RCAP Solutions works with communities to address a broad range of needs, including community infrastructure, and to promote public, environmental, and economic health.

RCAP Solutions is a member of the Rural Community Assistance Partnership. RCAP is a national network of regional nonprofit organizations that provide comprehensive, on-site technical assistance and training to help small, rural communities address their drinking water, wastewater, and other community development needs.

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**Stafford Springs, Connecticut—Wastewater**

Located in the Northwest corner of Connecticut, the Town of Stafford Springs has a Water Pollution Control Authority that ensures that the Willimantic River basin is not adversely affected by development. The town’s aging wastewater infrastructure is in need of multiple capital improvements. RCAP Specialists will provide technical assistance while also assisting with project development. In the past, RCAP Solutions at the request of USDA-RD assisted the community with Vulnerability Assessment and Emergency Response Planning work. The desired outcome will be a radical upgrade of the Wastewater infrastructure.

**Hardwick, Massachusetts—Wastewater**

The Town of Hardwick is a rural community with large portions of forest and wetlands in the South West portion of Worcester County. Hardwick borders the Quabbin Reservoir, the largest drinking water supply in Massachusetts so environmental health issues in this area are of great concern, especially failing septic systems. The Town of Hardwick has recently received funding under the MA. State Community Septic Management Program and is looking to assist homeowners in repairing their failing septic systems.

RCAP Solutions Specialists are providing Technical Assistance to the Town of Hardwick and ensuring that the neediest homeowners (with failing septic systems) are targeted first. The Town signed a contract with RCAP Solutions to help them administer the loan funds. RCAP TAPS will also oversee their septic system upgrades and connections to the town system where applicable. Total compliance with Mass DEP will be the final outcome.

**Orange, Massachusetts**

The Town of Orange is a rural community in the Northwest portion of Massachusetts. Orange is under MASS DEP order to repair failing septic systems and wells on a portion of town own land which abuts a lake, which is part of the primary watershed of the Quabbin Reservoir. This is a unique situation as the homes on the property are privately owned and are the only users of the failing utilities, yet the Town is under order as the land owner. The Town has recently received funding under the State Community Septic Management Program and is looking to sell the land to the homeowners and assist them with repairing the failing utilities.

RCAP Solutions will help the Town of Orange to monitor the construction and inspection process as well as provide Technical Assistance as needed. The end result will be ensuring compliance with the MASS DEP consent order.
Project Task Details:
The goal of this project is to create an Asset Management Plan for the system which includes four steps; Inventory and Replacement Schedule, Operations and Maintenance plan, Financial Strategies and a Capital Improvement Plan. Deliverables, dependent upon the system's commitment will be:

1) CUPSS Asset Check-Up Report,
2) Financial Check-Up Report,
3) My CUPSS Plan.

At a minimum, the project will provide all three of these reports but they could have caveats based upon the report status and system approvals. The water district must review inventory and attributes to ensure proper reflection of system equipment. This project will ensure that CUPSS, EPA's asset management software. RCAP Solutions will assist the water district with data entry and include analysis of the results for future operational efficiencies and long-term improvements and financial outlook. As a result of this effort, the community will have increased capacity at the local level in this area towards better management and a sustainable system over the long term.

Dexter Utility, Maine – GIS Mapping & Asset Management Plan

RCAP Solutions will assist the Utility District by updating their 1984 sewer system map and creating a digital GIS map. The Utility District Superintendent will give RCAP Solutions the set of maps from which to work. RCAP Solutions will digitize the maps and include pipe type, size and lengths. These map products and data will be in a flexible format so they can be incorporated in any future mapping or modeling. The expected outputs and outcomes are: RCAP Solutions will utilize the work completed during the GIS mapping project to create a utility service area, infrastructure maps and information report for the District to review. RCAP Solutions will create spreadsheet outputs that can be used to input additional asset management attribute information and analysis. The long-term outcome is for the Sanitary District to increase capacity of the technical staff along with managerial and financial stakeholders to improve future capital improvement schedules and budgets.
Ogdensburg Borough is a rural community located on the Wallkill River in Sussex County, NJ, approximately 50 miles northwest of New York City, NY. Ogdensburg Borough covers approximately 2.3 square miles and was the former home of the New Jersey Zinc Company which was opened in 1990. According to the 2000 US Census data, there are 881 households in the Borough with a Median Household Income of $60,313. The Borough population is 2,638. At the request of the USDA/RUS Senior Loan Specialist, RCAP Solutions was asked to provide technical assistance in helping the community with a rate analysis and rate restructuring plan for the water system. RCAP Solutions staff met several times with the system CFO to review and analyze finances. Overall, the system was in good fiscal shape making debt service payments and funding reserve accounts. However, during the previous two years to balance the budget, Ogdensburg was drawing down heavily on reserve funds. It was learned that a new billing system had been put in place and that the transition period from the old system was when budget deficits began. The billing system software had some bugs pertaining to decimal reading with remote meter readings from newly installed meters when uploaded to print customer bills. This problem was corrected by the vendor. However, during the billing switch over, only half the system customers received new meters. In FY 2013, a resolution was passed to replace all system meters with the newer models.

Ogdensburg finances have stabilized since the meter installation and RCAP Solutions staff will continue to monitor finances. RCAP will provide technical assistance to the Ogdensburg Borough by assisting them with a rate analysis and rate restructuring plan for the borough’s water system, as needed. This will build capacity at the local level by enabling them to continue to have sufficient revenues to cover operating expenses and debt service payments.

Flemington Borough Water System, New Jersey

Flemington Borough is the county seat of Hunterdon County, NJ. The Borough is known for its Greek revival and Victorian architecture with 60 percent of the buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Likewise it has a robust central business district with many restaurants and upscale shopping. Flemington Borough previously received USDA funding of $351,000 ARRA loan and $704,050 grant for water system improvements. USDA Rural Development has requested RCAP Solutions provide technical assistance with the completion of the Asset Management Plan. During the 2012 program year RCAP Solutions will assist Flemington Borough with an asset management plan for their water system and assist in analysis of the results. This assistance will provide the system a solution to resolve needs related to the planning necessary for future operational efficiencies along with a long-term financial outlook. In addition, the AM Plan will improve the community’s ability to obtain funding. This work will be utilizing the CUPSS Asset Management software.
In cooperation with the NH Department of Environmental Services' Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF), RCAP Solutions has been assisting in conducting income surveys in small community public water systems that are applying for debt relief under a program that offers “principal forgiveness.” Principal forgiveness is designed to lower the annual debt repayment, the amount of which is based on a ratio of the water user charge, as compared to the Median Household Income (MHI) of the community.

RCAP Solutions was asked to determine the MHI of Amazon Park, a small manufactured housing community in Rochester, NH. RCAP had been in discussions where this community was mentioned, and so is familiar with the economic distress there. The NHDES SRF Program took RCAP’s income survey materials, including instructions, forms, and advice to the community, and instructed the owner in how to conduct an income survey. Upon receipt of the completed forms, RCAP reviewed the data, and entered them into our software designed to analyze and report results.

In our report to the NHDES, RCAP found that the economic condition of the community is indeed one of the lowest community MHIs ever surveyed. Of the 94 households, 76 (81%) responded to the survey. The calculated MHI is $13,000. The level of principal forgiveness they are eligible for is 90% of the annual principal payment (not to exceed $200,000), which is the maximum allowable under the terms of the 2012 NH SRF Intended Use Plan. This is a most favorable outcome for the water users of Amazon Park, in terms of use of public funds to keep safe drinking water affordable to very low income individuals. The outcome is also an excellent example of a partnership between the non-profit sector and a NH State Agency to bring about the best use of available grant funds.

In our report to the NHDES, RCAP Solutions was asked to assist the Selectboard of the Town of Pittsburg, NH to develop an understanding of the concept of Asset Management, as it applied to their newly rehabilitated drinking water system. In the past, the Town has deferred maintenance of the water system, and as a consequence it needed to undertake a nearly complete rehab (completed last year), which was only possible with a high level of grant funding from public sources.

This project aims to train the Operator and Selectboard in the benefit and concepts of Asset Management. As applied to this case, RCAP will bring a modest approach to introducing the concepts necessary to provide long term sustainability. We intend to utilize a paper-based tool as a first step, rather than overwhelm the Board with computer terminology. While the selectboard is still working to build capacity in this area, they are sincerely interested in the future welfare of their new water system. The expected outcomes of the introduction and training would be a further interest in developing a suitable plan with an impact on their ability to become a more sustainable drinking water system, as well as improved public health and economic vitality.
Lincoln, New York

The Town of Lincoln which is located in Madison County NY has a population of 1818 and a Median Household Income of 46023 and is looking to develop a new water system connection to the regional water authority OCWA. Preliminary project estimates came in over 4 million dollars which has cause a significant challenge to addressing the local community’s water issues. A booster pump station and water storage tank would be required to maintain adequate working pressure throughout the proposed water system.

The community through Rural Development has asked RCAP Solutions to assist with development and administration of an income survey for the Clockville Water District. The proposed Clockville Water District would serve areas within and adjacent to the hamlet of Clockville. It is hopeful that the income survey will gain them valuable eligibility to federal and state funding making the project affordable for its users.

Currently the income survey is underway with an initial mailing and another one to be sent out this spring. If successful it will position them for funding under the RUS and SRF programs.

Lower Esopus, Watershed Partnership, LEWP, New York

RCAP Solutions is currently assisting the Lower Esopus watershed towns of Hurley, City of Kingston, Marbletown, Olive, Saugerties Town and Village and Ulster in a regional project sustaining a watershed stakeholders group to protect and enhance the Lower Esopus Creek for multiple uses including water supply, flood management, agriculture, tourism, recreation and local value.

The task at hand is to assist the LEWP to build on the base line stream corridor evaluation commissioned by the Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership, LEWP (of which RCAP Solutions is a founding member), to craft a comprehensive stream and watershed management plan. Work has commenced with multiple stakeholders and agencies, including the seven LEWP municipalities and community representatives, Ulster County, NYSDEC, NYCDEP, NYSDOH, USEPA, USGS, Congressman Gibson and state and local legislators, Riverkeeper, The Nature Conservancy, Hudson River Watershed Alliance, Hudsonia, Esopus Creek Conservancy and a host of others to benefit the water resources of the entire watershed.
**Municipal Authority of the Borough of Shenandoah, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania**

The Municipal Authority of the Borough of Shenandoah is a water system providing potable water and fire protection to approximately 3,080 residential customers located in Shenandoah Borough, West Mahanoy Township and Butler Township in rural Schuylkill County. The community is in economic and social transition as a diminishing coal industry loses jobs and overall economic slowdown in the region. The area is seeing an increase in minority population, especially within the Mexican community. Per 2000 Census data Shenandoah Borough has a median household income of $18,714 and 2.1 residents per household. At the request of the USDA/RUS program director, RCAP Solutions was asked to provide technical assistance in helping the community develop the 2010-2011 budget for the water system and to assist the Authority with the preparation of the USDA/RUS Annual and Quarterly Reports. In the 2011 Program year RCAP Solutions will provide technical assistance to The Municipal Authority of the Borough of Shenandoah with the preparation of Annual Budgets and USDA/RUS Annual and Quarterly Reports. The assistance provided by RCAP Solutions will better enable the Municipal Authority of the Borough of Shenandoah to manage their finances and to meet the covenants of their USDA/RUS loan.

**Gilberton Borough, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania**

The Borough of Gilberton is a small community located in rural Schuylkill County. In better economic times, iron and coal mining provided jobs and economic stimulus that enabled both Gilberton and the region to thrive. However, these industries have collapsed as is demonstrated by a median household income of $24,792. This creates a declining revenue base as high school graduates leave for better job opportunities and senior citizens customers die off. This bad situation was further enhanced when a devastating flood forced the demolition of more than 20 homes. A poorly built treatment plant and collection system have required ongoing costly repairs. Bad management practices, especially in allowing a high amount of delinquent customers has pushed Gilberton to the brink of insolvency. A debt service reammortization plan between the USDA and Gilberton was executed in 2010. One of the major components of the plan was the required funding of two reserve accounts to fund system repairs and equipment replacement costs. $1,000 per month is to be deposited into each reserve account. The financial technical assistance provided by RCAP Solutions will allow for the Gilberton to make better financial decisions and hopefully enable them to fulfill the standards of the RD management plan. RCAP Solutions will provide technical assistance through budget development and in the completion of USDA/RUS required annual reporting. The 2010 USDA annual report showed a profit for the year as revenues met O & M costs and debt service obligations. Likewise, the 2011 budget show a positive cash flow and full funding of the reserve accounts. RCAP Solutions will closely monitor the fiscal position of Gilberton and meeting the terms of the reammortization agreement.

RCAP Solutions recently met with the secretary to complete the USDA RD FY 2013 yearend financial report. Revenues are sufficient to meet O & M costs and debt service obligations. A rate increase implemented at RCAP Solutions request last year will increase revenues and help ensure financial solvency with the sewer systems debt service changing from an "interest only" payments to full "principle and interest" payments in 2014.
RCAP assists USDA and Broad Top Township with technical assistance on financial and managerial reporting and training on Asset Management for a sewer line extension. RCAP staff conducted a system training with the leadership on USDA reporting requirements and the local officials also enjoyed a preview of Asset Management. RCAP closely coordinates all activities with USDA, the Bedford County Planning Commission and the Broad Top Township Supervisors. All entities are pleased with this coordinated effort and benefit from the RCAP training and technical assistance. This USDA Rural Development project referral is for a community in rural Bedford County with a historically low median household income and many diverse needs. Broad Top Township is in the northeast corner of Bedford County and while much of Bedford County has an agricultural economy, this area lays claim to a history of coal mining, which damaged many of the local streams. With its many water and sewer needs, this area also serves as one of the historical RCAP "legacy" projects. Since the 1990s, many technical assistance providers from RCAP Solutions have assisted in project development tasks from RFP development to funding assistance. This particular community also serves as one of RCAP’s original decentralized wastewater projects in Pennsylvania. More recently, RCAP staff conducted a system training with the leadership on USDA reporting requirements and the local officials also enjoyed a preview of Asset Management.

Outcomes of this work are the following:

- Sustainable infrastructure and manageable rates
- Local leadership knowledgeable about RCAP and the tools we offer
- Sufficient reserves to cover costs of asset improvement, replacement and repair
- Sound budgeting and financial and managerial practices and policies that are adhered to
- Updated Emergency Response Plans and Vulnerability Assessments
An integral part of our planning is the assistance of Sukh Singh and RCAP Solutions. Ms. Singh has already invested several hours in guiding the executive board in the proper direction. We have made use of three of the RCAP education and training department publications. We also plan to avail ourselves of educational workshops with Ms. Singh and RCAP Solutions for further training and assistance in obtaining financing for this public works project. RCAP Solutions is crucial to our small rural community and others like us. I strongly urge you to provide whatever support you can through your office towards RCAP Solutions. I know that Nemacolin Inc.’s project will take several years to plan and complete. It would help us greatly to know that we can rely on continued funding for RCAP Solutions and, in turn, RCAP Solution’s training and guidance through this project.

Angela Visnesky
Vice President, Nemacolin, Inc

RCAP utilizes Health and Human services funding to improve water and wastewater facilities in small, low-income, rural communities. RCAP staff annually provide a variety of key training programs, serve on advisory councils and develop innovative programming in addition to serving over 600-700 communities with on-site technical assistance. For FY 2014 so far, RCAP Solutions staff have delivered long-term technical assistance to over 114 communities, delivered 130 technical assistance consultations to additional communities and we have conducted over 50 trainings to 289 community members. Currently RCAP Solutions staff also participate in 16 task forces and program activities throughout our northeast region.

RCAP staff utilize HHS funding to serve the following communities in Pennsylvania:

- Nemacolin, Greene County
- Brave Water and Sewer, Greene County
- Monongahela Township, Greene County
- Defiance, Bedford County
- Borough of Mount Union, Huntingdon County
- Alexandria Borough Porter Township JSA, Huntingdon County
- Green County Planning & Development Commission, Greene County
- Tioga County Source Water Protection Coalition
- Dover Township, York County
- Borough of Ebensburg, Cambria County
- Greencastle, Franklin County
- Wayne Township, Greene County
- Dunkard Township, Greene County
- Dunkard-Bobstown JMA, Greene County
- Refton Village, Lancaster County
- Potter Township, Centre County
- Freeland Borough, Luzerne County
The Dadson Estates community, located in Tiverton Rhode Island is a Mobile Home Community consisting of about 75 units. They are currently experiencing a water quality issue due to a failing on-site wastewater treatment system. The community has recently been approved for funding by USDA-RD to upgrade the wastewater treatment systems and improve drinking water quality. RCAP Solutions is providing Technical Assistance to Dadson Estates and liaising with USDA-RD for the duration of the system upgrade, this will result in an acceptable drinking water quality and a functional WW treatment system.

New Shoreham has the distinction of being the smallest town in the smallest state. The municipality encompasses the entire geographic area of Block Island, an island of just under 10 square miles located approximately 12 miles south of mainland Rhode Island across Block Island Sound. The Town of New Shoreham Water and Sewer District Commissioners have had a few issues in the past, which RCAP Solutions personnel have helped them to monitor and solve. In view of the previous problems, RCAP concluded that they would benefit from Asset Management training. We will present the options for a system of their size and complexity. RCAP’s CUPSS trained and certified TA providers will train the system’s personnel. This will result in a better organized system and future cost reductions.
The Selectboard of the Town of Readsboro, VT is struggling with doubts as to whether or not their water rate structure is fair and equitable. RCAP Solutions has been working with Town Clerk and Town Administrator to evaluate the water rate structure. Billing and usage data analysis will be conducted, and a plan proposed to the Selectboard as to how sustainability can be improved, given sociological trends in the community. These trends are due to aging population and little immigration, according to initial information gathered during our initial visit. However, since the inception of this project, a joint effort between the USDA and US EPA has produced a valuable tool, entitled: “Sustainable Management for Rural and Small System Sustainable Management.” This guidance has been introduced as a means for such challenged communities to look at what measures to take to improve the sustainability of their utilities. Continued work will include a workshop to the Selectboard, in order to reach a satisfactory outcome, which would include an enhanced sense of possibilities and real-world suggestions as to how to manage their system more effectively, given the challenges they face in a shrinking demographic situation.

Readsboro, Vermont

Upon a referral from the USDA Area office in Brattleboro, VT, RCAP Specialist contacted the Town Manager in Cavendish, VT regarding a compliance issue related to the USDA requirement for Vulnerability Assessment and Emergency Response Plan certifications by borrowers in their Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program. Cavendish has been long overdue in their submission, so RCAP was asked to make contact and assist the community with the task. In training the community on USDA requirements we learned of the high level of stress the community had experienced since the passage of Hurricane Irene. We made an appointment to meet with the Town Manager and the Water Operator and along with a second meeting, RCAP went through the RCAP Vulnerability Assessment template with them guiding them through the process which resulted in a satisfactory VA and ERP preparation, such that the Town was able to complete and submit the certifications, and come into compliance that same day. The outcome of the visit was an educated and informed Town Manager about the USDA RD requirements, and the process to bring about compliance with the USDA regulations.

Cavendish, Vermont
The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) is a national network of nonprofit organizations working to ensure that rural and small communities throughout the United States have access to safe drinking water and sanitary wastewater disposal.

The six regional RCAPs – its partners or affiliates – provide a variety of programs in their section of the United States to accomplish this goal, such as direct training and technical assistance; leveraging millions of dollars to assist communities develop and improve their water and wastewater systems.

The work in communities is coordinated and carried out by each of RCAP’s regional partners. The network includes a national office in Washington, D.C., that coordinates funding, reporting and finances for the programs and handles communications at a national level for the network. For more information, visit www.rcap.org.