

# RCAP Project Highlights



**Where:**  
Westminister, VT

**Problem:**  
Assist in the formation of a legal entity/district  
Conduct a Needs Assessment



## Westminster Fire District #5 *Regional Consolidation of Wastewater Collection*

This very small village located just north of Westminster and south of Bellows Falls consists of a very compact main street area that has a waste water collection system serving 55 homes. Until recently North Westminster was a separate village within the Town of Westminster. The village had a bond for the construction of their wastewater system with USDA Rural Development. During the merger procedure, the Town decided that they would not take over the bond held by the Village. So the town selectboard urged the residents of the former village to form a fire district, so that the district could take over the bond. The new “Westminister,VT Fire District #5” used an engineer to carefully analyze the collection system in preparation for the potential of adding wastewater flows from the nearby village of Saxtons River, in addition to the wastewater flows from a proposed affordable elderly housing project. The study confirmed that there is enough capacity for the proposed increase in flow using the 6-inch main.

There will be many issues for this new district to consider in the near future, including preparation of ordinances, by-laws, and a rate structure, as well as financial management issues with billing and reporting to Rural Development. As of this writing, RCAP is meeting with the committee to discuss strategies for public education regarding the merits of consolidating wastewater systems. It will be a challenge to communicate the significant benefits of consolidation, not only to the present customers of the district, but to those of the systems who want to use the existing pipeline (through reduced capital expenditure), as well as customers of the receiving wastewater treatment plant in Bellows Falls (through increase revenue from expanding their customer base; and, thus a decrease in sewer rates).

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.

**For more information**

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