



The Evolution of Charlestown's Wastewater Management Program

Regulatory Events

1993
Wastewater Management Commission Becomes Official
 Formally initiated by the Town Council and responsible for developing solutions to Charlestown's onsite wastewater management needs

1994
Wastewater Management Ordinance
 Required residents to have septic system pumped every three years

1996
RIDEM Grant
 \$37,500 awarded for development and implementation of a wastewater program

1998
Ordinance Revised
 Management district created and inspection-based pumping mandated

1999
Plan is Completed
 Wastewater Management Plan is completed

2000
Town-Approved Service Providers
 List of service providers also made available through mailings

2001
Three Districts
 Ordinance revision creates 3 inspection districts; mailings began

2004
Inspection-Based Pumping & Cesspool Phase-out
 Ordinance revision mandates inspection-based ISDS maintenance, and all cesspools replaced by 2009

2004
Significant Compliance
 97% compliance rate within three districts

Community Outreach & Education Advances

1980s
Voluntary Pump & Education Program
 The 1980s marked the beginning of an extensive education campaign, promoting the voluntary pump program.

1994
Free Tank Giveaway
 No takers until the program became mandatory

1995
Funding Voted Down
 Funding for a wastewater staff person was defeated at a Financial Town Meeting

1998
Some Funding for Staff
 Voters at a Financial Town Meeting approved \$15,000 for use on wastewater management activities

1998
Notice-to-Pump Program
 First initiated in environmentally sensitive coastal areas

2000
Project Partner
 Signed on as a partner in the BIGHP Project—hired part-time staff to monitor inspection program

2005
DEM Grants
 Previously awarded in 2000, DEM again awards \$25,000 for finding buried systems and installing risers and screens, as reimbursement to homeowners

2005
Web-Based Tracking
 Contracted with CARMODY Data Systems to track inspections online and transition to paperless reporting by service provider

1993
Door-to-Door Education
 The Wastewater Commission went door-to-door, educating the public about septic maintenance issues.

1994
Free Inspection Program
 150 system inspected, but only residents with "cream-of-the-crop" systems utilized the service

1999
Low-Interest Loans
 First town to make CSSLP loans available for replacing and repairing systems

2005
Traveling Display and Mailings
 Created educational display for public places; mailed realtors and various organizations about program updates

2005
Part-time GIS Manager Hired
 Has led to improved mapping and parcel accuracy for the Town; plotter purchased

Water Quality Issues

1988
Sole Source Aquifer Designation
 The Wood Pawcatuck Aquifer received the EPA Sole Source designation.

1994
Shellfishing Closure
 Green Hill Pond closed to shellfishing, prompting concern about wastewater issues

1997
East Ninigret Closed
 Continued concerns about wastewater issues

1998
Private Well Testing
 Program conducted by Salt Ponds Coalition and Town sampled Green Hill Pond, showing some contamination

2005
Septage Study
 Gerimia Associates investigated future disposal options of collected sewage. They concluded that a plant built in and maintained by Charlestown was not currently, financially feasible or necessary.

1990

1993

1996

1999

2002

2005

