

# Choosing Your Geologist: Consultant Selection



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# Before you start...

- Understand your responsibility as the Project Sponsor
  - Your Project – Your Water Supply
    - System has ultimate responsibility
  - Take ownership of the project
  - Stay involved through the process

# Application Process

- Very brief discussion of process and roles
- Pre-Application
- Aquifer Test Plan / Waiver
- Aquifer Testing
- Application Submittal

# Groundwater Withdrawal Applications

1. Sustainable withdrawals
2. Impacts to competing groundwater or surface water users
3. Impacts to the environment

# Where to Begin

- Scope of Work
  - List of what needs done and the expected result
- Pre-Application Meetings
  - Pre-Drill Well Site Review

# How to Find a Geologist

- References
- Referrals
- Pennsylvania Department of State
  - <https://www.pals.pa.gov/#/page/search>
  - Search for Engineers as Profession Type

# SRBC Training

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission held two training sessions in the Spring of 2016 reviewing required elements of a SRBC application. Attendees are provided on the SRBC web site.

<http://mdw.srbc.net/pwsap/Spring2016Workshops/attendees.html>

Not a Commission endorsement – but a good place to start.

# Soliciting Bids

- Provide as much information as possible
- Location
- Desired outcome
- Unusual challenges
- Request a Statement of Qualifications /  
References
- Cost information



# Interviews

- Who will be assigned to the project?
- Will they be available throughout the duration of the project?
- Knowledge and experience?
- Qualifications?
- Any subcontractors?
- Insurance?

# Interviews – The Flip Side

Consultant's questions for you, and there should be questions.

- Do they “get” your organization and project?
- How will your staff/board respond to their communication style?
- Will they be able to tell you “hard truths”?
- Does the consultant admit to what they don't know?

# Experience

- Real world experience
  - Similar projects
  - Similar settings
  - Successful completion – time and budget

# Checking References

- Similar project?
- Specific staff members?
- Satisfied with work?
- Communicated throughout project?
- Delays/changes handled well?
- Work effectively with regulatory agencies?

# Qualifications

- PA Geologist Licensing
- NY Geologist Licensing
  - Takes effect November 21, 2016
  - Starting to accept grandfathering and endorsement applications on November 21, 2016
  - No schedule yet for examinations

# Big Firms vs. Local Experience

- Local experience can be valuable – assess against the potential increased resources of a large firm
- Can depend on the work scope
- Plumber vs. Electrician
- Interview and assess the project team to be assigned to your work.

# Team Players

- Non-confrontational
- Consistent Message / Advice

# Other Considerations

- Listen to your consultants
  - But, if something doesn't feel right...
- Your project – your water. Stay involved
- Aquifer testing has value
  - Can guide operations – rates and duration of pumping. Well operating rotation.
  - Provides a baseline to which future well performance can be compared.



# SRBC Staff Observations

- Poor advice on project and application requirements.
- Choosing consultant based on pre-conceived impressions.
- Poor knowledge of local conditions.
- Consultant recommendation of unnecessary work.
- Communicate with Commission staff early and often through the project.

# Resources

- <https://normanswei.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/how-to-select-environmental-consultants.pdf>
- <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/rr/RR502.pdf>
- <https://www.501commons.org/resources/tools-and-best-practices/using-consultants>
- <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/facts/98-053.htm#Finding>

# Questions?

