ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER

Bowers Beach: Addressing saltwater intrusion and securing safe drinking water in a coastal town

SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE | DRINKING WATER | 2024-2025

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Bowers Beach is a small coastal town in Kent County, Delaware, located on the Delaware Bay. Drinking water for the majority of the town's 300 residents is provided by privately-owned drinking water wells, many of which are shallow and all of which are located in close proximity to the coast.

Several of Bowers Beach's wells have shown signs of being impacted by saltwater intrusion, flooding, and manmade contaminants. To address this public health concern, Bowers Beach requested assistance evaluating options to secure a more safe and reliable drinking water source.



BOWERS BEACH | CREDIT: ADOBE STOCK / JDAVID

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Region 3 RealWaterTA team worked with Bowers Beach over a period of twelve months to evaluate options for remedying the town's drinking water challenge. This process included convening conversations among key partners including town residents, the State of Delaware, and nearby water systems Artesian Water Company and Tidewater Utilities to evaluate the feasibility of connecting to their systems. The EPA RealWaterTA Engineering Support Team was also engaged to assist, which resulted in the development of a Preliminary Engineering Design (PER).

Drawing on findings from this process, Bowers Beach submitted a **Delaware Drinking Water SRF pre-application in February 2025, requesting $25.8M** to connect to Artesian Water Company's water supply system, which serves several nearby communities. The proposed project consists of an off-site water main extension, a booster station, an elevated storage tank, and a distribution system for 237 connections. This project was placed on the DWSRF Project Priority List. If funded, this project would provide the community with safe, reliable drinking water.

The Region 3 RealWaterTA program helps Mid-Atlantic communities access funding to address water infrastructure needs. This program is coordinated by the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center and funded by US EPA.

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PRIMARY WATERTA PARTNER ON THIS PROJECT:

The Water Center
University of Pennsylvania