

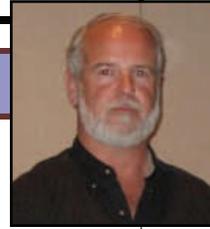
# Volume I, Issue II— July 2009

Delaware On-Site Wastewater Recycling Association

DOWRA  
P.O. Box 1696  
Dover, DE 19903

DOWRA NEWS  
July 2009

## Message from the President—Ken Walsh



Greetings! As this is my last newsletter article as President, I wanted to take this time to thank everyone for their continued support during these hard economic times. I know it is very hard justifying committing time and money to this organization, and would like everyone to know that it doesn't go unnoticed. Unlike most surrounding affiliate organizations, DOWRA continues to grow and prosper within the industry.

As you are aware we have several committees including Education Outreach, Membership, and Newsletter that are still delivering tangible goods to our members to assist in easing the burden in obtaining CET's as well as disseminating information that impacts our industry. We are also currently involved in assisting with providing input on DNREC's regulation rewrite.

Not only is this year the final year for my Presidency, many other Board of Director Positions are up for grabs. These positions include **Regulator, Engineer, class H System Inspector, Academic, and Installer**. A nominating committee has been appointed by the board, chaired by Niki Evans to develop a list of nominees. Board positions are three year terms, which include attendance at 4 quarterly board meetings, conference and participating on at least one committee.

New members offer new and exciting ideas for change. If you are interested please contact Niki Evans at [Firelady49@aol.com](mailto:Firelady49@aol.com).

## NOWRA Updates— Hilary Moore

As a member of DOWRA we are a part of NOWRA, the National On-Site Wastewater Recycling Association. In the past years NOWRA has provided support to affiliates through website design/ hosting, local representation, database development, insurance discounts as well as educational publications. Currently, NOWRA is going through a rough patch in which major changes are being made in order for them to stay viable in the future. NOWRA is in the process of redirecting efforts to find a direction which encompasses all members and become financially stable. This includes redefining the entire organization.

As part of the recent changes, BTF will no longer be providing Executive Director services after May 31st due to budget constraints. For the time being the Washington On-Site Sewage Associations, with John Thomas, will be acting as the ED. The I4A database which was introduced this year will most likely not be utilized by our association. Publications such as the OSJ may be limited to twice a year in an attempt to make them more educational and less advertisement. You will find more email/web information being provided to members instead of actual interactions in an effort to streamline processes to make them more efficient.

The NOWRA Board of Directors is taking all of this very seriously. The Board is also seeking opinions from associations on thoughts of combining forces with other water/wastewater associations. Many changes are on the rise and many associations are waiting patiently to see if the benefit is there at the end of the year. We will keep you posted.

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### Moore wins On-Site Professional of the Year Award

On May 7, 2009 the Delaware On-Site Wastewater Recycling Association was proud to partner with the Delaware Technical Community College in presenting the third annual On-Site Professional of the Year Award. This award is given to an on-site professional who demonstrates a consistent and above average dedication to the betterment of the environment.

The winner of this year's award was Hilary Moore of the Ground Water Discharges Section. Hilary has been with the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control for over 10 years and currently works as an Environmental Engineer. As most of you know she is the past president of DOWRA and is heavily involved at Delaware Tech where she teaches and assists with developing the training center.

Other winners DOWRA would also like to recognize are: Walter Baumer, Wastewater Operator of the Year; Robert Eldreth, Water Operator of the Year; Gerard Esposito and the Wilkerson Family for the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Congratulations to all Nominees and Winners for enhancing the on-site industry.



Pictured Left is Hilary Moore accepting her award.

Pictured on the Right is Walter Baumer accepting his award.



### Regulation Amendment Process Underway for the On-Site and Spray Regulations—Jack Hayes

The Ground Water Discharges Section of DNREC is in the process of updating the draft version of the regulations from the comments received to date from the workshops and meetings. The proposed draft regulations will be updated on the website on or around July 31, 2009. This should be approximately 80 – 85% of the changes to the regulations and will allow the on-site industry a couple of months to review these updates. The summer months are difficult to schedule meetings/workshops so we will hold off with these until mid to late September timeframe.

At that time the GWDS will schedule multiple workshops one each for small system changes and others for large system specific changes. Look for the new updates on the DNREC website after July 31<sup>st</sup> and plan to attend the workshops beginning in September. If you would like to add or contribute your thoughts or ideas please feel free to contact Jack Hayes at (302) 739-9327.

<http://www.wr.dnrec.delaware.gov/Information/GWDInfo/Pages/GWDSDesignInstallOperateInfoForProposedWWTreatmentRegs.aspx>

Be sure to stay up to date on the regulations by checking in on the website!

### Small System Wastewater Treatment— Ben Miller

Historically wastewater treatment has always been associated with large municipal wastewater disposal systems. These systems were designed based on flows, quality of treatment needed, affordable treatment methods, location, and disposal methods. As rules and regulations became stricter throughout history, Best Management Practices BMP's has been the forefront in determining types of treatment and quality levels. The use of BMP's varies from area to area and does take in consideration of treatment costs.

As technology has advanced and treatment methods and types have become more affordable on a small system scale, regulations and requirements have began requiring treatment in certain areas and situations for small flows including residential treatment. However, treatment technologies may not be a one type fits all on small scale systems. Small scale systems are more susceptible to chemicals and the varying differences from home to home that need to be evaluated prior to picking a treatment technology.

Most treatment systems are microorganism dependant for wastewater treatment. Aeration units including suspended growth and fixed growth both require microorganism for treatment. Peat systems and other filtration media technolo-

gies also require microorganism growth for treatment. The historical treatment from a standard disposal bed or trench even requires microorganisms to treat the effluent and keep the biomass at bay.

With residential flows being fairly low the use of bleach, fabric softeners, water softeners, cleaning agents, and medications can have a detrimental effect on treatment systems and their ability to perform. Many people do not realize it takes just a little to create an environment where microorganisms will not be able to survive and perform.

When designing a system it is very important to interview the homeowners and review what chemicals they use, whether a water softener system is present, are occupants within the residence on strong antibiotics or medications, and other information such as water use habits, number of occupants, and vacancy periods. With this information at hand it is very important to consult with the manufacturers on whether the particular site is suitable for their treatment technology. It is much easier to perform this upfront than to have to solve a microorganism environmental problem once the system is installed.

### 13th Annual Conference Fast Approaching— Hilary Moore

The 13th Annual DOWRA Conference, "**Elevating the On-Site Industry for Tomorrow**" will be held on October 20 & 21, 2009 at the Dover Downs Hotel and Conference Center located in Dover, Delaware. The Conference will again host a two tract presentation schedule which will focus on local issues. Current topics include: O/M Contract Issues; Pollution Control Strategy Issues, and Mapping; Class H Inspection Nightmares and Fixes; Peat Reuse; Regulation Updates; Safety Issues; Risk Assessment; Seeking Funding for Replacement systems and many, many more.

**Mail outs will start in August, so be on the look out. Registration forms can also be found on the web at [www.dowra.org](http://www.dowra.org).**





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### 2009 Sporting Clay Event—Kevin Sockriter

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Sporting Clay Tournament was held on May 9, 2009. Surprisingly during this financial crisis, we had roughly 70 shooters (compared to about 50 last year). There was plenty of food, drinks and a nice selection of awards. In addition to the awards, a last minute decision was made to do a 50/50 Raffle. This worked out well as it generated enough money to provide cash prizes for the winners of each division.

Thanks to all of the support, we were able to provide a nice selection of door prizes this year. A Benelli Nova 12ga shotgun, a Savage .17 caliber rifle w/scope and a Garmin GPS were the main prizes. There was also about \$500 worth of miscellaneous door prizes.

We provided trophies/awards to the top three shooters in each of the three Lewes class' and the traditional worst overall shooter. Cash prizes were also given to the winners of each Lewes class, and mugs and gift cards were provided for the top three female shooters.

I would like to thank everyone that supported this event. Without your support, we would not be able to make this event a success. We look forward to next year's event and we hope to make it even bigger and better. Thanks again and I look forward to seeing all of you at our golf tournament on September 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **NOWRA's Septic Locator**

Be sure to visit NOWRA's Septic Locator at [www.septiclocator.com](http://www.septiclocator.com) is a online search directory created by NOWRA to help on-site system users locate septic products, services and industry professional in their local areas. This site is a great advertising tool to all of DOWRA/NOWRA members and it is free to you and the public. The site is also a great source of information. Each member's information will be updated annually by DOWRA based on your membership renewal application.

## Consumer Guides to Evaluating Service Contracts– Eric Valentine

As we as an industry and individuals continue to increase our knowledge and professionalism it is only natural to assume that our clients; homeowners, will do the same.

In the past few weeks I have been able to locate consumer guides on every topic from dealing with a puppy with a broken leg and diagnosing engine codes on a Dodge to evaluating and choosing an appropriate daycare. With all of the resources available I should not have been surprised when I stumbled across “A Homeowner’s Guide to Evaluating Service Contracts.” This consumer guide has been written and published by The Consortium of Institutes for Decentralized Wastewater Treatment (CIDWT).

For those of you unfamiliar with the CIDWT it is a group of educational institutions cooperating on decentralized wastewater training and research efforts. The Consortium also includes people from professional associations, citizens groups, regulatory agencies and private industry. It would be well worth everyone’s time to spend at least a few minutes at [www.onsiteconsortium.org](http://www.onsiteconsortium.org) to familiarize yourself with this great onsite resource.

With the permission of one of the guide’s authors; Nancy Deal, I am reproducing parts of the guide. The entire document is available for free at [www.onsiteconsortium.org/edbrochures.html](http://www.onsiteconsortium.org/edbrochures.html).

The very abridged “Homeowners Guide to Evaluating Service Contracts”

### **Introduction**

*Proper operation and maintenance of onsite wastewater treatment systems is critical to ensure good performance. It is also an important way that you, the homeowner, can protect a significant investment. Having a service contract with a professional trained in the operation and maintenance (O&M) of onsite wastewater treatment technologies is a sound approach to achieving proper maintenance of your system.*

*O&M service visits often result in early detection of problems that could lead to a malfunction. Early detection makes it possible to take remedial action before a system becomes a public health hazard, detriment to the environment, or a liability for the homeowner. Some counties and states have regulations that require a certain amount of system management. Whether or not they are required in your area, routine service will ensure that onsite wastewater treatment systems will continue to be a permanent and effective part of our wastewater treatment infrastructure.*

*People seeking services from a maintenance service provider desire proper service for a fair price, but they often don’t know what services are necessary for their system. As an onsite wastewater treatment system owner, you should be aware of the different contracts that may be available and know exactly what service you can expect. In many cases, fees for service agreements are comparable to or less than those charged for centralized sewer service.*

### **Frequency of Service Activities**

*Without exception, all onsite wastewater treatment systems require some level of service. However, the frequency of service activities is typically determined by four factors:*

- *Regulations*
- *Site conditions*
- *Technology*
- *Wastewater source or use*

*Regulatory authorities are mainly established to protect public and environmental health. Thus, in developing regulations that define the frequency of system monitoring activities, these authorities consider the relative risk to public health and the environment. Additionally, population density is also taken into account. Where risk is perceived as high, required monitoring frequency measures the performance of onsite wastewater treatment systems and minimizes risk exposure to pathogens.*

## Consumer Guides to Evaluating Service Contracts– Continued

*Site conditions will influence the required frequency of service. This is again because of environmental/public health risks and population density. Environmental risk is based upon the sensitivity of your site to the addition of wastewater.*

*A site with deep, medium textured, well drained soil has an excellent ability to accept and treat wastewater; the environmental risk is low. A site with extreme soil texture (excessively sandy, clayey, or rocky), or a site with shallow soil overlaying rock has limited treatment and/or dispersal capability. Likewise, a site with seasonally saturated soil or poor surface drainage has a limited ability to accept or treat wastewater. Wastewater treatment systems located on these tougher sites pose a greater risk to public and environmental health.*

*Systems located near surface water such as lakes, rivers, or wetlands are also greater risk to public health and the environment, because there is a greater chance of human contact with the wastewater. Additionally, as population density increases and wastewater treatment systems are placed on smaller lots, the risk is greater that pathogens leaving underperforming systems may reach the neighbors. In many areas, increased population also means an increase in the number of water wells that may become contaminated by inadequately treated wastewater from nonperforming systems.*

*Wastewater treatment technologies require specific service activities based on their treatment processes. Ultimately, service activities are unavoidable, because all treatment technologies require some level of service to keep them functioning properly. The manufacturer of each technology generally establishes service guidelines to ensure proper operation of their product.*

*In general, advanced treatment technologies require more frequent service visits, because they are more complex. If a specific configuration of treatment components and wastewater loading requires additional service visits to keep the system operating properly, the system designer may specify more frequent service.*

*Wastewater source or use may well be the most important factor to determine the required frequency of service. All wastewater treatment systems have a design loading rate based upon a specific quantity and strength of wastewater.*

### **Understanding your onsite wastewater treatment system**

*The first step for selecting a maintenance provider requires a simple understanding of the system. The onsite wastewater treatment system can be divided into four components: wastewater source or use, wastewater collection, pretreatment, and final treatment and dispersal (Figure 1).*

*The wastewater source or use is the facility that the wastewater treatment system serves. This may be a residence or a commercial operation. The wastewater collection system is generally the plumbing that conveys the wastewater to the pretreatment component.*

*Pretreatment components remove contaminants (nutrients and pathogens) from wastewater to produce effluent of sufficient quality to be accepted and treated by the final treatment and dispersal component. A septic tank is the most commonly used pretreatment component. Additional pretreatment components that may be used are aerobic treatment units, media filters, constructed wetlands, and/or disinfection units. Site conditions and the nature of the final treatment and dispersal component determine which pretreatment components are used.*

## Consumer Guides to Evaluating Service Contracts– Continued

### **What types of service contracts are available?**

A variety of service contracts are available. It is important that homeowners know exactly what service they will receive under any service contract they consider. It is no surprise that as the amount of service provided increases, the cost also increases to cover the additional activities. A description of different types of contracts follows.

**Monitoring Contract** is a contract for monitoring the onsite wastewater treatment system performance. The service provider records system data and collects samples for laboratory analysis. The results are delivered to you and to any permitting authority that may require such monitoring.

**Operating Contract** is a contract to assess the current operational status of each system component. The service provider identifies components that need maintenance or repair but does not perform these services under this contract.

### **Summary**

Wastewater will continue to be generated as a part of our daily activities. Effective management of this wastewater is critical to protecting public health, environmental health, and property value. All wastewater treatment technologies require service. However, the type and frequency of service depends on the specific technologies that make up your system, and how you use it.

As I mentioned earlier this is a very abridged version of “A Homeowners Guide to Evaluating Service Contracts”. Please take the time to read the entire Guide as there is a good chance that your client will.

Partially reproduced with permission of CIDWT.

Lesikar, B., N. Deal, D. Gustafon, D. Lindbo, G. Loomis, C. O’Neill. A Homeowner’s Guide to Evaluating Service Contracts. Consortium of Institutes for Decentralized Wastewater Treatment (CIDWT). 2006.

DOWRA is seeking volunteers to work the fair exhibit! The state fair runs July 17 –26. There is a morning shift and an afternoon shift.

You will be given passes for admission.

Please contact Ben Miller if you are interested

at : [bmiller@freemire.com](mailto:bmiller@freemire.com)

Or 443-827-0821

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## 2009 DOWRA Calendar

**July 17-26**, Delaware State Fair Exhibit, Grandstand, Delaware State Fair - Harrington, DE

**August 20**, Date to be Announced, DOWRA Membership Appreciation Crab Feast , Invite only 6:00 pm, Seafood City, Felton

\*\* All those who attend board/membership meetings will be invited.

**September 8**, DOWRA board/membership meeting, 6:30 pm pizza, 7:00 pm meeting starts Board Room, Exhibit Hall, Delaware State Fairgrounds

**September 18**, DOWRA Annual Golf Tournament, 12:00pm, at Jonathans Landing Golf Course, Magnolia, DE

**October 20-21**, 13th Annual **DOWRA** Conference, Dover Downs Hotel and Casino, Dover, DE