



MOU Partnership Progress Report



Partners Creating Pathways to Integrate Onsite/Decentralized Solutions Into Today's Wastewater Infrastructure

November 2008

In January 2005, EPA initiated a partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding with eight public and private sector organizations to improve decentralized wastewater management in the U.S. Since its creation in 2005, the partnership has generated many successes, marked by better cooperation, collaboration, consultation, and communication among the various organizations. Some of the highlights of the efforts put forth by the MOU participants are listed below.

Highlights

- **Increased Training and Workshops.** Attendance at training and workshops for installers and pumpers has increased markedly over the past three years, and feedback has been extremely positive. The partners have continued to collaborate on training efforts—relying on the combined strengths of each organization.
 - NAWT's training program for inspectors, maintenance professionals, and vacuum truck operators sponsored a total of **65 workshops for 3,000 participants** during 2005–2007. CIDWT and other partners assisted in development of the course, which provides orientation for the NEHA installer credentialing program.
 - Cooperation among the organizations has improved training **curriculum consistency**, allowing regulators and service providers to receive the same information regardless of which organization sponsored the training.
 - **Cross-attendance** at annual meetings and conferences, exposing participants to events and information provided by other organizations. Partners now routinely participate as speakers and trainers almost interchangeably at industry events, improving cross-pollination of ideas and management approaches.
- **Installer Credentialing Program.** A joint professional development program for system installers nationwide began in June 2006, featuring training workshops, a testing program, and a **new credentialing initiative**



supported by several of the partner groups, which helped to develop a standardized curriculum and knowledge-based examining process

- Nearly **200 people** have completed the “Certified Installers of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems” (CLOWTS) credentialing program. **Counties in Ohio and Iowa** who are now requiring completion of the CLOWTS program prior to performing work in each county. Counties in Washington and Illinois are giving **special recognition** to those who have successfully completed the program. The installer credentialing program is administered by NEHA, with NAWT, NOWRA, and CIDWT providing support and key assistance in curriculum development.
 - CIDWT is leading development of a **new training program** for wastewater treatment system installers. CIDWT is being supported by NEHA, NAWT, NOWRA, installation professionals, and others.
- **Model Performance Code.** NOWRA has conducted regulator workshops for state and local regulators as part of the EPA-supported initiative to develop a model performance code for managing onsite and cluster wastewater treatment systems. In 2007, NOWRA held **five workshops**, with some jointly sponsored by other MOU partners, and plans to host two additional workshops.

- RCAP has provided drinking water treatment and wastewater management technical assistance and training to thousands of individuals in hundreds of communities in the past. Approximately 10 percent of the wastewater training events addressed decentralized systems. RCAP coordinates its water and wastewater technical assistance and training with EPA and its partners.
- **Annual State Onsite Regulators (SORA) Conference.** NESCA hosted its 10th annual State Onsite Regulators Alliance (SORA) conference in March of 2008, bringing together regulators from 40 states to exchange information and network with each other and the MOU partners. NOWRA partnered with NESCA and SORA in sponsoring a regulators' session of the Model Code Workshop. SORA reciprocated by allowing NESCA and CIOWTS to present their workshop during the organization's annual meeting.
- **MOU "Partnership Alley".** WEF organized the first MOU "Partnership Alley" at WEFTEC07, one of the wastewater industry's premier national conferences. Partner participation in the WEF Small Communities Committee has expanded and strengthened WEF's support for decentralized systems as part of the nation's wastewater treatment infrastructure.
- **Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Glossary.** CIOWTS completed a glossary of terms pertinent to decentralized wastewater in 2007 with partner support. The glossary provides a common definition of technical terms that are often used interchangeably.
- **MOU Exhibit Booth.** The partners established the MOU booth and developed a variety of outreach materials

for display at conferences and training workshops, including an informational PowerPoint presentation on the partnership. This effort has helped tremendously in promoting the MOU partnership and its efforts.

- **MOU Website.** NOWRA developed an MOU web site (www.us-epamoupartners.org) that allows users from the EPA MOU Partnership to interact via an Internet forum. The web site includes a calendar of events and a bulletin board forum. This forum now serves as the communications mode for the partners.

The Future Shines Bright

The ongoing success of the MOU partnership and extensive outreach regarding its benefits to the decentralized wastewater industry has created synergy among the partners and sparked interest among other organizations.

Maintaining the momentum for the next three years will require a sustained effort by the partners to support the MOU partnership—especially in integrating the regulatory, policy, and research issues of the new partners into future MOU activities—while continuing to build upon the group's shared goals and common interests. As the partnership moves through the remainder of 2008 and beyond, there will be an increased emphasis on improving consistency regarding management practices and linking management to treatment technology types, risk factors, and the condition of receiving waters. Training events, conferences, webcasts, and workshops will continue to play a major role in maintaining the viability of the partnership and enhancing the competency of the public agency.

Our Partners

