

WOWRA News

FALL 2012

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A Letter from the President

Fellow WOWRA Members:

On September 12, 2012 members of the WOWRA board of directors met with Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) Secretary Dave Ross and his staff in Madison. The board prepped for the meeting with three primary topics to discuss. First, we discussed potential legislation that would allow surface discharge and eliminates surface discharge as a reason to fail a private onsite wastewater system. This legislation directly contradicts state law and could potentially raise health risks to those surrounding properties and their owners. Members of our profession are aware of this, but the board wanted to reaffirm that DSPS knew WOWRA's stance on the issue. Upon delivering the WOWRA message, DSPS assured us that their number one priority is safety and they would continue to view any proposed legislation that affects health and safety with skepticism.

The second topic discussed was the WOWRA POWTS Evaluator Course. The point of bringing this up was to begin educating Secretary Ross on the background, curriculum, instruction and relevance the evaluator course has had on the industry. We talked about the basics of the POWTS Evaluator Course and mainly touched on the previous troubles we've had trying to get the course recognized at the state level. Secretary Ross assured the board that DSPS was interested in the POWTS course, but it was up to WOWRA to decide the fate of the POWTS evaluator course. After the meeting the board discussed next steps for the POWTS evaluator course and determined to build course offerings and attendance. This will take some time in building course recognition as the industry standard. My challenge to you as industry professionals is to stand behind the course. If you haven't taken the course, TAKE IT! If you have, encourage your employees, fellow professionals, and even regulators to take the course. The POWTS Evaluator Course is WOWRA's cornerstone and we must treat it as such.

The last topic was staff changes and reductions at DSPS. Multiple WOWRA members requested this as a topic of discussion and were interested in how the agency was responding to industry concerns with perceived delays with plan reviews and staff shortages.

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We expected a generalized “political” answer. What we received was enlightening. Secretary Ross’ primary message was; the DSPS is administering and executing with less. The Secretary said it best when he stated they reduced staff to provide industries regulated by the department with the cost savings and efficiencies necessary for private businesses to remain profitable.

Now I know what you are thinking, that all sounds fine and dandy, but what about now, I am struggling right now with plan turnarounds? And what about retirements and the future of the POWTS staff? I can tell you this, Secretary Ross and his staff are 100% aware of these issues and they are addressing them. So just because someone isn’t there now, doesn’t mean they will be in the future.

Simply put, DSPS does not want to over-regulate our business. The agency wants to provide the necessary framework to ensure our profession is reasonably regulated without having multiple agency staff duplicating each other’s responsibilities and slowing the process down with additional staff oversight. DSPS wants us as qualified professionals to make our own decisions.

With that said, if you have issues I encourage you to use WOWRA. WOWRA has a membership of over 100 industry professionals from around the state. We also have the resources to network you with others from the state and nation. We have the resources to help. Secretary Ross also confirmed that WOWRA is in a good place with our new contract counsel George Klaetsch and his firm – Klaetsch Public Affairs Strategies.

I left the meeting with the upmost confidence DSPS is heading in the right direction. They want us to be the driving force of our industry. And if you still need to turn to the state, Secretary Ross and his team are there to lend a hand. He also mentioned that if anyone is having issues with permit turnaround time, they should contact WOWRA directly and have us inform Secretary Ross directly (and trust me George has his number on speed dial). Ross guaranteed an instant turnaround on any issue.

I know when the board walked in to the meeting we had just as many issues and concerns as you have. But when we left, we were all surprised and encouraged by the DSPS response. On behalf of the WOWRA board of directors thanks to all WOWRA members who contacted us prior to the DSPS meeting with their thoughts and recommendations

Sincerely,
Aaron J Ausen
President WOWRA

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Introducing Katie Boycks

WOWRA Welcomes New Trade Association Manager

Hello members. My name is Katie Boycks and I am really excited to join the team at Klaetsch Public Affairs Strategies. A little about my background: I currently reside in Middleton with my husband, two daughters and our 9 year old Labrador retriever. I am a lifelong resident of the state of Wisconsin where I attended undergrad at UW-Madison followed by law school at Marquette University.

Various opportunities eventually landed me back in Madison as the Director of the state trade association for life and health insurers (WALHI). While with WALHI I handled the management of the association, day to day operations, as well as acting as a secondary lobbyist. It was a difficult but worthwhile decision to then leave the workforce to raise my two beautiful daughters.

Now that my girls are a lot more self-sufficient, I decided it was time to stretch my brain again and get back into the workforce. I look forward to meeting you all personally and working with you to maintain and even strengthen your associations. I encourage you to contact me at any time with questions or concerns.

I can be reached at 608-441-1436 or kboycks@kpasllc.com.



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**** For Members Who Have Not Already Renewed
for 2013 Please Read and Fill Out!!****

WOWRA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Dear WOWRA Member,

In October, membership renewals were individually mailed out to all current WOWRA members. In case you missed the mailer you may renew your membership with the Wisconsin Onsite Water Recycling Association now. Just fill out the attached Membership Renewal Form and mail it along with a check made payable to WOWRA. Membership dues are in three categories: **Full Member** (onsite industry members including installers soil testers and suppliers to the industry); **Additional Member** (more than one person from the same company that already had a Full Member); or **Associate Member** (industry regulators/government personnel). Associate Members are non-voting members. Members are encouraged to renew by deadline is December 31, 2012 but, if you send in your renewal form and check by Thanksgiving you will be entered to win free admission to The WOWRA/WLWCA Onsite Show January 24-26, 2013.

Your membership provides discounts to WOWRA annual conventions and classes and provides you with up-to-date information regarding the onsite industry in Wisconsin. You will also be listed on the WOWRA website's search engine. Full and Additional Members also will automatically become members of the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association. Associate Members (regulators) can choose to belong to NOWRA for an additional fee. Finally, WOWRA gives you a united voice with those who regulate our industry.

We hope that you have found WOWRA to be a valuable resource for you or your business and choose to renew your membership. It is with your support that we have been able to successfully work on many important issues affecting our industry within the past year. Thank you for all your past involvement over the years with WOWRA.

Please note that the WOWRA address has changed since last year at this time. Our new address is 10 E Doty Street, Suite 523, Madison, WI 53703.



Approximately 30% of your WOWRA dues are spent on lobbying expenses. This 30% may not be deducted from you taxes as a business expense. Please consult your tax consultant for more information.

Dues Renewal Form

Name _____
Company _____
Address _____
City _____
State/ZIP _____
Occupation _____
Telephone _____
Email: _____
Your Previous Year's Membership
Category _____

_____ **Full Member** (Any person directly involved in the onsite industry, including installers, soil testers, designers, manufacturers and/or suppliers) \$200/year

_____ **Additional Member** (Available only to those who are employees of a company that already has a Full Member in WOWRA-no restriction on the number of Additional Members from year company) \$100/year

_____ **Associate Member** (Government personnel whose function is education, inspection or regulatory, anyone with an indirect interest in onsite disposal wishing to support the association. FYI Non-voting member) \$65/year state dues only or \$95/year state and NOWRA dues (NOWRA is our National Trade group, representing out interests at a federal level.)

Make checks payable to WOWRA.

Mail checks and registration form to:
WOWRA, 10 E. Doty St., Ste. 523
Madison, WI 53703
Phone with questions: (608) 441-1436

**Renewal Due December 31,
2012**



WOWRA Scholarship Fund

WOWRA's Board of Directors has established a scholarship fund to be distributed annually. The number of scholarships awarded varies based on donations from WOWRA members. One scholarship is the \$2,000 Robert Lindner Memorial Scholarship and one is the \$1,500 Gretchen McQuestion Scholarship. Other scholarships are awarded based on availability.

Since 1990, our association has awarded approximately \$115,000 to over 100 students, an impressive record. The majority of the money for the scholarships has come from member donations. The recipients are WOWRA members, their spouses or children.

As a contributor, your name and/or company will be listed in the quarterly newsletter until and including the spring 2013 issue. All names/companies will be listed in the order which the donations are received and a running total of the scholarship fund will also appear monthly. No amount is too big or too small. We need your help to continue awarding scholarships. We are again asking you to donate generously to this worthy cause.

___ Yes, I will contribute (amount) \$ ___
 ___ No, I cannot contribute at this time.

Please send your contribution with your annual membership dues. You may write one check-just designate how much is to be allocated to the scholarship fund.

Name for Newsletter:

How to Apply for a WOWRA

Scholarship

Do you have a graduating high school senior in your home looking for a college scholarship? Or are you or your spouse going back to school to further your education, but not sure how you're going to pay for it?

WOWRA has two scholarships available to WOWRA members or immediate family members of a WOWRA member. One, Robert Lindner Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$2,000, and one Gretchen McQuestion Scholarship in the amount of \$1,500. (These amounts may be changed at the discretion of the Board of Directors.)

The deadline to apply is January 1, 2013. Winners will be announced at the 2013 WOWRA Onsite Show, January 24-26, 2013 in Stevens Point, WI.

Scholarships can't happen without the support of our membership. To donate to the 2013 scholarship fund, visit the Members page at www.wowra.com for the donation form or fill out the donation form to the left. All donors will be listed on the webpage and included in the newsletter in spring 2013!

For rules and to download an application, visit the Members page at www.wowra.com.

For questions, contact Katie Boycks either by phone at 608-441-1436 or by email at kboycks@kpasllc.com.



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WOWRA Board Meets with DSPS Secretary Ross

On September 12, members of the WOWRA Board took time out of their work schedules and met with Department of Safety and Professional Services Secretary Dave Ross. Secretary Ross and his agency continue to show a tremendous interest in the POWTS profession. In July, Secretary Ross attended the WPCA Summer Conference and his Deputy Secretary; Bill Wendle attended the WLWCA Summer Conference in August. The September 12 meeting with the WOWRA board concluded Secretary Ross' meetings with all things POWTS related in 2012. WOWRA Board members in attendance were Aaron Ausen, Len LaFrenier, Todd Stair and Mark Wieser.

The meeting covered, three equally important WOWRA topics of interest – 1) Surface discharge, 2) DSPS staff changes and 3) POWTS evaluator training and certification. Secretary Ross and his team were very cooperative and informative during the meeting. Here is what we learned:

- The DSPS is committed to quick (yet careful) plan review
- The plan review records will transition to electronic (paperless) during the fall of 2012
 - The DSPS wants to minimize multiple duplicate copies of plan review
 - The DSPS continues to move toward credit card payments for plan review
- Targeted DSPS divisions will be reorganized in October, 2012 to achieve efficiencies
- The DSPS is considering fee structure changes that could potentially save stakeholder costs
- The DSPS is strongly encouraging local units of government that have delegated authority to make decisions relating to plan review and POWTS, and to do so without unnecessarily including state interference.
 - The DSPS is currently reaching out and educating local units of government of this position

On behalf of WOWRA and its board of directors, I would like to thank Secretary Ross and his entire agency for taking the time to visit with WOWRA and other POWTS related stakeholders.

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Vote

For most states, this is the first election since Election Day, November, 2010. Not in Wisconsin. The State of Wisconsin has been in perpetual election mode since November, 2010. With judicial elections, recall primary elections, recall general elections, special elections following the outcome of recall elections, our state have had more than a half-dozen elections in and throughout the state over the last two years. With that said, we have another election less than month away. For those of you who have participated in the elections mentioned above – VOTE! For those of you who have not participated in the elections above – VOTE!!

Regardless of how you feel about “those politicians” representing us in Madison and Washington DC it is important to exercise your civic duty within our democracy. If that is not enough, please know that “those politicians” have a direct and indirect impact on your business. Whether or not it is taxes, insurance, transportation or natural resource regulations; state and federal elected officials have the power to help or hurt your short and long term business success.

Please go to the following link to learn more about who represents you in Madison and Washington DC and where and when you are eligible to vote on November 6, 2012.

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/w3asp/waml/waml.aspx>

WOWRA Board Changes

In August, longtime WOWRA board member Tony Birrittieri of Petersen Supply resigned from the WOWRA board.

In his place, Steve Jentges of WSK Service Company/Statewide Septic Services was appointed at the August 18th WOWRA board meeting, to complete the remainder of Tony's board term through 2013. Steve has been in the industry for more than 20 years and will be a great asset to the WOWRA board.

In September, WOWRA board member Todd Stair also resigned from the WOWRA board. A successor for Stair's board position will be discussed and acted upon at an upcoming board meeting.

Their presence on the board will be missed, but their continued presence in WOWRA and in the industry will continue to have a positive impact.

A Special Thanks to Birrittieri and Stair from the WOWRA Board of Directors

As our WOWRA general membership is well aware, Tony Birrittieri and Todd Stair have been the foundation of the board of directors for many years. Their time and commitment has positioned WOWRA to be the premier association for septic related businesses today and for years to come. With that said, the board of directors would like to extend heartfelt thanks to both Tony and Todd. Because of their efforts the board will be able to build and strengthen our association for years to come. Thank you once again for your tireless dedication to WOWRA and the entire industry.

We also want to thank the general membership's consideration and patience during the board transition. If you are interested in serving on the board of directors, please feel free to contact Katie Boycks at 608-441-1436 or kboycks@kpasllc.com

Sincerely,

WOWRA Board of Directors

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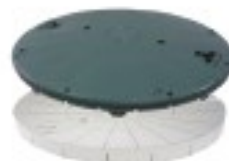
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Can it Recover?

By: Eric Larson, Onsite Installer | October 2012

Septic system repair and rejuvenation has become more common for many contractors since the economic downturn. Many others have been doing it for some time. More and more pretreatment products are being marketed for drainfield rejuvenation, and many excellent recovery techniques have been developed around the country. If you are considering such work, there are a number of issues to address.

The first may well be legal: Does the local code allow the type of repair needed? For example, you may be troubleshooting a ponded drainfield that could be recovered physically but is non-compliant for vertical separation. Some jurisdictions may allow portions of a system to meet an older code, while others may require all system components to be updated if any one component is updated or repaired.

The nature of the repair will drive the decision process. Control panel problems, leaking risers, broken lids, missing baffles and such are typically straightforward. Drainfield recovery is more complex than a new installation because many variables can be involved.

Many questions

A common belief is that if system clogging is biological, it can be recovered biologically. How do you know? If it is clogged, why is it clogged? Is it simply a matter of years of use? Or has its loading exceeded capacity?

If you suspect the system has been overloaded, is it flow? Waste strength? Both? What if the problem is only too much water? What if the problem is only too many suspended solids? What if the issue is short periods of heavy loading, like a 6-week season at a resort or camp?

What about construction problems? Are the tanks properly sized? Are they watertight? Is the drainfield level? Is the pump strong enough to properly dose the field? All of these issues can lead to ponding and hydraulic failure that cannot necessarily be solved only with drainfield rejuvenation products.

Some repair experts have found the most certain way to determine if clogging is biological is to sample the biomat for percentage of organic content. If the organic (volatile) percentage is high enough, a biological repair should be successful. In other words, if 60 percent of the clogging mat is biological, that is the maximum amount of capacity that could be recovered. But if successful, would that provide enough capacity for your customer?

What's the current loading?

It is also important to determine the current loading of a system. We used to be surprised at how strong residential waste can be, but not anymore. The fast-growing use of household products and pharmaceuticals has changed the nature of waste compared to 40 or even 20 years ago. It is not uncommon to have BOD5 well over 300 mg/L in residential septic tank effluent at troubled sites. COD can also be extremely high due to cleaners, sanitizers and similar products.

Restaurant systems that we once expected to generate BOD5 in the 600 to 800 mg/L range now commonly produce 1,200 to 1,800 mg/L. One recent report indicated that quaternary ammonia – commonly used in food service facilities – can have a nine-day residence time in plumbing. Degreasers are extremely effective at moving grease from plumbing, but then the grease can potentially reach the drainfield.

What's the upside?

Also, it is important for your customer to know what degree of success to expect with the recovery procedure, and what can be done if it is unsuccessful. It might be that it's best to build a new system. If pretreatment were to be selected as part of a replacement system anyway, then installing a pretreatment component that can help rejuvenate the system could be a good option, even if your confidence in recovery is not high.

Sometimes, because of its condition, a system cannot be recovered. For example, if drainfield rock is full of sand, installing aerobic treatment will not re-establish proper flow. Drainfield rejuvenation provides great value to many septic system owners. Properly applied, it is also a benefit to our industry.

WOWRA

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