

SSTS Advisory Committee Notes

June 9, 2016

Attendee's: Aaron Jensen, Cindy Tiemann, Matt Summers, Chris LeClair, Jim Larson, Sara Heger, Pete Otterness, Jeff Iverson, Theresa Haugen, Gene Soderbeck, Cody Robinson, Jim Larson, Ryan Hamilton, Craig Gilbertson, Brent Rud, Eric VanDyken, Troy Johnson, Terry Neff, Marilee DeGroot, and Nick Haig

9:30 – 9:40 AM Introductions, agenda review and appointments and vacancies on committees.
Sara Heger & Aaron Jensen

Aaron outlined vacancies on the committee. Brent Rud was introduced as the Northwest County representative.

There are openings, please direct any interested parties to Sara Heger or Aaron Jensen.

9:30 – 10:00 AM Updates
Goal -- AC informed of ongoing activity and provides suggestions and feedback

1. New Employee's : Theresa Haugen and Cody Robinson – Gene Soderbeck

Gene introduced Theresa Haugen the new SSTS compliance enforcement supervisor. Theresa replaces the vacancy left by Nicole Blasing and will supervise the compliance and enforcement field staff throughout the state. Theresa is based out of the Brainerd office and has been with the MPCA for 9 years.

Gene introduced Cody Robinson. Cody filled the soil scientist position open in the policy and planning section. He is replacing the vacancy left by Barb McCarthy and will be focusing on the Technical Advisory Panel and the Annual Report along with many other things. Cody is based out of the St. Paul office and is recently graduated from St. Cloud State University.

2. Campground Rule – Gene Soderbeck

Gene provided an overview of the campground rule that has been discussed before at the advisory committee. Currently the rule is finished and is waiting for the governor's signature. Once it is signed off it will go to publishing at the State Register.

MOWA Rule Discussions

Gene again provided an overview to the group about the discussion s with MOWA on the state SSTS permitting requirements. We have a draft proposal in place and we are waiting for MOWA's final review. Sara asked that the AC committee give feedback on the proposal. Gene went over the rule making process and let the group know that this

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proposal will go through normal rule making along with the other MPCA proposal of requiring tank pumping at the time of a compliance inspection. In talking with the rules coordinator the plan is to start the rulemaking process in July. Part of that process will be to solicit feedback from the AC committee. Gene stated that we want everybody to participate in the discussion. We will keep you posted as this process moves forward.

3. County Grants – Aaron Jensen

Aaron provided an overview of the county grants that are available. The grant application period is currently open and will close on June 15th. Overall the grants available have stayed the same over the last couple years. A new unsewered category was added this year. Also the funding available this year is lower, so adjustments were made on the amount available to be granted to each county. Gene stated that the Clean Water Council wished to keep the funds for the future in place and possibly increase the amount of money allocated to the SSTS grants.

Brent Rud asked about the BWSR reporting. Aaron explained the meetings the MPCA has had with BWSR and that BWSR is working on clarifying the reporting requirement and developing educational materials for the reporting. Gene felt that the BWSR reporting requirements would be clarified better and would be less onerous.

4. Certification and Licensing Update – Nick Haig

Nick provided an update to the group. Over 900 installation contractors have successfully updated their business filing with the MPCA to reflect the new continuous surety bond and demonstrated pipelaying credentials. This process will help all contractors in the future by saving them time and application fees that used to be paid to the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI). It also simplifies the license application and renewal process. MPCA communicates the pipelaying status of SSTS license holders to DLI for administration of the plumbing program. The remaining non-Installer SSTS license holders will be updating to the new surety bond form during their 2016 renewal.

The MPCA has moved to a new data management system. The SSTS Search for licenses and certifications is currently unavailable, but we are working to bring this functionality back in an improved capacity later this year, including the ability to renew a business license online. If you are unsure of the license status of a business, contact Jane Seaver at 651-757-2711. If you have questions about CEUs and SSTS certification, contact the SSTS hotline: 651-757-2201.

Eric wondered if we could have the certified individual's in a list as well. Nick said that was not currently available, and stated that we are focusing on the permanent solution rather than upgrading temporary stop gap measures. He apologized for the

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inconvenience this has caused contractors and local program officials and is looking forward to restoring and improving our online services for the SSTS program.

Nick provided an update to the Need-to-Know job analysis and exam development efforts underway. The Maintainer and Service Provider task analyses were developed in 2015 and validated and prioritized by professionals in surveys this past winter and spring. We are in the process of piloting inspector exam questions and look forward to a new Inspector exam in 2017.

10:00 – 10:30 AM Compliance inspection discussion – Aaron Jensen

Goal -- AC informed of ongoing activity and provides suggestions and feedback

Aaron provided an overview of the topic. There have been a number of requests from LGU's and inspectors to make changes to the current inspection form and to develop a Holding Tank Compliance Inspection form. We are looking for feedback from the committee if changes are needed and what changes should be made. Some of the specific changes that are being requested are adding the number of bedrooms to the form, adding well measurements to the form, adding gpd of the system to the form, what about a missing baffle, electrical issues that are not health threat, and so on.

There was much discussion on this topic. Nick explained that there are differences between existing inspections versus new inspections. Pete, Troy, Eric, Chris, Sara, Craig, and other spoke about the topic. The consensus of the group was that there were no changes needed to the existing system compliance inspection form. We should stick with what's required in rule and that there are plenty of places on the form to add comments if the inspector chooses to do so. Consistency in the form is important. Making changes to the form constantly is not beneficial to the professionals. Aaron asked if any counties require soil borings for holding tank inspections, because that was one of the issues why this discussion came up. Everyone at the meeting answered no they do not require soil borings for holding tank inspections. Cindy brought up the need for a place for the certified maintainer to sign the tank integrity portion of the form. Nick stated that we really don't have a specific tank integrity form and Sara stated that she would like to see that form created.

10:30 – 11:00 AM SSTS member topics/open discussion

Sara provided the group with information about an MPR story that was recently done about a researcher from SCSU on chemicals of emerging concern relating to septic systems. Sara went over some of the highlights of the article. Gene talked about the researcher and how they are known for their research on fish.

<http://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/06/09/minnesota-experts-ask-what-do-man-made-chemicals-do-to-fish>

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The next meeting will be September 8th either in person or maybe a combo of in person and on the phone.

Pete mentioned that there is a safety class that is being put on by MOWA on September 30th if people are interested.

<http://mowa-mn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2016SafetyTrainingFlyer.pdf>