

SSTS Advisory Committee Notes

June 14th, 2018

Attendee's: Jim Larson, Cindy Tiemann, Sara Heger, Pete Otterness, Aaron Jensen, Nick Haig, Craig Gilbertson, Mark Latterell, Eric VanDyken, Cody Robinson, Jeff Iverson, Sadie Wunder, Chris LeClair, and Jeff Grugel

8:30 AM - coffee, treats and conversation in St. Paul in room 116

8:55 AM - call into conference call - Call in number 888-742-5095, Conference Code 2746431637#

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM MPCA Agenda Items

Chris LeClair mentioned that he has now moved to Ottertail County, so some reorganizing may be needed for the members of the committee. Aaron Jensen said he would look into it.

1. SSTS FY19 grants and application – Aaron Jensen
Aaron Jensen talked about the county grant process that is currently underway. The application is on our website and was made available in the bulletin. It was emailed to all counties in May and the deadline is June 20th 2018. There is currently two grant areas. We removed the incentive grant due to funding issues. The two areas are the normal base grant that each county will receive and the second grant is the low income fix up grant. Currently there are 34 applications received. He will send out a reminder email to counties today or tomorrow to remind them of the expiration date.
2. Rule Change update – Aaron Jensen
Aaron Jensen provided a short update on the rules. The SONAR and the rule language is still being crafted. It is almost complete and the next public comment period should open in the next few weeks. At that time, the draft rule language will be released for the public and the advisory committee to comment. Stay tuned for the next comment period. If you would like to be notified of anything that happens with the rule change, please sign up for Gov delivery of the SSTS rules on the MPCA website. Please contact Brandon Montgomery if you have specific questions.
3. LGU Assessments- Updated Form – Cody Robinson
Cody Robinson let the group know where the updated form is located. He went over the changes made to the LGU assessment form. The purpose and instructions were updated to make the form clearer. The form is broke down into four categories. Pete Otterness asked what is the priority for these and how many will be done per year. Aaron Jensen said the goal is to work on the LGU's that did not submit the annual report or do not have an updated ordinance. The goal for each staff is to do 5 per year per compliance staff. There may be some others that request an assessment or others that have specific issues that need to be address, but for the most part it will be focused on the no annual report and no ordinance areas.
4. Homeowner Training – Sara Heger

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Sara Heger added the topic of the U of M homeowner classes. Six classes have been offered already in Martin, Beltrami, Douglas, Lake, and Cook County (2). The next one is planned for Kandiyohi County tonight. They currently have a full schedule for this year, but the plan is to do more next year. There is also a factsheet that was developed for these classes (attached). Craig Gilbertson said that Sara Heger received grant funds to host these classes.

5. Tank Registration Update – Aaron Jensen
Aaron Jensen provided a short overview of the issue that started the tank registration changes. Currently the new forms and process has been developed and is being finalized. When the forms are finished they will be posted on the MPCA website and a letter will be sent to all manufacturers. The letter will also be posted online. Those manufacturers that want to combine identical registered tanks into one multi use tank will be allowed to do that. Those that do not wish to make changes can ignore the change and continue to operate as usual. The goal would be to work for the rest of this year to update the list and hopefully all the changes will be incorporated for next year's construction season.
6. Tank Fee Enforcement Update – Gene Soderbeck
Sadie Wunder went over the tank fee process. They sent out 12 order of sanctions for not submitting the form. An email was sent out to counties to let them know which installers had their licenses removed. Seven of 12 businesses have not responded to the order of sanctions. Sadie Wunder said that we have audits coming up on discrepancies between the numbers reported by the LGU versus numbers reported by the installer. There are currently 112 discrepancies with the installers versus the county reporting. We will be looking at those to identify why the reporting discrepancies happened. Pete Otterness said that a year or two ago the thought would be that if the discrepancy was one or two tanks the discrepancy probably would not be followed up on. Sadie Wunder said that would probably be the outcome. This year the MPCA is going to do a cost benefit analysis of chasing the smaller discrepancies. Mark Latterell asked if the discrepancies were localized in specific areas. Sadie Wunder said that they have not analyzed the data yet to determine that information.
7. Design Short Course – Nick Haig
This summer will provide the second offering of the design short course, which is intended for individuals that were not successful on the exam after taking the entire design certification workshop. The course qualifies individuals to retake the exam, but is not accredited as certification training. The class will be held in Alexandria this year on August 14th and 15th. Participants receive a workbook to complete prior to the training. The first day of the workshop is working through this workbook together. Participants then receive an additional workbook to page through that evening, and the group solves those problems on the morning of day 2. The exam is offered in the afternoon of Day 2. Sara Heger added some information about the challenges of the design course. There was much discussion on the design course in general and

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why there has been some struggles. Nick Haig also talked about the MACPZA meeting where the Agency presented at in regards to the certification and training, LGU assessment, and the proposed new rules. Mark Latterell did not know about the design course issue and didn't know that the correspondence was happening and that there was a meeting. Nick Haig said the message delivered at the meeting was to work together to make the certification and training better. Eric VanDyken mentioned that he heard overall the reception of the meeting was good. He said that the thing he hears most often is the wording of the questions. The second is the inability to identify what they got wrong on the test and what is the right answer. Being able to identify what they got wrong would be very beneficial for test takers. Nick Haig said they have and are working on the those two issues. The new test for the design short course will have some of those wording issues addressed. The test also has been shortened. With regard to the answers to the questions, the test question pool is too small to allow the release of the questions. They are working to improve the exam analysis document and deliver customized tutoring to help individuals more easily identify where they struggle. Chris LeClair asked when the exam analysis was updated. Nick Haig said that it was updated in early 2018. Eric VanDyken talked about some ways to maybe improve the review process. Allowing the tester to come in and review the questions in a controlled manner. He said that it would be unlikely that many would take advantage of that process of coming to St. Paul to do that review. Nick Haig stated that they are allowed to do a test review at any of the regional offices. He also discussed how identifying the question and the answer was not a good way to help people learn the design information. Pete Otterness asked if this same process is happening for the soils exam. Nick stated that the Sites and Soils exam will go through an identical process.

8. Around the state meetings - Aaron Jensen
Aaron Jensen talked about the Talking Tour summary that was sent out to LGU's. The MPCA is working to identify the issues heard at the meetings, identify what we can work on and what the next steps are for these issues. We have had several meeting and are actively working on some of the issues already. This year the MPCA plans to send an update to the LGU's informing them what things the MPCA is working on and a status of the issues that were identified at the talking tour meetings. He projected October is when that update would happen.

10:30 - 11:00 Member Items

Sara Heger asked if there are any other topics that folks would like to discuss.

Sara Heger mentioned the MOWA/NOWRA national conference that is coming up this year in October. She talked about the three tours that will happen during the conference. Craig Gilbertson added that this is the first time that NOWRA has come to Minnesota, so this maybe the only opportunity for folks to network with others from different parts of the country.

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Next meeting - September 13. The meeting will be a conference call meeting as well, unless someone objects. No one objected. Meeting adjourned at 10:15am.

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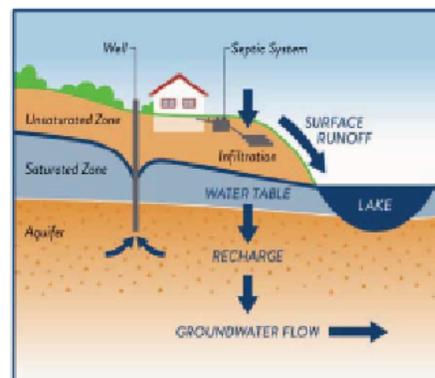
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Protecting our Water Takes Good Drinking Water and Septic Systems

Sara Heger and Craig Gilbertson

There is growing concern about new chemicals in our groundwater, drinking water, lakes, rivers and streams. These “chemicals of emerging concern” (CEC) include products we use every day around our homes—cleaning products, over-the-counter medicines, and pharmaceuticals. CECs can present a health risk and are more likely to get into our drinking water if we do not have good drinking water or septic systems. Properly constructed and maintained drinking water and septic systems can provide safe and reliable drinking water and wastewater treatment for decades.



Good Septic System Includes

- A watertight septic tank.
- A soil treatment area – typically a drainfield or a mound with the appropriate soil conditions for treatment of wastewater.
- Proper operation being conservative with water use and cleaners.
- Maintained appropriately with an evaluation at least every three years.

Failing Septic System

- Failing septic systems can cause sewage to back-up in the home or come to the surface. Failing systems are more likely to release CECs and harmful bacteria, viruses, and other microorganisms into the environment. Failing systems
- Do not have watertight tanks and may have cracked tanks, seepage pits and drywells.
- Do not have the required soil conditions beneath the soil treatment area.

Good Drinking Water System Includes

- Proper well construction and maintenance.
- Proper installation, back siphon protection, and maintenance of distribution systems, including water treatment devices, water lines, and fixtures.
- Maintaining isolation distances from contamination sources.
- Leaking or dripping fixtures and pipes.

Drinking Water System Posing Health Risks

- Wells in pits.
- Shallow uncased wells.
- Unused wells that are not sealed.
- Wells with damaged casing or openings.
- Cross connections between water lines and potential sources of contamination without protection-plumbing device or air gap
- Sources of contamination stored or unmanaged near your well

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What You Can Do to Protect Our Water

Private drinking water and septic systems are critical to public health and the environment. Make sure your drinking water and septic systems are operating properly by following the lists below. Just like other infrastructure around a home or business, drinking water and septic systems need regular maintenance and eventual replacement. Effective operation saves money and protects water resources. Consult a local licensed septic system professional or licensed well driller if you are having any problems or issues.

Septic System Operation and Maintenance	Drinking Water System Operation & Maintenance
<p>Evaluate and clean septic tanks at least every 3 years (state code) by a licensed septic system maintainer/pumper.</p> <p>Walk the drainfield area every year to ensure proper operation.</p> <p>Avoid compacting the soil treatment area.</p> <p>Maintain healthy vegetation (no irrigation or fertilizer needed).</p> <p>Be mindful about water use. Your system should not be loaded at more than 70% of its peak design flow; spread water usage through the day and week.</p> <p>Repair (or replace) leaking faucets and toilets.</p> <p>Only human waste and toilet paper should go in the toilet. No wipes, feminine products, cotton balls, etc.</p> <p>Use cleaners wisely: Use only as much cleaner as needed and avoid toxic chemicals with "poison or danger" on the label.</p> <p>Do NOT use antibacterial products. They kill good bacteria too!</p> <p>Properly dispose of hazardous waste and unused medicines through local take back programs.</p>	<div data-bbox="889 577 1214 798"></div> <p>Also, test for manganese at least once if a baby will drink (dry formula) the water.</p> <p>Inspect your wellhead regularly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damage: Any cracks or holes in well casing, corrosion, loose wires, or soil settling?• Well cap: Is it securely attached to the well casing? Is it broken or missing?• Connections: Are the electrical conduit and other connections watertight? <p>Protect your well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep top of well at least 1-foot above ground.• Do not use, store, or dispose of potential pollutants (such as fertilizers, pesticides, or hazardous chemicals) near your well. <p>Seal unused wells</p> <p>Maintain water treatment devices</p> <p>Check for and address leaks and drips</p>

Helpful Resources

- **UMN Onsite Sewage Treatment Program** (www.septic.umn.edu).
- **MPCA Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems** (www.pca.state.mn.us/water/subsurface-sewage-treatment-systems)
- **Water and Health** (www.health.state.mn.us/topics/water/).
- **Wells and Borings** (www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/)
- **Find natural products:** Select products with a grade of "A" by the Environmental Working Group (<https://www.ewg.org>).
- **Find your household hazardous waste collection site** (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/living-green/find-your-household-hazardous-waste-collection-site>).

