

SSTS Advisory Committee Notes

June 13th, 2019

Attendee's: Sara Heger, Aaron Jensen, Chris LeClair, Tyler Dale, Joe Sanders, Kathy Tran, Matthew Summers, Jim Larsen, Jeff Grugel, Matt Spellman, Nick Haig, Mark Latterell, Cindy Tiemann, Brandon Montgomery, Lisa McCormick, and Scott Robinson

Sara Heger talked about vacancies to the committee. Aaron Jensen is going to reach out to the MACPZA for the Metro county position.

No additional agenda items mentioned.

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

1. SSTS FY20 grants and application – Aaron Jensen
The legislature just wrapped up the budgets for the year and we didn't get as much as we requested for county SSTS grants. Our budget was cut by about \$600,000 each year of the biennium. Currently the MPCA is working to determine what we will have available for county grants. At this time, it looks like we will have the normal Base grant and likely 1.5 million for the low-income fix-up grant. Due to the cut, there will likely not be any incentive grants this year. Low-income grants increased because we asked for more money in that area. Stay tuned for the county grant application to be emailed out to counties in the next few weeks. The base grant will be automatic as usual, but each county interested in low-income grants will need to apply.
2. Rule Change update – Brandon Montgomery
He provided an update on the rule. We are still waiting on signatures from the governor and the commissioner, but staff is working on the notice of intent to adopt and preparing for the comment period. We are still hopeful for a January 1, 2020 rule implementation.
3. Soil Verification – Brandon Montgomery
He provided an overview of the topic and went through a handout (attached) to outline the future soil separation documentation for existing systems. He also explained the options available for soil verifications. Aaron Jensen highlighted the information just presented. The ultimate goal for all of this is to make sure we get the right answer in regards to compliance. Scott Robinson explained a situation in Northeast Minnesota. The county is just signing the permit and that is considered the soils verifications. Aaron Jensen explained that going forward that process just explained would not be acceptable. Sara Heger will add an LGU signature spot to the soils boring log. Tyler Dale asked about past practices and determination by LGU's. Aaron Jensen explained that moving forward this process should be used. All decisions on what is acceptable documentation for past work should be determined by the LGU and the inspector. Sara Heger asked what is the timeline to roll this handout to the industry. Aaron Jensen said hopefully in the next couple of weeks. Sara

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Heger will update the boring log by then. Nick Haig asked about communication on this handout and what about changes if people have suggestions. Aaron Jensen explained that we are quite confident in the rule interpretation, but if people have suggestions on the handout please get those to us as soon as you can and we can talk about this at the next AC meeting if we need too.

4. Need-to-Know (NTK) process Update – Nick Haig
Sara Heger stated that questions on when this process will start back up were mentioned by a member, so she added this item to get an update. Nick Haig provided an update on the Need-to-Know process for the SSTS program. Matt Rotz is the new Instructional Designer for the Certification and Training Unit and he has been working to get up to speed with the SSTS program while balancing his new work and continuing to help the Wastewater Operator Training program. Matt and Nick will send a note to the NTK Sounding Board soon. If you are not on that list, please contact Nick or Matt to get on the list. Sara Heger asked if there is a projected timeline. Nick replied that the position for the wastewater training specialist position (Matt's replacement) closes soon and we hope to have someone in there soon and then Matt can increase his workload to include SSTS NTK work moving forward, within the next year. Sara Heger talked about the country shortage of professionals to work in the SSTS industry. Anywhere from installers, service providers, and on.

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM - Member submitted items for information or discussion

1. Homeowner trainings in 2019-2021 – Sara Heger
She went over the past trainings that they have done and the results. They were all well received and well attended. She applied again for the same grant for this season and was able to apply for \$10,000, which is less than last year where they received \$20,000. She will be sending out a request to folks to host these meetings. The host will do all the advertising and find the location for the event. Many partnered with lake associations and others which worked well to get the word out and to get people to the training.
2. Kidney dialysis research – Sara Heger
Sara Heger stated that they are going to be looking at a system that is subject to dialysis. There is very little research on this topic and many are now doing this treatment at home. They are looking for more systems to test in addition to the one they already have. Please let her know if anyone has any sites. They will look at the soil and the tanks, but it gets hard to characterize the soils part. There was a question about extra flow to the SSTS. Sara Heger stated that it really does not affect the flow much. Nick Haig asked what are you looking at in the septage for this research. The components of the chemicals used and how they flow through the system and soil. Scott Robinson mentioned that this may affect more people in the rural areas since they are furthest away from the hospital and are likely to do the at home treatment and are likely on

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an SSTS. There was a question if this should be put into a septic system at all. Sara Heger said that they will look at the waste and provide some guidance on what is the proper disposal of the product.

3. Crushing glass for “clean sand”, Scott Robinson
Counties are crushing glass, combining it with sand, and using it in some applications. They are not using it for SSTS sand yet, but the question is could they. Another product that has been talked about was shredded tires. Brandon Montgomery explained that if shredded tires were used it would need to be registered like other distribution media. The crushed glass in sand would be a variation or an addition to sand and would not meet the current rule. We would need to prove that the glass is inert and no chemicals are coming off it. It would also need to meet the sieve requirements in rule. Scott Robinson said that there isn't a market for recycled glass up in his area, so they are using it in other applications. There are markets for recycled glass in the metro area, so this scenario would probably be limited to specific areas. Brandon Montgomery outlined the process to use or test some of these things under a Type IV system. If the county wants to pursue registration, they should talk to Cody Robinson. Jim Larsen talked about the inconsistency with the crushed glass and there may be some problems with infiltration and longevity of the glass that would need to be researched. Nick Haig shared the following resources at the MPCA to assist with recycling market development:
<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/recycling-market-development>
4. Homeowner Installed Tanks – How does MPCA get the Tank Fee?, Scott Robinson
Scott Robinson explained that some counties allow homeowners to install their own system. How do homeowners pay the tank fee? Aaron Jensen explained that a few years ago, the tank installer fee was revised and at that time, the decision was made with direction from partners to simplify the process. The current process has been in use for a few years now and seems to be working better. The current process allows homeowners to submit the tank installation form to the MPCA and we would send them an invoice. We currently do not ask the LGU's to report the homeowner installs and don't plan to spend time chasing after an individual homeowner for 25 dollars. There are typically around 200 homeowner installs each year and that small amount doesn't constitute spending a bunch of time to chase down. Scott Robinson asked about changing the fee to others instead of installers. Aaron Jensen explained the process we went through not long ago and this is where we ended up. We are always open to new processes, but at this time, this seems to be the best process. He also asked about online payment of tank fee. Yes, we do have an online payment option.
5. Webinars for continued education, Scott Robinson
Scott Robinson provided an overview of his question in regards to other education opportunities. Nick Haig shared the status of MPCA's approach to online learning for its certification programs and emphasized that the agency will review applications for accreditation

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today. Draft policy considers the importance of face-to-face contact and restricts the number of credits that can be earned online. Sara Heger talked about how the interaction for in person training versus online is very different. She also said that many of the folks they train are used to the in person training, so would they actually use the online training. There was also discussions on the verification part of the online class. How do we verify that right person took the course? Scott Robinson wanted to bring it up based on a specific situation, so we could think about it some more.

6. HDPE versus Schedule 40 pipe for building sewers or between SSTS components, Scott Robinson
He has a regulator that will not let them use anything but schedule 40. He explained a situation where HDPE would have been a better fit than schedule 40. He is looking for some clarity on the rule. Brandon Montgomery talked about pipe requirements after the septic tank. The only part that has to be schedule 40 is the pipe coming out of the tank to the undisturbed soil, but after that, it can be HDPE piping. Cathy Tran talked about the pipe requirements for building sewers. They do allow both Schedule 40 and HDPE to be used and there is a specific standard in their rule for the HDPE. The group also mentioned that the local ordinance could be different, so he should check that as well. Jeff Grugel asked if HDPE is approved for the plumbing purposes. He is under the understanding that it is not approved for the plumbing aspect. He talked about some MDH variances they have issued. Cathy Tran said that HDPE is approved for the building sewer. Jeff Grugel will get in contact with Cathy Tran to get the rule citation he needs. Table 701.1 in the plumbing code is where this is referenced. Nick Haig shared this resource with Scott: [Septic system and plumbing regulations fact sheet](#)
7. Type I, III vs Type IV, Scott Robinson
Scott Robinson talked about the topic. Mainly in regards to type III site conditions and can he use type IV technology on a type III site. Brandon Montgomery explained that the way the current rule is written it is not allowed, but what we have identified is that this situation is sometimes the most ideal situation and should be used. We have added this to our rule change list. LGU's can always contact the MPCA for clarification on this example.
8. Mentoring by LGUs, Scott Robinson
Scott Robinson said that LGU mentoring is happening frequently up in his area. If the LGU is mentoring the designer and installer, is there separation that allows the LGU to inspect the system. Just like it is required for a private business that designs a system and can't inspect it without the LGU review in between. Nick Haig went over the mentoring and the conflicts to avoid. There is still some separation in the example provided with the business having a separate license and the LGU doing the mentorship. There was much discussion on what the process should be to mentor and that there could be some room for improvement in areas. There was also discussion on when mentors need to be present on sites and the rule outlines when that needs to happen for each specialty area.

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9. Staffing at the MPCA, Bernie Miller

Sara Heger talked about the topic. The MPCA program seems slimmer than it has been in a while. There have been some challenges with retirements and vacancies in the program. Things like rule changes are not happening as often or in a timely fashion. Aaron Jensen stated that we are also disappointed with the current rule process timeline. We never anticipated that it would take this long and we hope that it never takes this long again to make a change. Another thing we have tried to do is keep consistency with the rule and not make changes every year, unless they were legislatively required or for a special project like the current rule in process. The MPCA has also received feedback-voicing frustrations with always changing the rule. Therefore, we have keep a list of things that need to be changed and we have been in early discussions about when to start that rule revision process. We definitely plan to work with the industry to look at all potential changes all at one time. Sara Heger said that the industry should also work on exploring what needs to be changed and work within their industry groups to come to a consensus as a group on changes needed to the rule that can be brought to a rule change discussion.

SSTS quarterly meetings in 2019 - September 12 and December 12

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 pm.