Wastewater Management Made Easy!
Shape Up Your Program in 3 Practical Sessions

Workshop #1
Select a Management Approach & Build Your Database
October 26, 2007

Workshop #2
Create Consistent Forms, Reports & Procedures
November 30, 2007

Workshop #3
Send Notices, Track Progress and Generate Reports
March 7, 2008

Fall 2007 Workshop Series
Sequence of Mailings

March 7, 2008

Lorraine Joubert,
URI Cooperative Extension NEMO
Topics

• Sample notices, educational materials, and mailing sequence for different management options.
• Example ordinances.
• Open discussion
Management Options

1. Voluntary – education and financial incentives
2. Track maintenance of alternative systems.
3. Mandatory inspection and maintenance of all system types.
4. Cesspool phaseout
5. System standards- siting, treatment, site assessment and monitoring
1. Voluntary /Education Program
What’s the Plan?

“It’s not enough to just show up. You have to have a business plan.”
What’s in Your Education Plan?

Set goals - What do you hope to accomplish?
Who is your audience?
What Action do you want them to take?
What Message will motivate them?
Choose your Tactics
Set Timelines
Evaluate and Report Results
What’s in Your Education Plan?

Set goals - What do you hope to accomplish? Make sure all systems maintained and repaired? Focus on I/As or critical areas?

Who is your Audience? Owners, homebuyers, service providers, town council.

What Action do you want them to take? Find out what type of system they have. Use properly. Hire a registered inspector approved by town. Inspect and pump regularly. Repair as needed. Plan to replace a cesspool.

What Message will motivate them? Save money, protect well, comply with rules.

Choose your Tactics – Direct mail, news articles and letters, workshops, loans, rebates, tax breaks, etc.

Set Timelines – Months to plan and organize, prepare materials, send letters and support media, report results.

Evaluate and Report Results – Number of systems inspected, repaired, calls for information, survey responses, loans approved.
Starting a Voluntary WWmgt Program

Are you ready to begin?

1. Is WWmgt plan completed and approved by DEM?
2. Do you have a broad based WWmgt committee?
3. Do you have an outreach plan with specific actions items?
4. Do you have ready facts about need for better wwmt and actions needed?
5. Do you have enough support from council, staff, board members?
6. Start setting up RIWIS database!
Starting a Voluntary WWmgt Program

**Basic Steps**

1. Invite **service providers** to apply to become town-approved inspector in voluntary program.
   - Attach RIWIS information
   - Schedule information session and RIWIS training

2. Send notice of voluntary program to **system owners**.
   - Attach basic facts on need for action.
   - Attach summary of voluntary actions recommended.
   - Schedule information session
Example Outreach for Voluntary Program

Meet with newspaper editors to explain your program, ask them to support your outreach efforts.

Create series of short articles for town newsletters, water bill inserts, local newspapers, existing newsletters.

Create poster displays for busy public places – sr citizens center, town hall, etc.

Example town newsletters:

– NK water bill insert “the Puddle”, BI Times notices
– Hopkinton newspaper insert.
– Glocester loan info in free advertiser.

Where private wells are a concern, schedule URI well protection workshops and tap water sample collection, link to OWTS care.

Publicize low in interest loans!
2. Alternative/ Innovative System Maintenance

**Basic Steps**

1. Send initial notice to system owners of need for I/A maintenance and State/local rules.

2. Send similar notice to system owners at property transfer.

3. Receive notice that contract is cancelled.

4. Send notice of State/local permit requirements.  
   Copy DEM.  
   Include: List of I/A maintenance provider.

6. Work with DEM to enforce
Alternative/ Innovative System Maintenance

Supporting Outreach Examples

Organize town I/A system facts to demonstrate need: total number of I/As, % of new permits as I/A, % new I/A permits as variance on substandard lots or critical areas.

Present to town council with plan to being education and enforcement. If possible, recruit support from system designers, community leaders.

Send press release upon council approval. Attach facts and short article on state (and local) rules for system care.

Include information on need for I/A maintenance contracts with building permit approval.
Alternative/ Innovative System Maintenance

Supporting Zoning or WWmgt ordinance

• Record I/A systems in land evidence record so new owners are aware.

• Require owner to have maintenance contract.

• Require owner to hire qualified service provider.

• Apply to “any system with a pump, electrical component, or any system designed for large flow or high strength waste.

5. Require performance monitoring for large systems, other alternative systems in critical areas.
3. Mandatory Inspection and Maintenance

- Ordinance approved
- Maintenance schedule created
- System passes inspection and needs pumping
- System passes inspection and does not need pumping
- System fails inspection
- Inspection not done
Education to Support Ordinance Adoption

- Direct mail to residents on findings of voluntary program, WWmgt plan, watershed assessments, need for better maintenance.

- Time press releases and newspaper notices/articles to coincide with mailings.

- Build support - Speak with business organizations, town boards, neighborhood groups at their meetings to explain what’s proposed. Address their concerns. Seek their support.

- Resolve technical issues with scientific /technical committee.

- Hold information sessions before hearing with time for one-on-one Q&A with residents and town staff /experts.

- Be prepared to counter negative press or false rumors with letters to editor.
Mandatory Inspection and Maintenance

Sample Sequence of Town Mailings to Property Owners

Click on the links below to see suggested mailings for each event, including links to sample letters and factsheets.

To see the flowchart version, click here.

Event
1. Ordinance Passes
2. Maintenance Schedule Created
3. System Passes Inspection and Needs Pumping
4. System Passes Inspection and Does Not Need Pumping
5. System Fails Inspection
6. Inspection Not Done

1. Ordinance Passes
   a. Residents need to be made aware of new ordinance
      i. Early Education to all residents
         1. Letter detailing ordinance and regulations
         2. What’s in Your Backyard?

2. Maintenance Schedule Created
   a. Residents need to schedule inspection
      i. First Maintenance Inspection Letter to selected residents
         1. Town Program Info
         2. Town Approved Service Providers
         3. First Maintenance Fact Sheet
         4. Tank Upgrade Fact Sheet

www.uri.edu/ce/wq/RESOURCES/wastewater

Sample letters to system owners with factsheets and other information on URI website.

Mailings also on CD
Sample factsheets
inspection procedures, pumpout, access risers and filters, system care, and local program summary to be included with scheduled notices.
1. Ordinance Passes
   a. Residents need to be made aware of new ordinance
      i. Early Education to all residents
         1. Letter detailing ordinance and regulations
         2. What’s In Your Backyard?

2. Maintenance Schedule Created
   a. Residents need to schedule inspection
      i. First Maintenance Inspection Letter to selected residents
         1. Town Program Info
         2. Town Approved Service Providers
         3. First Maintenance Fact Sheet
         4. Tank Upgrades Fact Sheet
3. System Passes Inspection and Needs Pumping
   a. Resident needs to schedule pump out
      i. Pump-out Letter
         1. Pump-out Fact Sheet
   b. Owner has system pumped
      i. Thank You For Your Compliance Letter
         1. Suggested date of next inspection
   c. Owner does not have system pumped
      i. Action depends on Town regulations

4. System Passes Inspection and Does Not Need Pumping
   a. Resident does not need to take further action
      i. Thank You For Your Compliance Letter
         1. Suggested date of next inspection
   b. 3 to 5 years later routine maintenance should be performed
      i. Routine Maintenance Letter
         1. Routine Maintenance Fact Sheet
### 5. System Fails Inspection

- **a. Resident needs to repair/replace system**
  - i. Notice of Deficiency
    1. Repair/Replacement Procedures
    2. How To Hire a Contractor Fact Sheet
    3. Financial Aid Brochure
    4. Low-Interest Loan Application
    5. Tank Upgrades Fact Sheet

- **b. Resident repairs/replaces system**
  - i. Routine Maintenance Letter
    1. Routine Maintenance Fact Sheet

- **c. Resident does not repair/replace system**
  - i. Fine

### 6. Inspection Not Done

- **a. Resident has not scheduled an inspection after 45 days**
  - i. Reminder Letter
    1. Town Approved Service Providers

- **b. Resident has still not scheduled an inspection after 90 days**
  - i. Notice of Violation
    1. Town Approved Service Providers

- **c. Resident has not scheduled an inspection 15 days after NOV**
  - i. Fine
Sample Sequence of Town Mailings to Property Owners Regarding Wastewater Management Program

This flowchart provides a suggested sequence of Town mailings to property owners, as part of a wastewater management program. The shaded boxes indicate letters, with bulleted items being suggested enclosures.

**Early Education Efforts**—newspaper articles, advertisements, notices, other mailings

1. **First Maintenance Inspection Letter**
   - Town Program Info
   - Town-Approved Service Providers
   - First Maintenance Inspection Fact Sheet
   - Tank Upgrades Fact Sheet

2. **Property Owner Does Not Have Inspection Performed**
   - Reminder Letter(s)
     - Town-Approved Service Providers
   - 45 days
   - Notice of Violation
     - Town-approved Service Providers
   - 45 days
   - Notice of Deficiency*
     - Repair/Replacement Procedures
     - How To Hire a Contractor Fact Sheet
     - Financial Aid Brochure
     - Low-Interest Loan Application
     - Tank Upgrades Fact Sheet
   - *letter will vary, depending upon whether deficiency warrants a repair or a replacement

3. **System Fails**
   - Repair/Replacement Not Completed
   - 15 days
   - $$$ Fines $$$

4. **System Passes**
   - Tank Needs Pumping
   - Pump-out Letter
     - Pump-out Fact Sheet
   - Owner Does Not Have System Pumped
   - Owner Has System Pumped
   - Resulting action depends upon Town regulations

5. **Property Owner Has Inspection Performed—results reported to Town for inventory and tracking**
   - Thank You For Your Compliance Letter
     - Suggested date of next inspection
   - 3-5 years

6. **Routine Maintenance Letter**
   - Routine Maintenance Fact Sheet
4. Cesspool Phase Out Options

- Voluntary or until RI cesspool phase out bill is implemented in critical areas.
- With property transfers – or within 1 year.
- Set phase out date XX years following first inspection.
Cesspool phaseout rules

Consider phasing out cesspools in critical areas or townwide

- Annual pumpouts for all cesspools.
- Immediate removal for failing system that is health threat
- Removal within 1 year of property transfer.
- Removal within xx years following first inspection.

Examples:
Block Island, Charlestown, South Kingstown; Tiverton water supply overlay zone.
5. Treatment Standards

System standards- siting, treatment, site assessment and monitoring

Used widely in zoning for

- Wetland buffers
- Watershed/Aquifer overlay districts
- Problem areas/ substandard lots
System standards – siting, treatment, site assessment, monitoring

A variety of local ordinances regulate location of onsite systems within wetland buffers, density within aquifers, and need for advanced treatment within critical areas, most commonly within wetland buffers.

Examples:
• North Kingstown – use of advanced treatment systems within wetland buffers on substandard lots within aquifer overlay zone;
• Tiverton – advanced treatment within wetland buffers in drinking water overlay districts.
• South Kingstown – advanced treatment and site specific soil survey within wetland buffers as condition of special use permit.
• Jamestown – high water table district requires use of advanced treatment in high water tables in designated areas of dense development.
• Block Island – full treatment standards

Issues:
Zoning board variance usually required for approval – land owner must hire consultants to prepare application.
Wastewater Management Program

INSPECTION RESULTS

Summary of Jamestown’s FMI Results

- Failed inspections: 2%
- Substandard systems: 5%
- Passed inspection: 93%

FMI – 1608 Inspections Completed – 94% Compliance

- 35 Failed
- 85 Substandard Systems (cesspools and steel tanks)
- 1488 Passed Inspection

Jamestown Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inventory Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systems needing First Maintenance Inspection</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative and Alternative Systems (I&amp;A)</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substandard systems (cesspools and steel tanks)</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional systems</td>
<td>1417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # of Systems in town</td>
<td>1711</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Topics

- Sample notices, educational materials, and mailing sequence for different management options.
- Example ordinances.
- Open discussion
RI HEALTH supports RI NEMO outreach to municipalities to protect drinking water sources.

The Town of Jamestown is working with URI to provide training and technical support to RI municipalities in use of RIWIS.

RIWIS was developed under the EPA Block Island and Green Hill Pond Watershed Community Wastewater Demonstration Project in partnership with the towns of South Kingstown, New Shoreham and Charlestown.

Thank you to our funding agencies and partners:
www.uri.edu/ce/wq/RESOURCES/wastewater