Dear Thomas,

Welcome to YOWA's semi-annual newsletter to help you stay up-to-date. Membership renewals were sent in December. If you haven't renewed yet, please consider signing up today! Download the Membership Application.

If you have any questions, please contact us.

President's Message

From where I sit this is a very exciting time for this organization. For starters, we should be proud of the fact that we have been around for more than 15 years: no small feat given all that goes on in our professional and personal lives!
During this time we have made significant strides in improving the professional image of the onsite wastewater industry, which has been one of the primary goals of the organization. I see a bright future for the association and our members. Let me share these recent highlights:

- This past year we decided to go back to the Yankee Onsite Wastewater Association (YOWA) name. For the past several years we "tried out" the Massachusetts Association of Onsite Wastewater Professionals (MAOWP). While the full name really describes who we are and what we do, the pronunciation (and the acronym!) was a tongue-twister for many of us. Although we will focus our organizational efforts primarily in Massachusetts, our membership is actually regional, and our goal is to expand activities throughout New England.

- Earlier this year YOWA completed a formal Strategic Action and Marketing Plan and today has three vibrant and active committees on the Board that are undertaking important work in the areas of Training and Professional Development, Marketing and Communications, and Member Benefits. Our goal is to remain proactive in supporting the onsite wastewater profession and our members. We hope you enjoy this first of two Newsletters for 2017.

- We have maintained our affiliation with the industry's leading national organization, NOWRA so our members will continue to receive the important benefits associated with this national group. Recent NOWRA activities include lobbying and educational activities in Washington, D.C., and benefits include access to selected NOWRA's training, links to important collateral and resources, and listing in its Contractor's Provider Locator Service. Read on for more information on YOWA's relationship with NOWRA and the benefits it provides.

- Our upcoming, co-sponsored NEIWPC Training on May 24th in Taunton, MA is targeted for Mass. Title 5 professionals. We are looking at an ambitious fall calendar of trainings and events and hope you will join us. (See more in the article on Training and in the Calendar.

YOWA is the ONLY organization focused on the onsite wastewater industry in Massachusetts and the New England region. We ARE the industry, and we depend on members for our vibrancy and success. I invite you to come back, get involved, and re-engage. I think you will like what you see.

This past year our all-volunteer Board and other individuals stepped up to produce a critical road map that will take YOWA to the next level. I welcome you to join us on the journey.

Please feel free to give me a call if I can answer any questions, and I look forward to seeing you in YOWA!

Sincerely,

Thomas Groves, YOWA President
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YOWA Training is Back

YOWA is committed to meeting the professional development and educational needs of its members. We support our members and the whole industry by both sponsoring workshops and courses which we organize as well as by partnering with other organizations such as MEHA, MHOA and NEIWPC to cosponsor courses. YOWA has the experience and training expertise in the onsite wastewater industry to provide its members with the latest information from highest-quality instructors. It is our intent to provide members with discounts for these events so consider becoming a member if you are not one already.

Coming right up on May 24 is the NEIWPC Technical Seminar on Massachusetts Title 5 Approved Technologies. YOWA members receive a discount.

In addition to co-sponsoring training events with MEHA, MHOA and NEIWPC, YOWA announces two new workshops for 2017.

- **Troubleshooting Onsite Systems**, Oct 6 with Dr. Sara Heger in Acton, MA. Learn the latest in analyzing system problems efficiently to improve your repair or maintenance recommendations. Accreditation is being sought and registration to follow.

- **Introduction to Innovative and Alternative (I/A) Systems**, Fall 2017 will include a focus on the needs of town officials to understand these non-traditional systems. More information to follow.

YOWA looks forward to serving the training needs of its members with even more trainings in 2018. Suggestions for specific trainings are always welcome. Send ideas and requests to President Tom Groves at yankeeonsite@gmail.com

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Water Infrastructure Awareness Day - Advocating for Wastewater Funding and Solutions - May 23

Virtually all of us in the onsite wastewater business agree that our industry suffers from a lack of understanding and appreciation on a number of levels, from the individual system owner all the way up to our elected legislators. One example of a misunderstood or underappreciated issue relates to funding. More than
$100 Billion in grants and loans have been dispersed through Congress and the EPA to municipalities over the last 30 years, and virtually ALL of this funding has gone to central sewer collection and treatment. NOWRA is both committed to and working hard at changing this. At the state level, YOWA believes that allocation of funding by our elected legislators could significantly impact our businesses in Massachusetts and New England.

For many years, here in Massachusetts a day has been set aside for state representatives and senators to meet with industry professionals to explain the scope of water-pollution-related problems which exist in the state, and to solicit support for public funding to help solve them. Known as "Water Infrastructure Awareness Day", this year's event will be held on May 23, 2017 and is being organized by the Massachusetts Water Pollution Control Association (MWPCA), among others. The event's organizers, including MWPCA, have not only graciously invited YOWA to formally attend, but will also provide us with an opportunity to offer a brief presentation about onsite wastewater issues and related funding needs. Several YOWA board members are planning to attend the event, which features a lunch in the State House Great Hall with state representatives and senators. YOWA is very excited about the opportunity Water Infrastructure Awareness Day will provide to raise awareness at the State House about the need for and benefits of decentralized wastewater management solutions.

MassDEP Updates

Below are highlights from the recent MA Environmental Health Association (MEHA) Conference held in Taunton, MA on February 8, 2017 (co-sponsored by YOWA).

Marybeth Chubb has recently been promoted to manage the onsite wastewater program within MassDEP and gave a presentation on recent and upcoming changes. Among these are:

- A change to the System Inspection form. The update was minor but there is a new form on DEP's website. The change is related to the wording for the signature of the System Inspector and no longer indicates that he or she has examined the flow associated with a shared system. DEP eliminated this wording because shared systems are no longer regulated at the state level, only at the local level. The form was changed and dated June 2016.
- A change to the design flow table in section 203 of Title 5 was implemented. This was done as a result of legislative action which required the MassDEP to evaluate flows for assisted living facilities. A review of actual flows from nursing homes and assisted living facilities found very similar average daily water consumption rates. Title 5 was changed September 9, 2016 to reflect this.
- A stakeholders group representing a number of perspectives will be convened in 2017 to look at Title 5. (See separate article herein on the first meeting of this group which now includes YOWA and NOWRA participation.)
Save the Date for Septic Smart Week
September 18-22, 2017

Septic Smart Week is a great national initiative sponsored by the USEPA to promote homeowner education and awareness to help assure septic systems are maintained and operating properly. YOWA will be working to provide Septic Smart Week resources which promote on-site treatment and dispersal of wastewater and to assure that each project is evaluated individually and given the best design for each site for homeowners.

Across the country local environmental groups, regulatory officials, and government face challenges posed by improperly maintained and failing septic systems. Through outreach and trainings and with the assistance of regulatory officials, design engineers, system installers and inspection officials, YOWA members can promote septic education and awareness to homeowners. Go to https://www.epa.gov/septic to access the resources that EPA makes available to stakeholders for their use promoting Septic Smart Week.

Septic Tips from EPA for use during Septic Week

- Keep it Protected - Get it Inspected! Have your septic tank inspected and pumped out by a licensed septic tank contractor as needed (on average every three to five years).
- Don't Strain your Drain! Use water efficiently to avoid overtaxing your system. Fix household leaks, run the dishwasher and clothes washer only on full loads, and consider installing high-efficiency fixtures.
- Think at the Sink! Don't pour grease, fats, or harmful chemicals like paints and solvents down your sink. They can clog or harm your system.
- Don't Overload the Commode! Do not flush non-degradable items such as dental floss, diapers, coffee grounds, or feminine hygiene products.
- Shield your Field! Care for your drainfield by only planting grass, not driving or parking on it, and reducing roof and surface water drainage near the drainfield.
Title 5: Assessment and Update being Tracked by YOWA

In March of 2015 Governor Charlie Baker issued Executive Order 562 which directed state agencies to "undertake a review of each and every regulation currently published in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations" in an effort to "reduce unnecessary regulatory burden". One such regulation is Title 5, and in response to this Order MassDEP reached out and solicited feedback from the public on Title 5 through a number of listening sessions they held across the Commonwealth during 2016.

Earlier this year MassDEP convened a group to assist them with vetting the feedback that they received, and in assessing options for implementation of possible rule revisions. Comprised of approximately 25 people, the group includes representatives from a wide range of Title 5 stakeholders including builders, environmentalists, health inspectors, designers and others. YOWA Vice-Chair Dan Ottenheimer was asked to sit on this committee to represent the organization. Another member of the committee sits there as a representative of YOWA's national affiliate, the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA). The concerns of the onsite wastewater professional are certainly well represented on this committee.

The committee has met once to date. At this initial session, introductions were made and the approximately ten subjects raised last year were read aloud and a brief discussion was held about each one. Items presented involve a range of subjects from molding privies for backcountry camping not being in Title 5, to a request to review 110 gpd-per-bedroom design flows. Other subjects include an update on Starter Home Zoning which is being discussed for implementation by a different state agency, a request to reduce groundwater separation for new construction, creation of a uniform state code, and creation of a new category of permit for projects between Title 5 and the Groundwater Discharge regulations. In addition, some revisions were suggested to the Groundwater Discharge regulations.

MassDEP has issued a summary of the comments provided which can be seen at: [http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/regulations/310-cmr-15-00-septic-systems-title-5.html](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/regulations/310-cmr-15-00-septic-systems-title-5.html). As of this writing, none of these ideas have been formalized or advanced beyond the initial meeting and no changes to Title 5 have been written for review at this time. YOWA is committed to representing our industry in this process. We will keep our members apprised of the work of DEP and this committee as it moves forward through this Newsletter.

News from NOWRA

The National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA) is the onsite wastewater industry's preeminent organization. Founded in 1992, NOWRA is dedicated to educating
and representing individual members and affiliate associations through promotion of sound federal, state and local policies, improved standards of practice, and increased public recognition of the need for and benefits of onsite and decentralized wastewater infrastructure. As you may know, YOWA is part of NOWRA as a state affiliate. In 2017 NOWRA has been, and will continue to be, involved in a number of activities and events which are intended to have a positive impact on our industry. Here is an update on just a few:

Washington DC "Legislative Fly-In"
On May 2 & 3 approximately two dozen NOWRA board members and other industry professionals from all over the country travelled to Washington DC for what was promoted as the "Legislative Fly-In". In much the same fashion as the Water Infrastructure Awareness Day being held here in Boston on May 23 (see related article in this Newsletter), the Fly-In provided onsite industry professionals with several opportunities to rub elbows with a number of members of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives.

Face-to-face time with our elected officials at any level is invaluable, and NOWRA's national lobbying firm (which is located in DC) ensured that the attendees representing our industry had ample opportunity to communicate their concerns and hopes for our industry.

NOWRA representatives were involved in approximately 50 different meetings. Most of them were with members of the House and Senate, including many with members of the four committees which regulate and provide funding for water and wastewater: the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, and both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Several Fly-in attendees also participated in meetings with EPA's Office of Wastewater, USDA's Rural Utilities Service(RUS), and the President's Council on Environmental Quality (they coordinate Administration environmental policy across all federal agencies).

NOWRA had several goals for its congressional visits:

1. Getting members of Congress to preserve funding for Section 319 funding from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and for water and sewer funding (both have been zeroed out in President Trump's budget.)
2. Encouraging US House Members to join the Decentralized Wastewater Recycling Caucus
3. Convincing members of both bodies to support NOWRA's proposed legislation which will require EPA to report to Congress on the successes and obstacles it faces funding decentralized wastewater treatment, and require small communities to self-certify that they have considered all wastewater treatment options before making a decision about treatment.

Are you aware that over the last 30 years Congress and the EPA have given states more than 100 billion dollars in grants and loans to address wastewater treatment issues, and that 99.7% of this money has been directed to centralize (big pipe) sewage collection and treatment systems? Although onsite/decentralized wastewater treatment systems serve 85 million Americans -25% of the country and 30% of new construction - they are virtually ignored when it comes to helping to fix the infrastructure issues faced by our industry. Attendees at the Fly-In were focused on this subject when speaking with the legislators that participated. NOWRA is all about promoting the importance and viability of onsite and decentralized wastewater treatment systems, and the need for more funding. The Fly-In was considered by those who attended to be a great success from this perspective.
Annual Conference - Dover, Delaware
NOWRA will hold its 3rd Onsite Wastewater Mega-Conference October 22-25, 2017 in Dover, Delaware at the Dover Downs Hotel & Casino. NOWRA is teaming with NAWT (National Association of Wastewater Technicians), DOWRA (Delaware Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association), NOWPA (Maryland Onsite Wastewater Professionals Association), POWRA-PA (Pennsylvania Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association) and SORA (State Onsite Regulators Association) to create what is being billed as the "Mega-Conference". If it is anything as successful as 2015's Mega-Conference held in Virginia Beach, Virginia, you will want to make the trip!

This conference will revolve around an expansive exhibition hall where virtually anything and everything in terms of services and products related to the onsite industry will be featured. More educational sessions than one can possibly absorb will be ongoing, and field trips to several sites will provide attendees with an opportunity to observe treatment technologies while in actual use. Various social events will offer exceptional opportunities to mingle with others in the business. And if you have not seen NOWRA's annual "National Backhoe Roe-D-Hoe® competition", or better yet you feel that you are good with a bucket, you really need to go to Dover in October. It's amazing!

NOWRA Membership Benefits
As a member-in-good-standing of YOWA, you are automatically a member of NOWRA, and the benefits of NOWRA membership are many. NOWRA's Onsite Journal is loaded with current industry information, and is published twice per year. It is simply a must-read for anyone who strives to stay up-to-date with changes in the onsite wastewater industry. Members also receive a free listing on NOWRA's Septic Locator - a consumer-friendly website to help customers find nearby NOWRA members who can help them. All members also receive significant discounts when attending NOWRA educational events such as the Onsite Wastewater Mega-Conference, which is supported by product manufacturers and service providers who are excited to inform anyone interested about what they have to offer. Members are able to receive discounts on Office Supplies through OfficeMax and discounts on equipment loans through Wells Fargo Bank.

Members are also eligible to serve on NOWRA's committees and its Board of Directors and to vote in the association's elections. NOWRA's Committees guide the development of policies, recommended practices and community outreach efforts which are then reviewed and approved by the Board.

Additionally, supporting NOWRA is beneficial in that the more vibrant this association is, the more impact it will have. Consider please NOWRA's mission:

To strengthen and promote the onsite and decentralized wastewater industry through activities that support recognition and promotion of professionalism for industry practitioners; implementation of best management practices throughout the industry that provide sustainable wastewater infrastructure solutions; achieve greater public awareness of the economic, environmental, and public health benefits of onsite and decentralized facilities; and to serve the public interest.

NOWRA is working to meet this mission by advocating and lobbying at the national level to increase "our" share of new construction which utilizes onsite treatment, to change policies at the EPA which discriminate against the use of onsite wastewater systems, and to secure a larger share of federal funding for onsite wastewater infrastructure. As NOWRA
achieves success, we all greatly benefit, regardless of what aspect of the industry we represent.