November, 2019
YOWA's E-NEWS

Hello Thomas,

Keep current with the latest association news, events and industry updates.

Watch your email as membership renewals will be sent out soon!

Happy Reading!

Installer Training Now Available Online!

Excavation contractors, pumpers and system installers are always very busy and it is hard for them to sacrifice a day to attend a training class. On top of that, there are very few classes available locally that are intended to provide an installer with the training to successfully read plans, practice proper construction techniques and ultimately build an onsite wastewater system that will perform as the designer intended.
The National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA) recently announced their first-in-the-country online training classes specifically geared towards site contractors and septic system installers. The class is offered in (8) 1-hour blocks and covers topics such as Piping and Tanks, Dosing and Controls, Treatment, Safety and others. Instructors are nationally recognized experts who make the information as interesting as it is informational. As a YOWA member, you may take these classes at a reduced rate! Additionally, for those installers who are also Massachusetts-approved System Inspectors or Soil Evaluators, these classes have been approved for TCH’s that are needed for your renewal. Learn More >>

YOWA Workshop Announcement

Save the Date: December 5th!

YOWA will be holding a one-day training that will focus on water movement through soil, effluent dispersal methods, and design and benefits of pressure (equal) distribution on Thursday, December 5th. Registration information will be released shortly.

Book Review: Soil-Based Wastewater Treatment

Many YOWA members have taken classes or otherwise participated in some of the activities hosted at the University of Rhode Island’s onsite wastewater training center. Recently two leading experts from the University of Rhode Island partnered to write a fantastic book detailing the treatment processes associated with an onsite wastewater system. George W. Loomis (a former member of the YOWA Board of Directors) and his associate Jose A. Amador have teamed with three leading organizations to publish this book: the American Society of Agronomy, the Soil Science Society of America, and the Crop Science Society of America.

This book should be read by anyone interested in the latest science and knowledge relating to onsite wastewater management, and is a necessary read for anyone involved with in a regulatory, public health, or environmental protection role in our industry. Chapters include Wastewater Treatment Technologies, Water in The Soil Treatment Area, Removal and Inactivation of Pathogens, and Impact on the Environment, among others.

Each chapter is readable to the lay person but also delves into the science of onsite wastewater soil-based treatment with thoughtful descriptions of current research findings. Put this on your wish list and hope you will find it underneath the tree in December – you will not be disappointed!
2019 was a large renewal year for Massachusetts Title 5 approved System Inspectors and Soil Evaluators. Almost 2,000 individuals renewed with NEIWPC in order to maintain their MassDEP Certification. The certification renewal consists of a 3-year renewal with a fee and proof of at least 10 training hours related to Title 5 or onsite systems in general. YOWA provided a great opportunity for those renewing by partnering with the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA) in offering an online training course “NOWRA’s A to Z Overview of Onsite Systems,” that is good for up to 8 hours of training contact hours. The course can also be broken down into 1, 3, and 4 hour modules for those that do not need the full 8-hours.

YOWA members benefited from this offering and were able to obtain the majority of their Title 5 hours in the comfort of their own home or office – and at the same time participants enjoyed a discount available only to YOWA members. Additional online course offerings are being developed by NOWRA, led by the recent release of a new installer training program (see related article in this newsletter for more information).

Did you know that YOWA benefits as well when industry professionals attend the NOWRA online training program? YOWA gets a small percentage of the registration fee for any individuals who reside in the YOWA territory, which consists of all of New England. YOWA’s role is to assist NOWRA with seeking state approval for the training programs, so it’s a win-win proposition. YOWA has sought and received approval for training hours in the States of Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire for the A to Z training. YOWA and NOWRA are working together to gain credit approvals for these courses in Vermont and Rhode Island.

In 2019, 131 applicants took online modules. Thank you for supporting NOWRA and indirectly YOWA by your participation. YOWA is committed to expanding its training offerings to our membership, and our relationship with NOWRA is an excellent example of these efforts coming to fruition.

Why Decentralized? Large Wastewater System Malfunction

A recent article speaks to the volumes of sewage which can be discharged when a centralized collection and treatment system has an operational problem. Certainly, there are times when onsite wastewater systems experience operational problems that may increase public health or environmental risks, but the volumes of effluent involved in an onsite system malfunction pale in comparison to those in circumstances like this one:

*Over the course of 9 hours from when it started until it was detected and stopped, Huntington Beach California saw the discharge of some 50-60,000 gallons of sewage into the water. This event in August 2019 saw the closure of beaches and the prohibition of any water contact. According to CBS news affiliate CBSN the health district and the mayor were extensively involved in locating, stopping, and monitoring this sewage spill.*

This story points out that the volumes of sewage and public health risks associated with sanitary sewer system malfunctions can pose great risks and harm to many people and communities.

NOWRA Mega-Conference Recap
The National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA) held its annual Mega-Conference on October 13-16, 2019 in Loveland, CO. The three-day conference kicked off with keynote speaker Dr. Robert Siegrist of the Colorado School of Mines providing the 400+ attendees with an overview of the connections between environmental health and onsite wastewater.

The Colorado Professionals in Onsite Wastewater (CPOW), the National Association of Wastewater Technicians (NAWT), and the State Onsite Regulators Association (SORA) shared hosting duties with NOWRA, and members of each association were in attendance in force. The conference provided educational opportunities arranged along 10 different technical tracks, from septic tanks to policy and funding. Dozens of manufacturers and industry associations filled the exhibit hall, where attendees enjoyed lunches and several very enjoyable, Colorado-themed social events. Tours of several local treatment sites rounded out the conference on Day 3.

Next year’s Mega-Conference is slated for October 25-28, 2020 in Hampton, Virginia. Virginia’s vibrant onsite industry association, the Virginia Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (VOWRA), will serve as local hosts. Consider attending – you will not regret it!

YOWA Board members, Dick Bachelder and Dan Ottenheimer attended the NOWRA conference on behalf of YOWA to assure that YOWA is operating the association in sync with the other state affiliates and the national organization.

More YOWA News

YOWA Board Retreat - 2019

Your volunteer Board was hard at work on September 26th with a brainstorming retreat at The Garden in the Woods in Framingham, MA.

Board members from across Massachusetts were joined by an expert advisor on enhancing board functionality and operations. Many notes were taken by board members and a white board full of ideas was developed for future Board of Directors leadership opportunities.
We are fortunate to have a vibrant Board of Directors from across a range of professions and locations who all deal with onsite wastewater, but we are never at a loss for new ideas and new members so please contact the YOWA office at 781-939-5710 if you are able to assist.

Finally, note that we selected The Garden in the Woods partly because of its central location and beautiful scenery, but also because we are trying to have as many of our functions and events at facilities which are served by onsite wastewater systems.

Title 5 is 25 Years Old!
A new version of Title 5 was rolled out by the MassDEP in 1994, which took effective on January 1, 1995. This new set of regulations replaced an older version which was lacking in many ways.

As we approach the 25th Anniversary of this nationally-significant set of regulations, YOWA is looking to develop a series of acknowledgement and thank you events in 2020. Not only did YOWA come into being as a result of this regulation and the hard work of former DEP staff and YOWA founder John Higgins, but the heightened level of professionalization practiced throughout the industry in our state today is a direct result of these improved rules.

If you’d like to help YOWA develop programs and acknowledge this important milestone please contact the YOWA office.

The Massachusetts Health Officers Association (MHOA)’s 2019 Annual Conference will take place November 6-8th at the Sea Crest Beach Hotel in Falmouth, Massachusetts. In conjunction with this conference, YOWA will be holding a board meeting on November 6th at 11:10AM

Member News

YOWA Board member, Alyssa Rusiecki gave a presentation about non-traditional onsite systems at the Western Massachusetts Public Health Association Conference last Tuesday, October 29th.

Member Promotion

It is with great pride that we share the news that YOWA Board of Director’s member Melissa Ranieri has been promoted to the position of Health Director for the Town of Walpole. We know how smart and capable Melissa is and are certain she will be do a fantastic job. We wish Robin Chapell all the best in her retirement.