

Discussion Groups

Individual working groups were formed to discuss each of the following questions.

“From your perspective (as a municipal or provincial official, a part of the on-site industry, a representative of a community group, or other):

Group 1. What are the 4 most pressing problems related to servicing for areas outside of the current serviceable boundaries of N.S. communities? (not available)

Group 2. What 3 servicing options are most likely to provide cost effective solutions for problems that face your communities? (page 51)

Group 3. What do you feel would be the most effective approach for long term management of on-site wastewater systems?

- a) List up to 6 advantages or disadvantages that you recognize.
- b) List up to 4 alternative management solutions that you recognize. (page 52)

Group 4. List what you believe are the 4 most important roadblocks to cost-effective wastewater management in your community. (not available)

Group 5. Where do we go from here?” (page 53)

Discussion Group Question Summaries

Group 1. What are the 4 most pressing problems related to servicing for areas outside of the current serviceable boundaries of N.S. communities? (not available)

Group 2. What 3 servicing options are most likely to provide cost-effective solutions for problems that face your communities?

Problem of water without sewer (cost of sewer)

cluster sewer could help if lower cost

What about future growth?

infrastructure charges

clusters do not appropriate for high future growth potential

Cost of doing nothing

enforcement of existing penalties

motivation required

social pressure

Lack of hard data
failure rates

NOT HOLDING TANKS

Can we say no?
to new development
to continued occupancy
unsuitable land

What are the limits of a cluster system? – how big?

Must judge each situation individually

Some small communities can't afford some options
shallow trench option may suit

Options depend on
new development vs retrofit
what % of properties have a problem
financing mechanisms
low-cost loans
area rates
property liens
means test

Group 3. What do you feel would be the most effective approach for long-term management of on-site wastewater systems?

- a) List up to six advantages that you recognize.
- b) List up to four alternative management solutions that you recognize.

The group identified six possible alternatives and then for some of the six, then identified advantages and disadvantages, and raised some questions for discussion, as follows:

1. Wastewater Management Districts (Administered by Municipalities)
 - (i) Can identify problem properties and define specific area to be included
 - (ii) Facilitates a pooling of resources, and can set rates and target users
 - (iii) Facilitates resolution to the problem
 - (iv) Can be applied to existing properties with problems or to new development
 - (v) May be more cost-effective solution in many situations
 - (vi) Facilitates access to private property
2. Private On-Site Systems (Status Quo)
3. Condominium Corporations
 - (i) Less government involvement

- (ii) Owners responsible
- (iii) Facilitates potential for higher density development and more public open space.

BUT

Will it work?
Will people cooperate?
New development only?
Stigma?

4. “Enhanced” Private On-Site Systems, e.g. maintenance agreement, management contract (need change in legislation?)

- (i) Better operation and maintenance.
- (ii) Responsibility on homeowners.
- (iii) Better control so better performance.

BUT

Monitoring component.
Education programs.
Agreements.
Management challenges.
Enforcement challenges.

5. Traditional Central Collection and Treatment systems

6. Insurance

Group 4. List what you believe are the 4 most important roadblocks to cost-effective wastewater management in your community. (not available)

Group 5. Where do we go from here?

Municipal point of view:

identify the need and show the benefit of improvements (to public)
open to innovative ideas
educate planners and technical people re clusters or other innovations

Provincial:

enforcement of existing regs and work with all parties to find practical solutions
uniformity across the province
when sitting regs or guidelines be more open to concerns of other parties

Industry:

educate consultants, designers regarding on-site and alternative technologies
be willing to go out of the comfort zone

Real Estate:

inspection at time of sale

Funding:

- low-cost loans for existing malfunctions
- more education of the homeowner re cost of implications to them of malfunctions

Maintenance:

- require easy access
- education
- municipally operated or administered maintenance programs for at least newly installed systems

APPENDIX I Program Outline

Tuesday May 14

11:30 – 1:00 Registration

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (on your own)

1:00 – 1:30 Introduction – Don Waller, Director
Centre for Water Resources Studies Dalhousie University

1:30 – 3:30 Panel: Problems for Individual Properties and Small Communities

Dave Briggins, N.S. Department of Environment and Labour will give the provincial perspective of on-site problems.

Pierre Breau, Director of Engineering, Municipality of the District of Lunenburg will present the issues and challenges that face a municipality.

Ann Muecke, Manager of the Regional Planning Project for the Halifax Regional Municipality will concentrate on planning issues – fragility of development on unserviced lots in poor soil conditions, the resulting sprawl, difficulty of providing other services, loss of valued rural character, transportation issues.

David Cotton, Wastewater Technologies Inc., Vermont, will provide an overview of the problems experienced in the northeastern U.S. (20-25 minutes)

3:30 – 3:45 Break

3:45 – 5:15 Technological Options

Robert Anderson, Environmental Innovations, Department of Environment and Labour will present the process by which technological options are considered in N.S.

David Cotton, Wastewater Technologies Inc., Vermont, will give an overview of the advances occurring in the U.S. (60 minutes)

Wednesday May 15

8:30 – 10:00 Management Alternatives

Grant Cooke, Services Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, will give a brief presentation on the management alternatives currently available in Nova Scotia.

Peter Casey, National Small Flows Clearinghouse, West Virginia, will provide an overview of the management alternatives developed in the U.S.. Both the management of individual on-site systems as well as small-scale cluster systems will be covered.

10:00 – 10:15 Break

10:15 – 11:45 Planning Alternatives

Ann Muecke will provide an overview of planning alternatives such as the need for clustering options and joint or collective management options.

Jeff Pinhey, M.A.Sc., P.Eng., will give a more site specific view to illustrate that a cluster approach, in addition to being an option for addressing existing problems, also offers many advantages as an alternative to the traditional way of subdividing land in rural Nova Scotia.

11:45 – 1:00 Lunch (provided)

1:00 – 2:30 Local Case Studies

Conquerall Bank, Lunenburg County, a small community about 5km outside the Town of Bridgewater, is experiencing failure of on-site systems. With the cost of providing traditional sewage collection and treatment being prohibitively expensive, the municipality undertook a study to explore alternatives. Pierre Breau and Willard D'Eon, CBCL, will present the findings of that study.

The Municipality of the District of Guysborough now has two wastewater management districts, the last being for Little Dover which will be the first community in N.S. to use a small diameter sewer approach to resolve its on-site problems. Gary Cleary, Director of Planning and Development, Municipality of the District of Guysborough, will relate his experience with wastewater management districts, focusing on the management aspects.

3:00 – 3:15 Break

3:15 – 4:45 Discussion Groups

3 or 4 groups will be formed to discuss the following questions:

From your perspective (as a municipal or provincial official, a part of the on-site industry, a representative of a community group, or other):

1. What are the 4 most pressing problems related to servicing for areas outside of the current serviceable boundaries of N.S. communities?
2. What 3 servicing options are most likely to provide cost effective solutions for problems that face your communities?
3. What do you feel would be the most effective approach for long term management of on-site wastewater systems?
 - c) List up to 6 advantages or disadvantages that you recognize.
 - d) List up to 4 alternative management solutions that you recognize.
4. List what you believe are the 4 most important roadblocks to cost-effective wastewater management in your community.

4:45 – 5:00 Wrap-Up

APPENDIX II Participant List

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Centre for Water Resources Studies
 Centre for Water Resources Studies

APPENDIX III Handouts

Contained in this section are copies of the following handouts:

1. Management of On-Site/Decentralized Wastewater Systems – Reference List
2. Sample By-Law No. 27 – Wastewater Management District

A third handout, Chapter 2: “Management of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems” from the USEPA Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Manual (EPA/625/R-00/008, February 2002), has not been reproduced for this document. For those interested in obtaining a copy of the manual, the following information is provided.

Twenty-five percent of the houses in the United States are served by onsite wastewater systems and an even greater percent of new housing is to be served by these systems. Those facts, combined with EPA's recognition of the positive role of decentralized systems in its Report to Congress (EPA 832-R-97/001b), make the newly updated Onsite Manual a major Agency product which has been incorporated into the Clean Water Action Plan (CWAP) issued by EPA and USDA. This comprehensive reference manual is designed to provide state and local governments with guidance on the planning, design and oversight of onsite systems. This manual will also be useful for onsite wastewater professionals, developers, land planners, and academics.

To request a copy of this manual please contact:

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Please indicate that you are ordering publication EPA/625/R-00/008, February 2002.

Alternatively, the Manual is posted on the USEPA web page at the following address:

<http://www.epa.gov/ordntrnt/ORD/NRMRL/Pubs/625R00008/625R00008.htm>