

Minutes of March 17, 2015

## ONSITE WASTEWATER STAKEHOLDER MEETING

State Public Health Lab

Jefferson City, Missouri

### **Welcome and introductions**

Mindy Laughlin, the meeting facilitator from DHSS, introduced herself and gave a brief history regarding her work with DHSS. She explained the objective of the meeting as well as her role as facilitator. She asked each attendee to introduce themselves before they speak so everyone could know who they were. DHSS staff introduced themselves and explained their role with the department. There were 40 stakeholders present.

### **Operation & Maintenance Guidelines for Onsite and Cluster (Decentralized) Wastewater Systems**

Jim Gaughan gave a presentation on the current status of the O&M Guidelines and explained the purpose of the manual. He gave a brief summary of how the document is laid out and how to use it. Jim also commented that the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Program was working to break the manual down into chapters that would allow users to print chapters as needed rather than the whole document.

Some attendees stated they have used the document and found it helpful. A few local authorities have included information about the manual to their citizens.

### **Onsite System Inspections/Evaluations for Real Estate Purposes**

Eric Folks updated stakeholders on the possible changes that the Onsite Program is looking to make with the inspection/evaluation procedures. He explained the need for the changes and how the proposed changes would be beneficial to human health, the environment, and new buyers. He also commented how the State Public Health Lab (SPHL) was working to provide reports of water samples in a more expedient way. The goal for the lab was to have this in effect by the end of January 2016.

Stakeholders commented about the need to always run water to check for discharge pipes. One comment was made to get rid of evaluations all together. Some would like to see a statement about how the soil survey report is not as comprehensive as a soil morphology report. There were no objections to the idea of evaluations becoming more stringent.

### **Bacterial Testing of Drinking Water**

This presentation was given by Pat Shannon of the SPHL. He presented information that was useful to licensed private inspectors and regulators. He also gave sampling statistics that compared water sample results to the type of wastewater system serving the property. Data proved that there is a continuing need to conduct water sampling on properties that are served with an onsite system. Following the presentation, stakeholders took a short break.

## **Legislation**

Eric Folks discussed House Bill 367. He gave a brief overview of the bill and reported the bill has been read twice, but has not moved forward. He then presented concerns that the Onsite Program had with the proposal.

Some comments from the group included:

Why was this introduced?

Passing this bill could cause many bigger problems in the future.

Could DHSS notify the LPHAs if there is a hearing?

## **Funding Assistance/DNR Update**

Charles Harwood, a soil scientist with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), talked about various issues within the department. His first topic was in regards to the types of funding the department had for citizens that need to repair or replace their onsite system. He made comments about how the criteria for the funds are now less stringent than before. The new Pump and Haul Permit was discussed in great detail by Charles and stakeholders. He made it clear that the new MDNR permits discussed were only for systems that do not fall under the DHSS jurisdiction. Another topic discussed was systems that are looking to land apply their effluent onto their own property due to new ammonia limits set by the EPA. Two forms of discharge mentioned were spray irrigation and subsurface drip irrigation.

## **Inventory of Wastewater Systems Throughout Missouri**

Jim Gaughan presented the last topic on the agenda. State and local agencies would benefit from knowing the number, type, location, age, and status of systems within the state. This is not going to be an easy task and will need cooperation from all departments involved in the wastewater permitting process to provide information. Jim summarized the limited data available and gave examples of ways to gather data.

## **General Discussion/Stakeholder Topics**

1. Why does DHSS only allow engineers to design onsite systems? The question was referring to architects being allowed to design systems since architects and engineers are governed by the same board.
2. Are county sanitarians required to act on known failed systems?
3. Does the State govern county sanitarian's conflict of interest? This question was broke down further with an example of a county sanitarian also being a licensed Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Professional.
4. Can there be a change in the variance rule for lots platted after January, 1996 to allow for owners that are "consolidating lots" to be eligible for variances since they are making the lots bigger? Local Planning and Zoning are requiring landowners to consolidate lots before building which nullifies any variance requests.
5. A suggestion was made to schedule the Stakeholders Meeting with the MSO Conference in the future.