

NOWRA 2020 – 2023 Elections Candidate Profile

Candidate: Marcia Degen

Category: Regulator

Candidate Statement/Bio:

Marcia Degen oversees the onsite sewage and water technical services section of the Office of Environmental Health Services at the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), a position she has held since 2009. Dr. Degen has a B.S. in Biology, a Masters in Environmental Sciences and Engineering, and a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering, all from Virginia Tech. She is also a licensed Virginia professional engineer. Her Ph.D. research was in onsite wastewater disposal systems, specifically looking at the effect of several variables on the in-ground denitrification rate. She has over 30 years of experience in wastewater and onsite systems. Marcia's career has involved consulting and teaching at the community college level, but has primarily been with state government. She started her regulatory career with the water permit program at the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), moved to wastewater engineering both at VDH and DEQ where she was a district engineer and then technical program coordinator for the Office of Wastewater Engineering before moving to her current position with VDH. She served on the Virginia Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association Board for 9 years; is a Board member for the State Onsite Regulators Association; is a member of the Virginia Water Environment Association; and is a past member of the Virginia licensing Board for onsite soil professionals.

Statements

What specific area of interest do you desire to work with the NOWRA Board on industry issues and how you will make a contribution?

I am interested in working on best practices/training and policy issues. NOWRA has produced a number of good training materials and I hope to add to that. I'd also like to help with collaborations with EPA, SORA, and other organizations to further our mutual interests in the onsite field.

Why you are willing to serve on NOWRA's Board as a leader in the onsite industry?

I believe in this industry and its members. I am impressed by the progress that has been made in technology and in regulation. Our members are hard-working, dedicated professionals and I see NOWRA serving its members by sharing knowledge, providing opportunities for networking and collaboration, and advancing policy that is supportive of the industry.

What is your perspective(s) on the directions that NOWRA as an organization should consider in order to increase its leadership role in the industry?

The Fly-ins are a great way to get our issues in front of the elected officials and our lobbying efforts have resulted in a larger share of federal funding for the onsite industry. Those are important efforts must be continued. Additionally, I'd like to see NOWRA have more services for our members such as job postings, online forums, and more frequent newsletters reporting on national onsite issues.

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What are the critical issues that NOWRA's Board should be addressing on behalf of its members?

NOWRA has already raised the profile of the onsite industry at the Federal level and gained better access to infrastructure funding. That effort must be continued in order to ensure long-term access to funding. Additionally, many of the residents using onsite systems are rural and lower income. A more accessible funding stream to especially help the critical needs of our lower income citizens is needed. NOWRA must continue producing quality resource documents and training so that our members have access to the right way to do their work in order for our field to maintain and improve its level of professionalism

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Candidate: Anish Jantrania

Category: Academic/Research

Candidate Statement/Bio

I began my career in the onsite wastewater industry 30 years ago at the National Small Flows Clearinghouse, West Virginia University. After working in various capacities both in the public and private sectors, I joined the Texas A&M University in Fall 2014 and circled back to academics. In my current position, I am responsible for managing the research, education, and demonstration programs related to Onsite Wastewater Treatment and Reuse Systems in Texas, which was originally started by one of our own colleagues Dr. Bruce Lasikar in early 1990s. In the last six years, our team rejuvenated our research and training center in Bryan, TX, successfully obtained federal grant to start a summer fellowship for Undergraduate students interested in Onsite Water Reuse program, worked closely with the Texas Onsite Wastewater Association to reinstate the state funding for research, and offered publication education programs to raise awareness of onsite/decentralized infrastructure. Having served on the NOWRA board in mid 1990s, I understand the responsibilities of serving as a member of the Board of Directors and if elected I would serve the organization with energy and enthusiasm.

What specific area of interest do you desire to work with the NOWRA Board on industry issues and how will you make a contribution?

I wish to work with the NOWRA Board on developing a sustained funding mechanism from federal and state government agencies as well as from private entities to support research, education, and demonstration activities related to enhancing visibility of the 21st century onsite water systems.

Why you are willing to serve on NOWRA's Board as a leader in the onsite industry?

Having grown up in the Onsite Industry with NOWRA over the last three decades, I wish to share my observations and experience to strengthen NOWRA's position to lead the membership during the next three plus decades and to overall improve the image of Onsite/Decentralized Water Infrastructure at all levels.

What is your perspective(s) on the directions that NOWRA as an organization should consider in order to increase its leadership role in the industry, and what are the critical issues that NOWRA's Board should be addressing on behalf of its members?

To lead effectively, one must observe carefully (someone must have said this before me, but I do not know who!). So, to increase NOWRA's leadership role in the Industry it needs to first observe the changes occurring in the Industry as well as the public space, through the state and local associations working with Water and then develop strategies to meet the needs that are not met by others. In my view, it is going to be NOWRA's ability to become a unique organization to meet the overlapping demands from both the Industry and the Public in a sustained reliable manner will allow it to increase its leadership role in the decentralized water industry.

What are the critical issues that NOWRA's Board should be addressing on behalf of its members?

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Critical issues must be identified and defined by all the Members! I am just one member, and to me the most critical issue for now is to improve the image of an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System to a homeowner who believes that s/he is “stuck” with the system and do not know why! While my team is working in Texas to improve this situation, a systematic approach from the national level would help.

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Candidate: Jim King

Category: Supplier/Vendor

Candidate Statement/Bio

I am the President of Eljen Corporation, an onsite solutions provider. I have an engineering degree and MBA from the University of Connecticut. I am a Captain in the US Army, currently non-active after serving two deployments in Iraq. Over the last ten years at Eljen, I have worked with state, national, and international governments as well as health agencies to improve the onsite wastewater programs. Part of my work at Eljen focuses on new technologies innovation and development.

What specific area of interest do you desire to work with the NOWRA Board on industry issues and how you will make a contribution?

I have been involved with the NOWRA Brand development and hope to continue to support NOWRA as the face of the US Onsite community. It is my goal that NORWA continues to grow in our industry and in the national political process.

Why you are willing to serve on NOWRA's Board as a leader in the onsite industry?

As a leader of my company, a leader of this industry, it only makes sense that I make a commitment to NORWA as a member of their board and take a leadership position on the national stage.

What is your perspective(s) on the directions that NOWRA as an organization should consider in order to increase its leadership role in the industry?

NORWA has made incredible strides over the last few years to increase its visibility and impact. I feel a closer relationship and partnership with the EPA could help with NORWA branding and recognition.

What are the critical issues that NOWRA's Board should be addressing on behalf of its members?

The most critical issue that NOWRA's Board needs to address is unifying the industry. Currently we have many states who have not joined, nor do they the ability to join our association. A partnership with the EPA may help in this regard.

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Candidate: Kate Carney

Category: Designer/Engineer

Candidate Statement/Bio

I earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biological Sciences from Missouri University of Science and Technology and a Master of Science degree in Environmental Science and Engineering from the Colorado School of Mines. I conduct soil/site evaluations as well as provide the design and management guidelines for residential and commercial OWTS. I am a Registered Professional Engineer in Colorado and I own Church Onsite Wastewater Consultants in Wheat Ridge, Colorado. I have taught as an adjunct professor at the Colorado School of Mines and I am the Executive Director of the Colorado Professionals in Onsite Wastewater.

What specific area of interest do you desire to work with the NOWRA Board on industry issues and how you will make a contribution?

I am particularly interested in working with the NOWRA State Affiliates group to network between states to help each other build professionalism and provide education.

Why you are willing to serve on NOWRA's Board as a leader in the onsite industry?

I am willing to serve on the NOWRA board as a leader in the onsite industry to collaborate nationally to provide resources and education to our industry.

What are the critical issues that NOWRA's Board should be addressing on behalf of its members?

I think promoting education in the onsite industry is essential.