

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION

REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS AS A KEY AUDIENCE FOR ONSITE WASTEWATER EDUCATION

NOWRA Mega Conference 2026
Westminster, Colorado

Presented by
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INTRODUCTION

UGA Extension’s Role in Onsite Wastewater

Brooklyne Wassel, Pike County Extension Coordinator

MC Halbrook, Glenn County Extension Agent

Dr. Gary Hawkins, UGA Water Specialist







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THE PROBLEM

Georgians in rural and some suburban areas rely on onsite wastewater systems to safely and effectively manage household wastewater. However, many decision makers for the home are not aware of basic care, maintenance, and signs of failure.



01

The general public historically does not readily attend onsite wastewater education programs.

02

Extension professionals were struggling to get the information to those who needed it.

REAL ESTATE

the connector between new septic managers and the education they need.

1st Step

All real estate professionals require 36 hours of continuing education every four years.

2nd Step

Coupling necessary education hours with information their client needs to enjoy their new home, and a match is made!

3rd Step

Use the credit hours and general program to slide septic education in...



"[The class] was very beneficial to realtors in attendance. Our job is to help our clients makes the best decisions for their families by providing information. This purchase is likely the biggest investment they will make in their lives. The knowledge we received on these systems is great information to be able to share with clients."

~ Judy R. Real Estate Professional and Program Participant

PROGRAM AT WORK



01

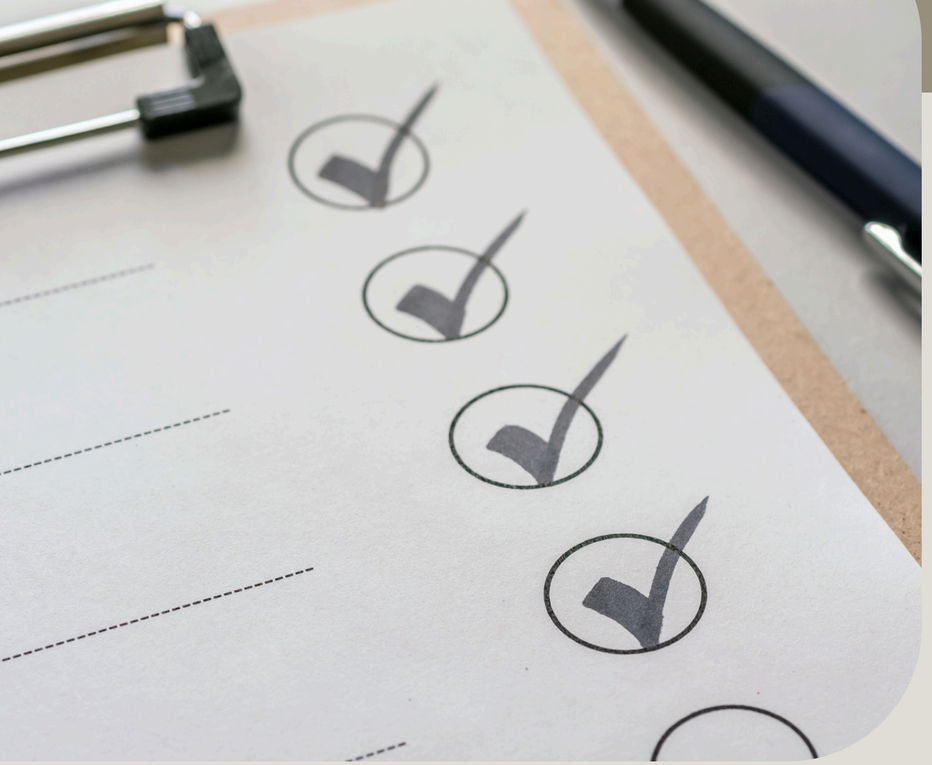
Radon Education

02

Well Water Education

03

Septic Education



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Objectives for the Onsite Wastewater portion of the training

01

Understand the importance of a septic letter often utilized in home purchases

02

Recognize signs of a failing system

03

Understand the components of a properly functioning system and how to ensure it remains functioning

04

Recognize UGA Extension as a resource in new areas of their profession

BENEFITS & IMPACT

Moving people in a way only onsite wastewater can...

Though many participants begrudgingly sat as the onsite wastewater portion of the program began, the audience demeanor quickly shifted to engaged and active participation.

A number of participants commented that they had no idea all of the things going on with a septic system or that they had always asked for a septic letter, but now they felt better looking for signs of failure.



> A single realtor makes multiple sales each year. Hundreds of families will benefit from the information gleaned in any given year. This is great, life-changing information for realtors to learn and share.

> I have always gotten well letters, but now I am going to add in septic letters.

TAKING IT ONE STEP FURTHER

Getting it into the hands of the homeowner

We created a multipurpose “Welcome Home” packet to serve as an educational resource for new homeowners in our area which includes:

- Septic ABC’s Publication
- Household Well Water Publication
- Well Water and Soil Testing Resource Guide
- 4-H Availability Matrix
- Other Extension and 4-H materials

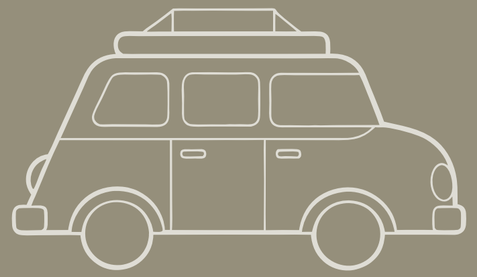


FUTURE ENDEVOURS

Where do we see this going?

1ST GOAL

Taking the real estate training on the road...



2ND GOAL

Getting the “Welcome Home” packet as a template for other counties to utilize





CONCLUSION

Real Estate Professionals are the Key

Real estate professionals are the first connection someone has to their new home in a new place. They are a trusted source of information, so if they do not have the information needed, there is a breakdown. Ensuring real estate agents have the education they need to succeed is paramount to reaching the notoriously difficult to connect with septic system owner.

Ideas and opinions stated in this presentation are the presenters' and do not necessarily reflect those of NOWRA



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THANK YOU!

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