



EPA's Decentralized Wastewater Program Overview

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Presentation Outline

- EPA Decentralized Program Background
- Decentralized Wastewater MOU Partnership
- Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative
- SepticSmart Week
- Workforce

Disclaimer: The comments made in this presentation are those of the presenter and not of NOWRA or the Mega-Conference sponsors.

Decentralized Program Background

- 1997 Report to Congress on Decentralized Systems in the U.S.
 - Primary Finding: Decentralized systems can provide the same level of treatment, and may be less expensive than centralized wastewater (sewer) treatment
- Early 2000s: Decentralized Program created including issuance of many guidance documents, and MOU Partnership
- EPA program provides non-regulatory program support focused on outreach tools for homeowners, counties and states

Decentralized Wastewater MOU Partnership



Decentralized MOU Partnership Priorities

- 1. Increase outreach and public education**
 - to ensure decentralized wastewater and septic systems are properly maintained to protect water quality and human health
- 2. Identify and utilize current information and data**
 - on the use and performance of decentralized wastewater and septic systems in the US
- 3. Promote the benefits of advanced decentralized treatment technologies**
 - within the wastewater industry and to the public
- 4. Share information on funding sources and pursue innovative public and private financing options**
 - to help communities and homeowners replace, upgrade, or maintain decentralized wastewater systems
- 5. Expand mechanisms to address workforce, education, training, and research needs**
 - related to the decentralized wastewater industry to improve future sustainability

Decentralized Wastewater MOU Partnership

- MOU Renewal every 3 years
- MOU began in 2005 with 8 partners
- 20 partners in 2020
- 2023 is the 7th MOU Renewal, 5 new partners
 - International Code Council (ICC)
 - National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA)
 - Ocean Sewage Alliance (OSA)
 - WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
 - USDA-Rural Development (USDA-RD)

Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative

News Releases: [Headquarters](#) | [Water \(OW\)](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Launches EPA- USDA Partnership to Provide Wastewater Sanitation to Underserved Rural Communities

Historic Funding from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Will Help Address
Lack of Basic Wastewater Infrastructure in Rural America

August 2, 2022

Contact Information

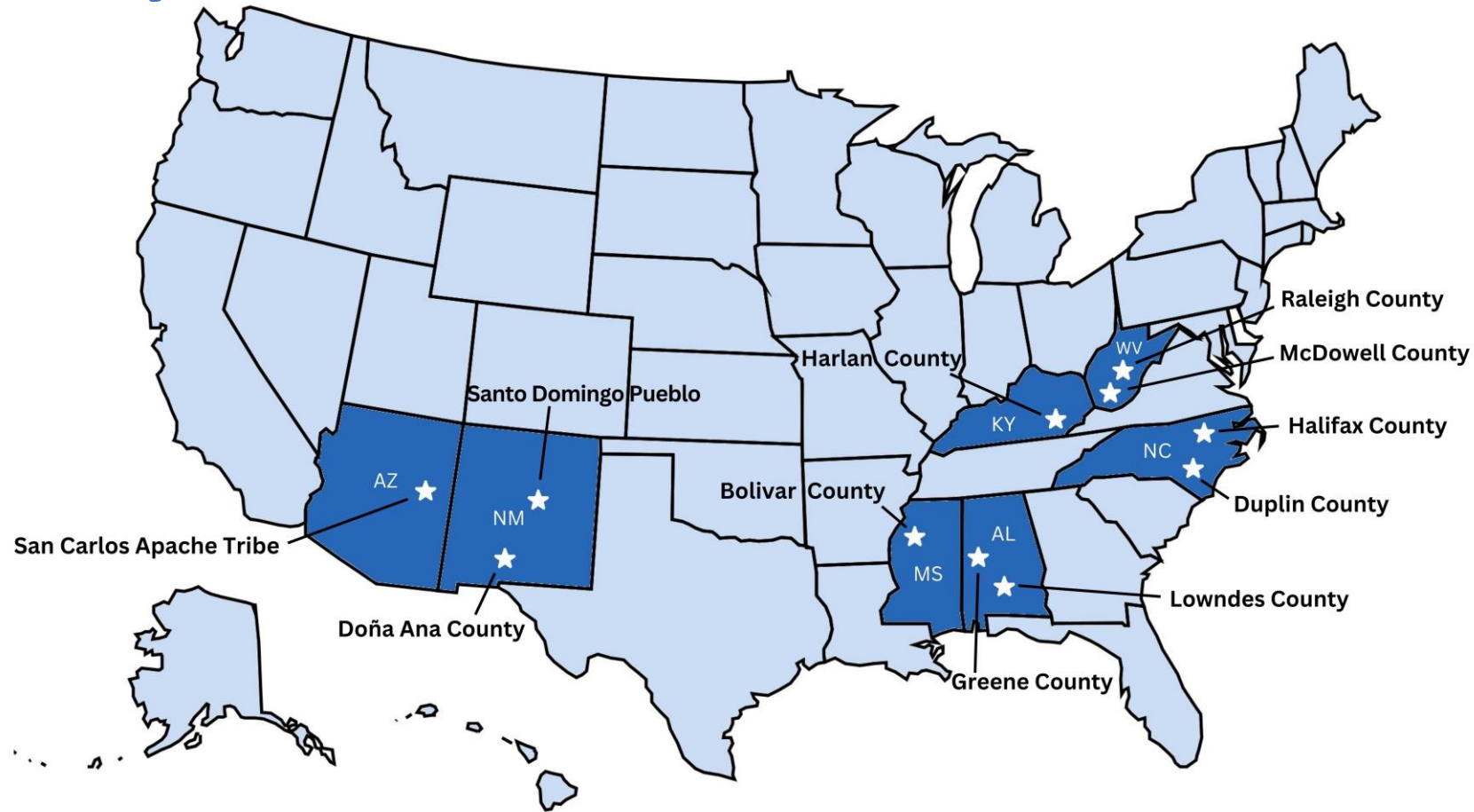
EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

WASHINGTON (August 2, 2022) – Today, at an event in Lowndes County, Alabama, where a significant number of residents lack access to wastewater infrastructure, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced *the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative*. The new initiative will be piloted in 11 communities across the country where residents lack basic wastewater management that is essential to protecting their health and the environment. EPA, USDA, the

Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative

- Participating communities receive:
 - Community Wastewater Assessment
 - Community Solutions Plan
- Documents are starting points to facilitate thoughtful approaches and may be tailored further based on needs of each community
- Assessment and Solutions Plan do not waive federal or state funding application requirements – but help communities take steps forward
- Community Initiative compliments important state and local efforts

Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative – Pilot Communities



What is in the Community Wastewater Assessment?

- Community Engagement and Input
- Community Description
- Build Environment Assessment
- Natural Environment Assessment
- Assessment of Need
- Regulatory and Funding Environment

What is in the Community Solutions Plan?

- Documents results of assessment
- Identifies potential solution options for further exploration
- Provides a plan to guide next steps of infrastructure projects and funding applications
- Preliminary project schedule and costs
- Outlines types of TA services needed to address local challenges

Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Project team kick off meeting	Fall 2022
Community listening session	Fall/ Winter 2022
Conduct wastewater assessment	Summer 2023
Develop solutions plans	Fall/ Winter 2023
Identify and begin next steps (e.g., developing a funding application)	Fall/ Winter 2023



SepticSmart Week

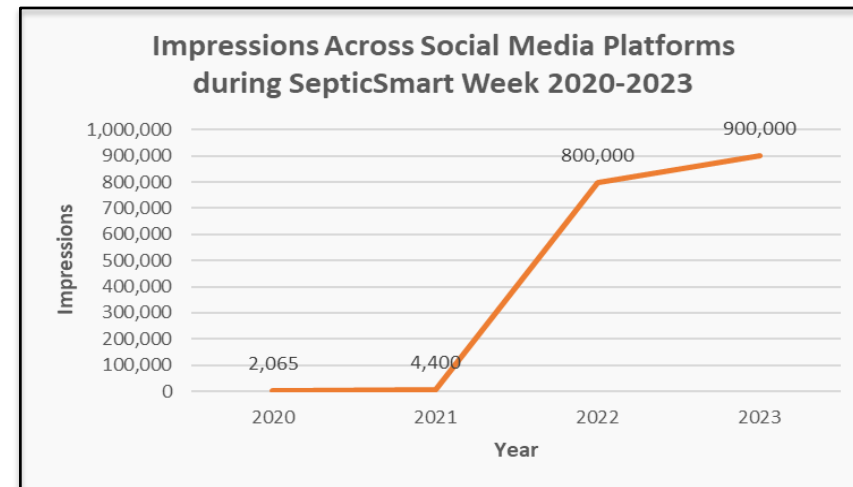
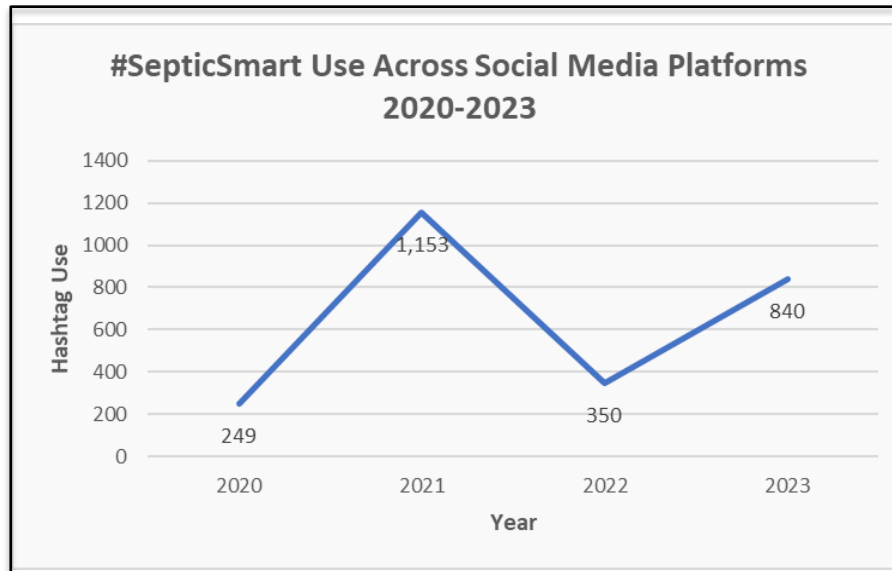
An annual outreach event to support
the proper operation and care of
septic systems

All educational materials available at
www.epa.gov/septic

SepticSmart Week 2023: September 18-22, 2023

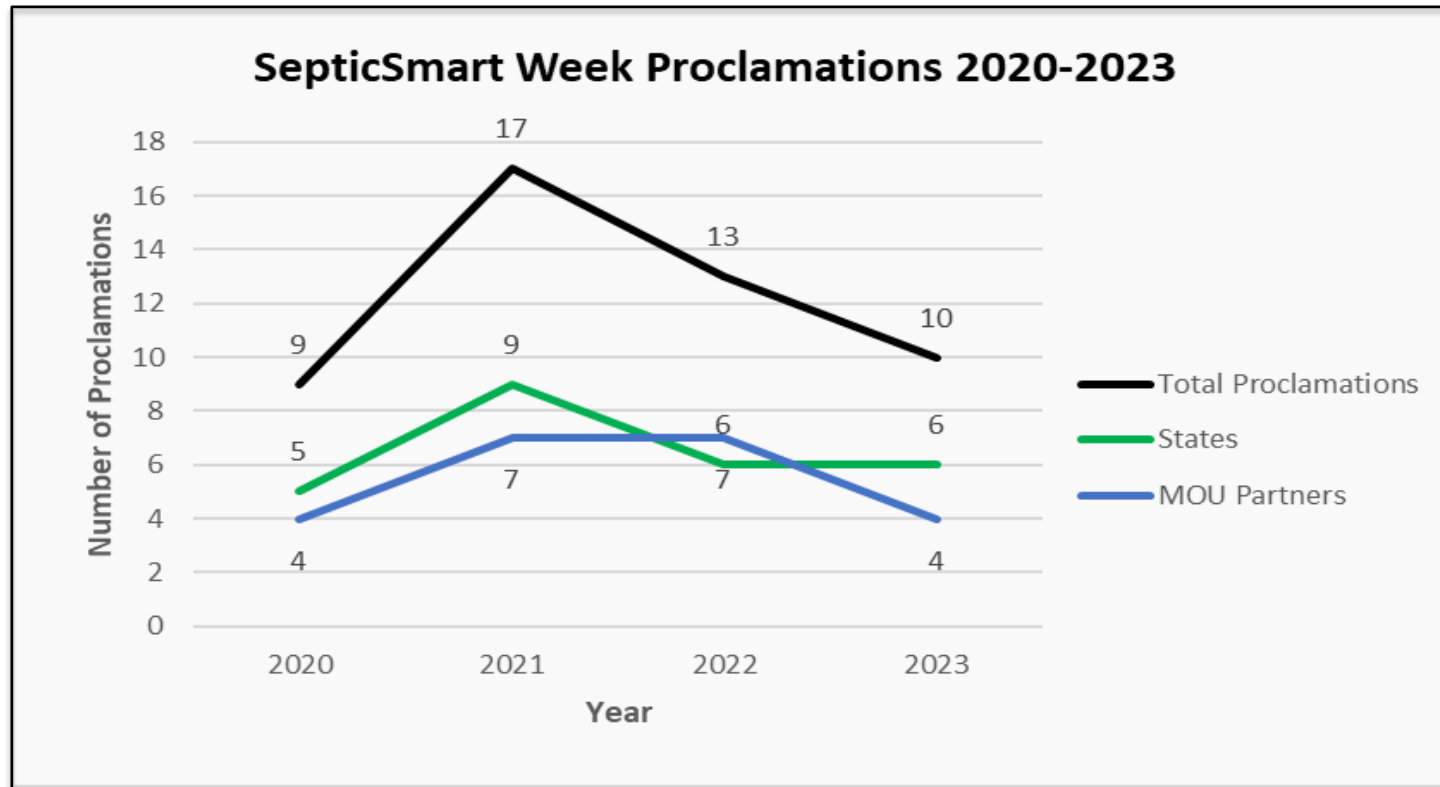
Highlights include:

- Over **840** uses of #SepticSmart and #SepticSmartWeek
- Over **900,000** impressions across Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn



Proclamations Declared

We received a total of **11 proclamations** from New Mexico, Michigan, North Carolina, Missouri, Minnesota, and Bella Vista, AR; as well as ASTHO, IAPMO, FOWA, NOWRA, and RCAP.



MOU Partner Op-Eds and Blog Posts

- ICC and IAPMO wrote SepticSmart-themed blog posts

IAPMO UPDATES

EPA's Annual SepticSmart Week: Safeguard Your Family's Health, Protect the Environment, and Save Money

Posted 14 Sep 2023
Tagged on Group



WASHINGTON — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), supported by state and local governments, the private sector, communities, and academia, is kicking off its eleventh annual SepticSmart Week. SepticSmart week 2023 encourages homeowners, wastewater professionals, and local officials to design and maintain effective septic systems to help serve their communities. Visit www.epa.gov/septic to learn more.

Organizations and individuals wishing to promote SepticSmart Week 2023 are encouraged to create public awareness about the event and share helpful tips, such as:

- Think at the Sink!: What goes down the drain has a big impact on your septic system. Fats, grease, and solids can clog a system's pipes and drainfield.
- Don't Overload the Commodal: A toilet is not a trash can. Disposable diapers and wipes, feminine hygiene products, coffee grounds, cigarette butts, and cat litter can damage a septic system.
- Don't Strain Your Drain!: Use water efficiently and stagger use of water-based appliances. Too much water use at once can overload a system that hasn't been pumped recently.
- Shield Your Field!: Tree and shrub roots, cars, and livestock can damage your septic drainfield.

SepticSmart Week: Sharing the Importance of Proper Septic System Maintenance and Care

The Code Council strives to provide communities with the tools they need to promote best practices in septic system care and wastewater management.

SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2023
by International Code Council

QUICK HITS


S epticSmart Week is an annual awareness campaign by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that is dedicated to educating homeowners and communities about the importance of proper septic system maintenance and responsible wastewater management.

This year's campaign will run from September 18-22, 2023, and will underscore the vital role septic systems play in protecting public health and the environment.

Wastewater Management Through Rainwater Harvesting Systems

Rainwater harvesting systems can play a pivotal role in wastewater management by providing an eco-friendly and cost-effective means to collect and reuse rainwater for activities like irrigation and flushing toilets.

Earlier this year, the International Code Council and the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) released an updated joint standard for harvesting rainwater and stormwater. The standard, CSA B805/ICC 805-2022 Rainwater harvesting systems, provides guidance to property owners, contractors, builders, architects and code officials on constructing new buildings or renovating existing buildings in ways to conserve water and protect water resources.



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Education CEU-bearing training for renewable

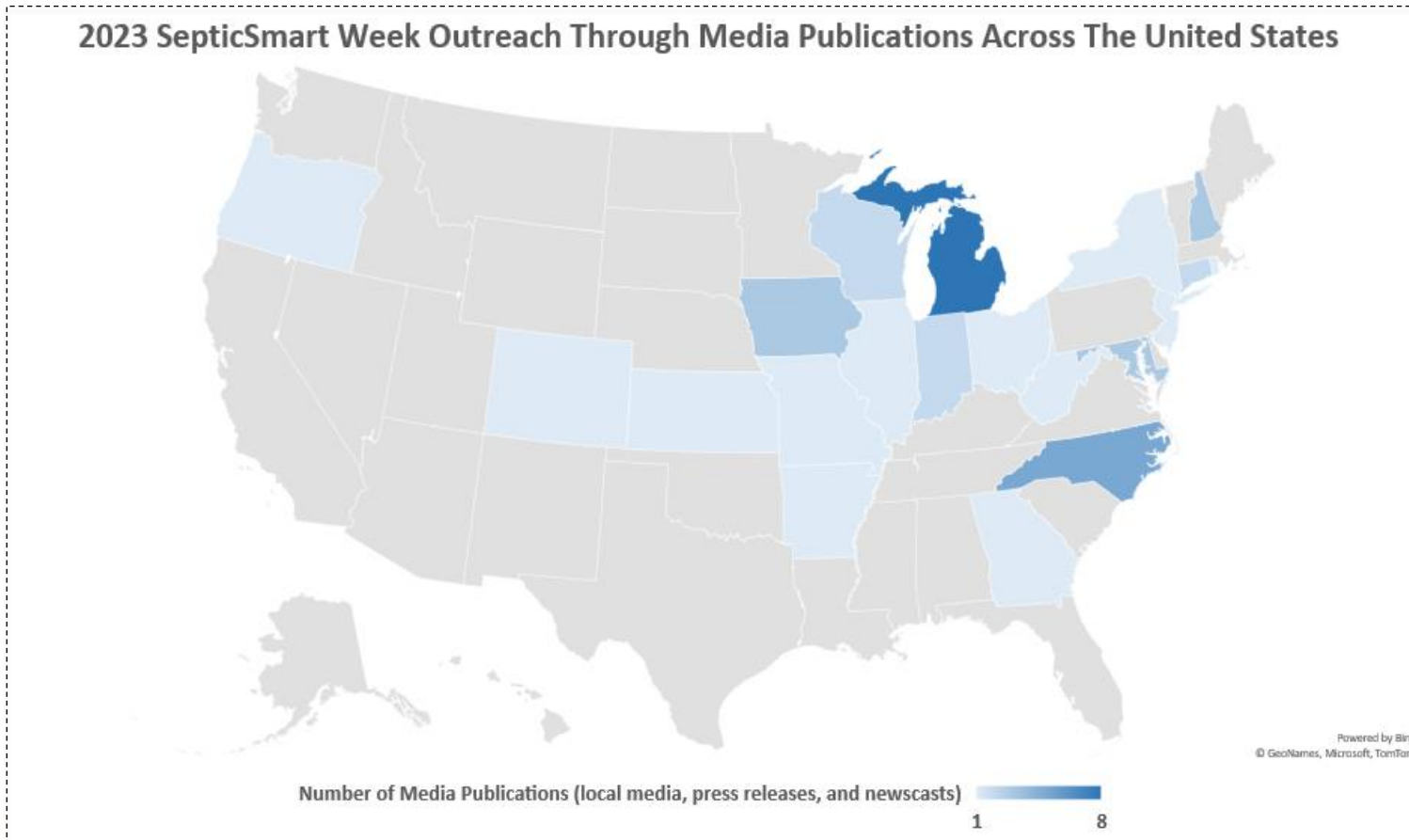


Newsletters and Listservs

- ASTHO's Environmental Health Directors listserv: **170 subscribers**
 - Audience: State/Territorial/Freely Associated State environmental health directors and staff.
- Southeastern New England Program Monthly Newsletter: **3,002 subscribers**
 - Audience: General public of Rhode Island and SE Massachusetts; State/Federal/Municipal Staff; Tribal staff; and environmental consultants.
- SORA's member listserv: **300 members**
 - Audience: Officials at the state government level with direct oversight of septic systems.
- CDC's Environmental Health Services newsletter: **>24k subscribers**
 - Audience: Environmental health professionals.
 - "Save The Date" newsletter had a **19.2% open rate**, SSW newsletter had **18.8%**.



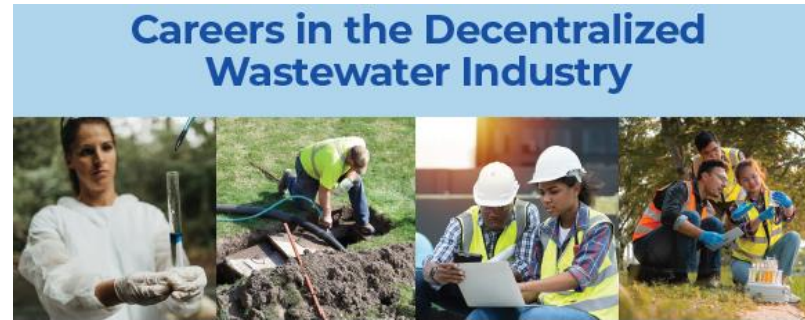
News Media



7 Press Releases and Newscasts
6 Local Government Civic Alerts and Blurbs
26 Local Media Publications



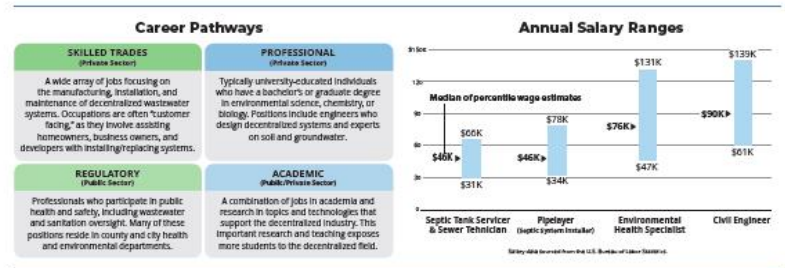
Careers in the Decentralized Wastewater Industry Poster



Careers in the Decentralized Wastewater Industry

WHAT COULD A CAREER IN THE DECENTRALIZED INDUSTRY LOOK LIKE FOR YOU?

More than one in five households in the U.S. depend on individual septic (decentralized) systems or small community cluster systems to treat their wastewater. Jobs in the decentralized industry provide **competitive wages, reliable employment**, and a way to truly **make a difference** by protecting public health and the environment. The sector faces a labor shortage, creating ample opportunity for the next generation of workers.



Words From Professionals!

"If you're looking for a rewarding career and think clean water is important, consider working in the decentralized onsite wastewater industry. You can help protect public health and the environment."
—Dave Cotton, Environmental Engineer

"Water and wastewater treatment is one of those professions where you can quickly rise from a low-level position to an expert in the field as it is highly specialized and will always be needed."
—Jared Willey, Wastewater Operator

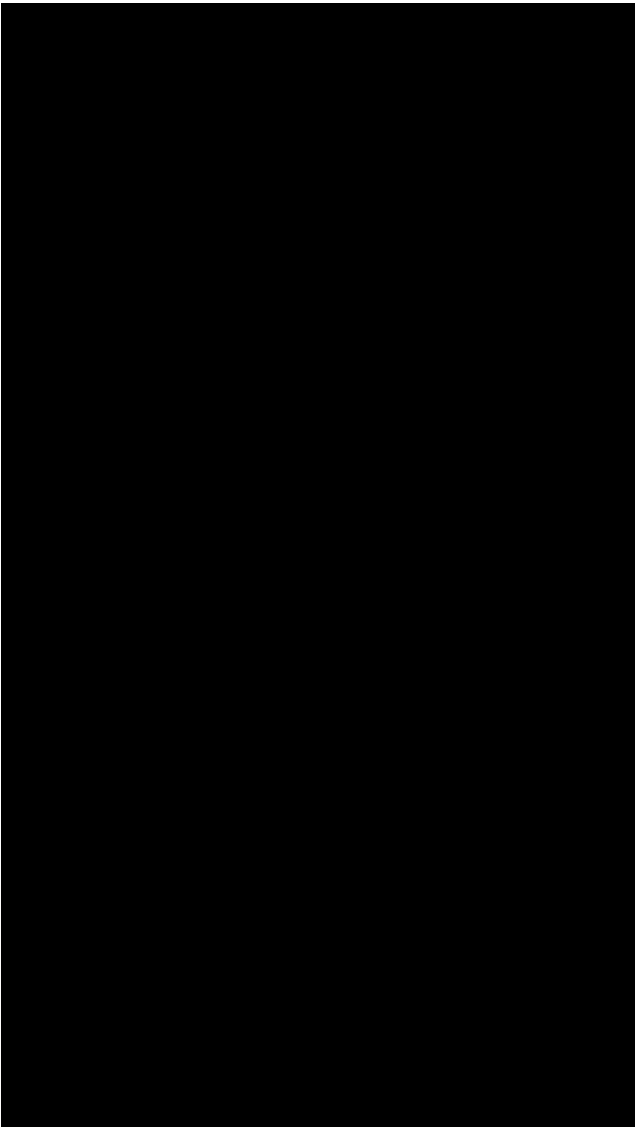
"Having a job you both enjoy and know is making the world better? It's a great place to be!"
—Dr. Sara Heger, Researcher and Instructor in Onsite Sewage Treatment

For more information, scan here or visit epa.gov/septic.

Developed by the Decentralized Wastewater MOU Partnership.



Septic Career Opportunities Video Series



SSW Creative Challenge



- Contest developed in collaboration with Youth Engaged 4 Change.
- Geared toward young adults aged 14-22 to submit creative content that depicts a "septic system of the future"
- Three winners - each received a \$100 Amazon gift card



Homeowner Education Spotlights:

Lunch with Planners
SEPTICSMART EDITION
 "Working together for a cleaner, greener Bella Vista!"



Conventional Septic System

SCAN TO RSVP:



 GUSANO'S PARTY ROOM
 19 CUNNINGHAM CORNER

 11:30AM - 1:00 PM

SEPTEMBER
18
 2023



GEAUGA PUBLIC HEALTH

Promoting and Protecting Community Health



Geauga Soil and Water Conservation District



Connecticut Environmental Health Association



MALPH
 MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION
 FOR LOCAL
 PUBLIC HEALTH



GET TO KNOW YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

Learn how to manage septic systems to protect you, your neighbors, and our water.

SEPTEMBER 21ST 6:00PM-7:30PM
 BELLA VISTA DISTRICT COURT

FREE EVENT- NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED
 EMAIL J.MAGINOT@GAUDA.EDU WITH QUESTIONS




septicSMART
 A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Program

www.epa.gov/septic

Advanced Technology Spotlight:

Onsite Wastewater Resource Center and RI Dept. of Environmental Management



Get SepticSmart! Learn About Nitrogen Reducing Septic Systems

URI's Onsite Wastewater Resource Center (OWRC) is proud to participate in 2023 SepticSmart Week! The U.S. EPA's SepticSmart Program designates the third week of September each year as SepticSmart Week to bring attention to the importance of caring for and maintaining septic systems. Don't miss this opportunity to join the OWRC and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management for an in-person workshop to learn all about Nitrogen Reducing Septic Systems! View full scale models of various nitrogen reducing technologies. Learn more



A collaboration between the Onsite Wastewater Resource Center at the University of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

WHEN? September 23, 2023
10am-11am

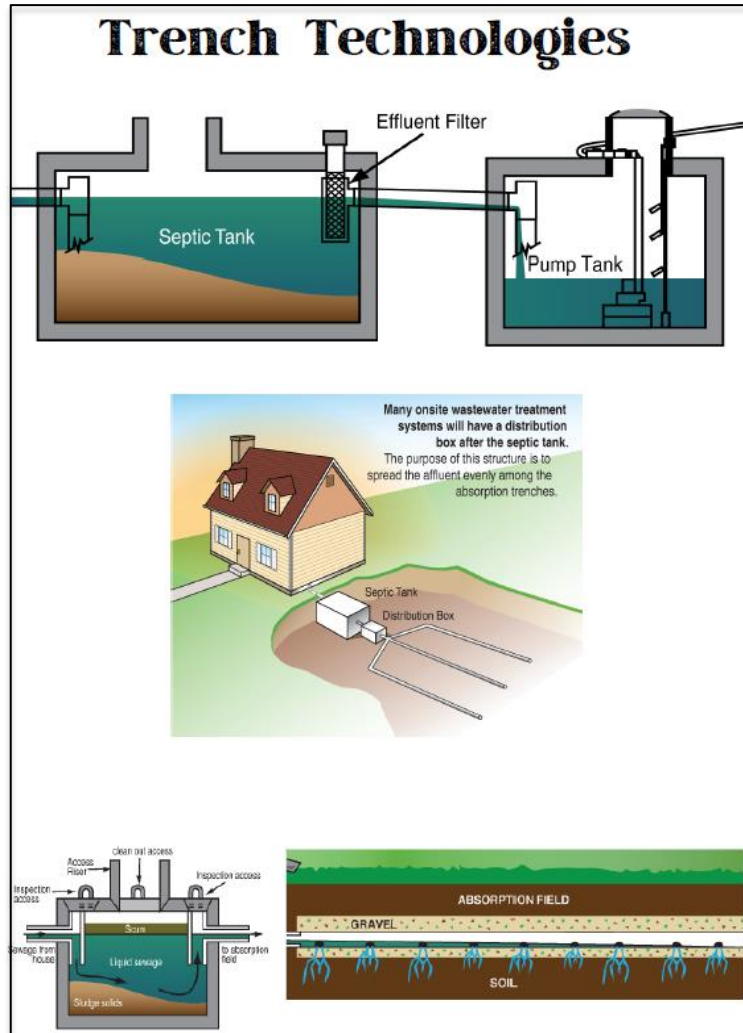
WHERE? URI's Onsite Wastewater Resource Training Center at Peckham Farm, 55 Peckham Farm Rd, West Kingston, RI 02892.
Parking available in front of the Peckham Farm buildings.

WHY? Become an educated consumer! Learn more about nitrogen reducing septic systems and which technology is best for your family!

Demonstrative workshop for advanced decentralized technology with a focus on Nitrogen reduction.



Workforce Development Spotlight: Missouri Smallflows Organization



Career Day where students learned from professionals about opportunities in the decentralized wastewater industry.



SepticSmart Week 2024 Goals

- Continue expansion of SepticSmart Creative Challenge
- Increase engagement through in-person and virtual events hosted by MOU partners
- Expand workforce development materials
- Create new visual media and social media text for the Social Media Guide
- Increase number of states in promoting #SepticSmartWeek
 - Blog posts, newsletters, proclamations, and partners across the country
- Increase reach across all social media
 - Increase use of #SepticSmart hashtag





Questions?