

Concurrent Sessions Track: Education

Monday, October 14, 2019

1:30 pm to 2:30 pm

Assessing Impact of Education on Public and Practitioners in Onsite Arena

Ryan Gerlich

The Voluntary National Guidelines for Management of Onsite and Clustered (Decentralized) Wastewater Treatment Systems (EPA, March 2003) lists Public Education and Participation (outreach) on the top of the list for improving management of onsite and decentralized wastewater treatment systems. Educating homeowners, students, policy makers, and practitioners (license-holders) on fundamentals of evaluation, design, installation, and responsible management is vital in protecting public health, environmental quality, and property value in areas served by onsite/decentralized systems. Texas is home for about 2.2 million onsite sewage systems. This number is projected to increase with population growth in the state as more than 20,000 new permits are issued every year since the beginning of this century. Public education and awareness related to all aspects of using onsite systems is critical to ensure that onsite systems are viewed as the permanent solution for wastewater management while protecting public health and environmental quality. A group of extension program specialists, engineers and researchers at Texas A&M University has been providing education and public outreach for students, homeowners, service providers and public over a decade. In this paper presentation, we will be sharing results of educational programs for students, homeowners, service providers and homeowners in Texas and the overarching impact of our activities on the participants. We will discuss details on the tools we use to assess effectiveness of our programs and present results from our recent annual program assessments both qualitatively and quantitatively.



Monday, October 14, 2019

2:30 pm to 3:30 pm

SSSA, CPSS and Life-long learning

Luther Smith

The Soil Science Society of America's (SSSA) Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS) Program sets the standards that define the profession of soil science. CPSS is a voluntary program that helps to protect the public and the profession by only certifying individuals that are able to meet the standards. SSSA also provides continuing education for professionals who work with soils directly as a soil scientist or indirectly in a related profession. Certification identifies professionals with the expertise that is needed by the client. The certification standards are evaluated through four areas: exams; experience; education; and ethics. The knowledge level is measured through examination covering six competencies: soil chemistry; mineralogy; fertility and nutrient management; physics; genesis, morphology and classification; biology and ecology; and land use management. Some of the value points of professional certification include credibility; opportunities; motivation; ability; and validation. Life-long learning is a key component of CPSS through the continuing education requirements. Every two-years a CPSS must earn at least 30 hours in continuing education related to soil science and being a professional. They continue to grow their knowledge and prove their commitment to the profession. SSSA is a resource for and provides opportunities in continuous learning both in person and online, self-paced

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events. Whether you are working directly or in a related profession coming in contact with soils consider becoming a CPSS and utilizing SSSA programs in support of your career.

Monday, October 14, 2019

4:00 pm to 4:30 pm

The University of Georgia On-Site Waste Treatment Demonstration and Training Facility for Educating On-site Waste Professionals in Georgia

Chris Kumnick

Flushing the toilet or pulling the plug in a sink that is not connected to a municipal sewer system starts a process that involves the on-site waste disposals system (OWDS). In Georgia, on-site waste treatment is regulated by Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH). Data from DPH, indicates that over 12,000 new OWDS are installed annually in Georgia. . To educate on OWDS, DPH provides training to newly hired environmental scientists. Additionally, DPH offers training and continuing education courses to

OWDS professionals who are required to renew certification every two years. To assist DPH train OWDS professionals, the University of Georgia (UGA) Extension Agents, and homeowners, a Graduate Student from Emory University along with faculty in the UGA Crop and Soil Sciences Department and DPH has redesigned a demonstration and training facility on the UGA Griffin Campus. The facility has been redesigned to provide hands-on education to better prepare various participants on OWDS. The facility contains both static and dynamic displays including a working tank with distribution lines, serial trenches, drip system, as well as a profile wall and display boxes of various Georgia approved distribution systems. During the conference presentation, the overall training program will be described highlighting both the classroom session where the basics of OWDS are discussed and the outdoor portion where participants can get needed hands-on experience with various aspects of on-site waste disposal systems.