

OPENING SESSION - Speaker and Abstract Information for 2021 Onsite Wastewater Mega-Conference

October 2021

EPA Update

Dr. Andrew Sawyers (invited), Director, Office of Wastewater, USEPA

40 minutes

Abstract:

Dr. Sawyers will discuss EPA's activities in support of onsite and decentralized wastewater systems. He will place particular emphasis on their implementation of federal legislation related to decentralized wastewater, and other EPA programs.

Biography:

In his capacity as the Director of the EPA Office of Wastewater Management Dr. Sawyers oversees the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program, the Clean Water Act's mechanism for the permitting of municipal and industrial discharge into surface waters of the U.S. As the Director of OWM, Dr. Sawyers is also responsible for multiple technical and financial assistance tools for the development and maintenance of the country's wastewater infrastructure, including WIFIA, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) and EPA's Water Finance Center. He previously worked for the Maryland Water Quality Financing Administration where he managed the state's Clean Water and Drinking Water SRFs and the Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund. He has a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in Geography and Environmental Engineering.

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Status of Advocacy / Lobbying Efforts on Behalf of Onsite and Decentralized Wastewater

Tracy Hammond, Senior Policy Advisor, Polsinelli, LLC

35 minutes

Abstract:

Tracy Hammond is a member of the firm's National Public Policy group and assists clients interested in shaping energy, environmental, and infrastructure legislation and regulation. He is part of the team which represents NOWRA on Capitol Hill. He will provide an analysis of the legislative and regulatory landscape, initiatives underway which may have an impact on the onsite/decentralized industry, and steps the industry can take to increase its influence in Washington on those initiatives.

Biography:

Tracy has spent over 15 years representing clients before Congress and many executive branch agencies. Tracy entered politics, serving as an aide to the Minority Floor Leader of the Missouri General Assembly in Jefferson City. Upon arriving to Washington, D.C., he began working for the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG) where he serviced both electoral and issue advocacy campaigns by providing analysis on political media activity. Prior to joining Polsinelli, Tracy served as Vice President at Dutko, advising clients with the firm’s Energy, Environment and Sustainability practice.

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Resiliency, Sustainability, and Onsite Wastewater

John Blount, P.E., County Engineer, Harris County, Texas Engineering Department

45 minutes

Abstract:

What have we accomplished and what is projected for the future? In days past onsite wastewater technology and regulation focused solely on disposal. Today with an emphasis on sustainability and resilience, the reuse and conservation of wastewater is now being evaluated. John will review the County’s current position and the path forward for the Houston Region, including discussion of massive reuse that goes mainly unnoticed and the future of onsite reuse and its impact in land planning.

Biography:

John Blount is a 1984 graduate of the University of Houston. After college he served as an Army Corps of Engineers officer on both active and reserve duty, achieving the rank of captain while being stationed in the United States, Republic of Germany and the Republic of Honduras. He has worked in the civil engineering field for 37 years and is a Registered Professional Engineer (WI) (TX) (ME) as well as a LEED Accredited Professional, Certified Flood Plain Manager (CFM) and Envision Sustainability Professional (ENV SP). He has been employed with Harris County for over 34 years starting as an Inspector and advancing to Director of the Engineering Department. He currently holds the position of County Engineer. He serves on the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) Joint Wastewater Committee and was previously Chairman of the Texas Onsite Wastewater Research Council appointed by the governor. John is a leader in green infrastructure and sustainability practices.

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The Science of Science: Identifying Strategic Research Needs for Environmental Science, Engineering and Public Health

Bryan Brooks, Ph.D., Director of Environmental Health Science, Baylor University

Abstract:

What are the big research needs to achieve more sustainable environmental quality? The United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals provide a global framework to assist in advancing a more

sustainable future for all people while protecting natural resources, but degradation of environmental quality decidedly challenges achieving these noble Goals. Studies of environmental quality have often been reactionary, responding to the newest disease, impaired ecosystem or species, and class of understudied chemical, physical or biological stressors.

Biography:

Bryan W. Brooks is Distinguished Professor in the Department of Environmental Science, and Director of Environmental Health Science at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. His research focuses on water quality and reuse, developing approaches to define and manage hazards and risks, environmental, aquatic and comparative toxicology and pharmacology, environmental and green chemistry, environmental public health, and the ecology, chemistry and toxicology of harmful algae blooms. Prof. Brooks has served on the NOWRA Board of Directors and coordinates NOW-R2 with NOWRA. He has served as Fulbright Visiting Research Chair in Water and the Environment at the University of Lethbridge in Canada, as a Visiting Erskine Fellow at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, as visiting Pearl River Scholar Chair Professor at Jinan University in China, and as visiting professor at the University of South Bohemia in the Czech Republic. Prof. Brooks received the Kenaga Award from the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, a Leadership Award from the Water Environment Federation, the Recipharm International Environmental Award, the Past Presidents Award from the National Environmental Health Association, and two Scientific and Technological Achievement Awards from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. He has published over 250 manuscripts with students and colleagues, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry. Prof. Brooks serves as Editor-in-Chief of Environmental Science & Technology Letters (American Chemical Society Publications).