



Manitoba Onsite Wastewater
Management Association



June 22, 2018

The Onsite Wastewater Management Industry Has a Vital Role to Play in Water Resource Management

The impact the onsite wastewater industry can have on the environment can be significant and it is gathering international attention as a cost-effective and sustainable solution to wastewater management challenges. As potable water becomes more scarce in certain regions, the international community is looking for ways to better manage wastewater and in fact to use it as a resource. Over the past few years a number of national and international partnerships have developed to discuss and develop management plans and policies that support the future sustainability of water resources and onsite wastewater features largely in this process.

In the US, the Water Environment and Research Foundation recently joined together with the WaterReuse Research Foundation to create WERF. This agency spends millions of dollars annually researching and developing policies for the management of water and wastewater resources.

The US Environmental Protection Agency has developed a partnership with eighteen other public and private sector agencies to research decentralized wastewater's feasibility as a sustainable, green, cost effective solution. Several papers have been developed by this group. Public education is a critical factor in promoting the benefits of decentralized wastewater solutions and to that end the EPA has a robust program that stakeholders can access to support education efforts. The EPA also has an MOU with WERF to properly manage decentralized wastewater systems.

Canada is no slouch in the water and wastewater research arena either. Research funding through the Canadian Water Network, the Natural Science and Research Council of Canada, the CMHC and other agencies has supported research at various universities and colleges throughout Canada on issues such as pharmaceutical contamination from wastewater, the use of wetlands to treat sewage, cold climate treatment of wastewater, assessment and management of environmental risks, water recapture and reuse, the effectiveness of LFH At-Grades Systems in the treatment of onsite wastewater and more.

On an even greater international scale, a collaborative consortium, led by the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) at University of Technology Sydney in Australia is involved in a three-year project focussing on effective governance for decentralised sanitation with BORDA Germany, the International Water Association and the UK Overseas Development Institute (ODI) among others while in the Middle East, Jordan is developing a new decentralized wastewater management plan.

The long and the short of it is, the onsite wastewater industry has a key role to play in order to ensure that the septic systems we design, install, maintain and repair provide safe and effective treatment as we return the wastewater to the environment. We may think of our industry as a pretty small cog in a big wheel, but that cog is becoming more and more important as time goes on and resources shrink.

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