

Utah On-Site Wastewater Treatment Training Program 2010-2011

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Partners/Collaborators:

- **Local:** Utah's 12 Local Health Departments; Utah On-Site Wastewater Association (UOWA)
- **State:** Division of Water Quality, Utah Department of Environmental Quality; Council of Local Environmental Health Directors (CLEHA)

Project Description

The Utah On-Site Wastewater Treatment Training Program was established in January 1998 in cooperation with the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the twelve Utah local health departments. It provides classroom and field (hands-on) training to Utah homeowners, regulators, designers, installers, pumpers, and other stakeholders in on-site wastewater treatment systems.

Adequately protecting environmental health and enhancing user satisfaction are achieved through knowledgeable selection, competent design, correct installation, and proper operation of on-site systems. Applying the right technology in the right place requires accurate information and up-to-date training. Landowners, homeowners, developers, lenders, installers, regulators, planners, municipal authorities, and elected authorities are all stakeholders in Utah on-site issues and must have current information and training to address these matters responsibly.

Utah will continue to grow, and as housing developments continue to expand into current open space, such developments may include areas of groundwater recharge, shallow soils, or shallow ground water. Current Utah rules allow the use of conventional septic tank systems, as well as eight alternative treatment systems that may be installed in areas where soils are unsuitable for conventional systems. Training those involved in the use of both conventional and alternative systems will ensure that these systems will work correctly.

Benefits to the State of Utah:

The entire state (29 counties and 12 local health departments) benefits from the training provided. Continued population growth, with associated housing developments, creates an increased need for accurate and thorough information regarding on-site wastewater treatment technologies. The Utah On-Site Wastewater Treatment Training Program addresses these challenges through such means as workshops and participation in educational conferences. Many of the soils in Utah are marginal or unacceptable for the use of conventional soil absorption systems due to high or fluctuating water tables, slowly permeable or highly permeable soil horizons, and extreme slopes, thus requiring the use of more advanced alternative systems. The On-Site Training Program provides the necessary education to utilize conventional and alternative systems in an effective manner that will protect both public health and the environment.

Accomplishments:

A state legislative initiative introduced and passed as House Bill 14S during the 2001 Legislative Session mandated a certification program for persons involved in siting, designing, operating, and maintaining both conventional and alternative on-site systems. The certification program, administered by the Division of Water Quality in the Utah DEQ, involves mandatory training provided by the Utah On-Site Wastewater Treatment Training Program.

The certification program includes three levels, each of which requires workshops and testing provided through the Utah Training Program: (1) Level 1: Soil Evaluation and Percolation Testing, (2) Level 2:

Design, Inspection, and Maintenance of Conventional Systems, and (3) Level 3: Design, Operation, and Maintenance of Alternative Systems.

Workshops are also provided for renewal of certification, as Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 certifications expire after 3 years.

During 2010-2011, two Level 1 workshops, two Level 2 workshops, and two Level 3 workshops were taught at locations around the State of Utah, as well as two Level 1 renewal workshops, two Level 2 renewal workshops, and two Level 3 renewal workshops.

We will continue to provide workshops in support of the mandatory State of Utah certification program for on-site wastewater professionals.

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Publications:

Sims, J.L., Cashell, M., Cowan, B., and Jex, R. 2010. Course Manuals for Levels 1, 2, and 3 Certification. Utah Water Research Laboratory, Utah State University, Logan, UT.



