

Dear Readers:

For seven years the Environmental Training Institute for Small Communities has been a major focus of NETCSC (National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities) activities. Held annually in July on the campus of West Virginia University, the Institute has attracted people from around the U.S. for four days of learning related to the management of small community drinking water and wastewater systems.

The Institute has been unique in that it has traditionally not been limited to one target audience. Participants have included regulators, local officials, technical assistance providers, treatment plant operators, economic development officials, engineers, environmental trainers, and other professionals involved in providing or improving small community water and wastewater services. Over the years, NETCSC has gotten consistent feedback about the value of holding classes in which both the regulated and the regulators, the assistance providers and the assistance consumers, and the experienced and inexperienced could share their perspectives.

The Institute also has provided the opportunity for participants to attend a variety of training sessions in a short period of time. Between 15 and 25 different courses and field trips presented in concurrent tracks by nationally known trainers were offered at past Institutes. One goal of the Institute has always been to identify courses that are needed and timely, but

often not readily available elsewhere. For example, financial management of small water and wastewater systems has been an area where NETCSC has determined both the need and the relative lack of available training and has been a core offering of the Institute. Other core offerings have been updates on regulatory changes, small system security and emergency response, and improved management of decentralized wastewater treatment.

However, NETCSC has long recognized that travel expenses have limited the number of people who could benefit directly from the Institute. To increase accessibility, NETCSC will increase its efforts to bring training to other parts of the country. This may involve bringing an entire Institute to another location or just a single course. Training offerings will be scheduled by request and will involve some degree of partnership and cost-sharing with those requesting the training along with other local organizations, agencies, or communities.

This issue of *E-train* describes a few of the courses that NETCSC could bring to your state or region. However, training offerings are not restricted to those courses described. NETCSC has developed a number of courses that could be presented and courses can be customized for specific topics and audiences. If you would like to have NETCSC bring a course or multiple courses to your area, contact us at (800) 624-8301 and ask to speak to a training specialist. ❖



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The National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) is located at West Virginia University and was established in 1991 with funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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Enews

Transitions

Directorship

Our friend and colleague, Dr. John Hoornbeek, has accepted a new position at Kent State University as Director of the Center for Public Administration. He served the National Environmental Services Center in various capacities for nearly 12 years, most recently as director of NETCSC. We wish him the best of luck and look forward to the possibility of partnering with him at his new organization as we all seek to serve small communities. Dr. Richard Bajura, who is serving currently as the interim Executive Director for the National Environmental Services Center, will provide leadership for NETCSC. He will be assisted by

Dr. Frank Saus and Ms. Trina Wafle. Each has had more than 20 years experience managing programs at WVU.

Etrain Editor

We welcome Ms. Marilyn Noah as the new editor of E-train. Noah has been with the National Environmental Services Center for seven years as editor of *Pipeline* and a contributor to the *Small Flows Quarterly*. She welcomes comments and suggestions for future articles and topics. Reach her by phone at (800) 624-8301 x5586 or by email at mnoah@mail.wvu.edu.

Calendar of Events

August 2006
NOWRA 15th Annual Technical Education Conference and Exposition
By the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association
August 28-31, 2006
Denver, Colorado
Phone: (800) 966-2942
Web Site: www.nowra.org

September 2006
National Association of Towns and Townships Annual Conference
September 6-8, 2006
Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill
Washington, DC
Contact: Sharon Blanchard
Phone: (202) 624-3555
Fax: (202) 624-3554
www.natat.org

American Public Works Association Annual Conference
September 10-13, 2006
New Orleans Convention Center
New Orleans, LA
Contact: Dana Priddy
Phone: (800) 848-2792 or (816) 595-5241
Fax: (816) 472-1610
Email: dpriddy@apwa.net
www.apwa.net

National Rural Water Association Convention
September 24-27, 2006
Hyatt Regency Reunion
Dallas, TX
Contact: Dawn Meyers
Phone: (580) 252-0629
Fax: (580) 255-4476
www.nrwa.org

October 2006
Association of State Drinking Water Administrators Annual Conference and Exposition
October 15-19, 2006
Tempe Mission Palms Hotel and Conference Center
Tempe, AZ
Contact: Tom Maves
Phone: (202) 293-7655
Fax: (202) 293-7656
www.asdwa.org

Water Environment Federation WEFTEC '06
October 21-25, 2006
Dallas Convention Center
Dallas, TX
Phone: (800) 666-0206 or (703) 684-2452
Fax: (703) 684-2492
www.weftec.org

November 2006
Groundwater Foundation Annual Groundwater Conference
November 1-3, 2006
Lansing, Michigan
Contact: Zoe McManaman
Phone: (800) 858-4844
Fax: (402) 434-2742
www.groundwater.org

December 2006
National Ground Water Association Annual Conference
December 5-8, 2006
Las Vegas Convention Center, Paradise Road
Las Vegas, NV
Contact: Kathy Butcher
Phone: (800) 551-7379
Fax: (614) 898-7786
www.ngwa.org

Who Needs What Training?

by Trina K. Wafle, Contributing Writer

Conducted between 2002 and 2005, NETCSC's Training Needs Assessment indicated that a well-developed training network—driven largely by certification requirements—exists for operators of environmental infrastructure but is lacking for others who are involved in wastewater, drinking water, and solid waste systems for communities of 10,000 or fewer residents. According to authors Craig Mains and John Hoornbeek, the training and technical assistance community needs to reach under-trained audiences and make effective use of different training approaches

Training programs offered by major training networks were reviewed during a six-month period. For background in applicable mandates, the authors reviewed the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act., (See NESCS Web site www.nesc.wvu.edu/netcsc/netcsc_regs.htm for a summary).

Eighty-two individuals (town administrators, plant operators, public works directors, transfer station/recycling center managers, regulators, technical assistance providers, consultants, and trainers from 50 states and Puerto Rico) were also interviewed for this study.

While those interviewed said they preferred conventional classroom training, they also said their biggest obstacles to training were time, money, and travel limitations.

The interviews also revealed a gap between the training needs local officials identified for themselves and the needs ascribed for them by others. Assistance providers and regulators participating in the interviews regularly identified more training needs for local officials than local officials identified for themselves.

The study revealed six areas of training needs:

Financial management topped the list of local officials, utility board members, assistance providers, and consultants. Specific topics of interest were capital improvements planning, asset management, maintaining financial viability, retaining qualified operators, and understanding funding channels. Management courses, in general, and financial management courses, in particular, are offered less frequently than operator training courses. Despite an increasing awareness among training organizations about the need, financial management training is still not widely available.

Emergency preparedness training ranked high with system managers, plant operators, local officials, and assistance providers, partly in response to federal requirements, and partly due to concerns resulting from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. All expressed a need for increased capacity for small communities to be able to respond to emergencies no matter what the cause of the disruption.


Regulatory compliance appeared to be acutely needed by drinking water system personnel due to a series of relatively complex regulations affecting a large number of systems. Regulations under the Microbial Disinfectants/

Disinfection Byproducts Cluster (M-DBP Cluster) were of particular interest because of the potential for systems to encounter treatment conflicts while trying simultaneously to reduce microbial contaminants and disinfection byproducts. Participants indicated a need for training that addresses simultaneous compliance with multiple drinking water regulations, including information on using advanced technologies, such as membrane filtration and reverse osmosis, as compliance strategies.

Wet weather flow issues were identified as a priority wastewater training need. Inflow/infiltration of rainwater to sewage systems issues were considered high priority, reinforced by a series of recent wastewater regulations. The data indicated that fewer courses were offered for collection systems and storm water systems than for treatment plant operation.

Decentralized wastewater treatment and management were also areas of significant training need. A lack of federal regulations for decentralized wastewater and a variety of regulatory approaches at the state and local levels present significant challenges to designers, installers, regulators, local officials, and system monitors and maintainers. Participants indicated a need for more technical training on different alternative systems, training on centralized management of decentralized wastewater systems, and monitoring and maintenance of decentralized systems. Fewer than half of the states currently have decentralized wastewater training centers. Plus the perception among regulators, funding agencies, and engineers remains that decentralized wastewater treatment is a less preferable option than centralized systems. A number of participants also mentioned that a lack of enforcement at the state level meant there was little incentive for working toward, and verifying, adequate treatment.

Municipal solid waste was viewed as increasingly being managed at the county or multi-county level rather than the town or small community level. Nevertheless, priority training needs were identified including controlling illegal dumping for solid waste managers, local officials, and assistance providers and managing operational costs. Recycling center managers were interested in training on managing operational costs.

The complete training needs assessment is available on DVD and may be ordered from NESCS at (800) 624-8301. Order #TRCDGN29. Cost is \$10.00. Shipping charges will apply. 



Craig Mains, NETCSC Training Specialist, co-author of this study.



Trina K. Wafle, NESCS Contributing Writer/Interim Associate Manager.



“What a great opportunity!”

- so say many of the National Environmental Training Institute attendees. The chance to share ideas, information, experiences, and opinions with fellow operators, regulators, small community officials, and other public employees about community training issues is priceless.

For the past seven years, the Institute has been bringing together participants from around the country; fellow travelers interested in learning about drinking water, wastewater, and utility management in a dynamic atmosphere. Over the years, the four-day-long conference has garnered a reputation for being both informative and enjoyable.

People and organizations working with small communities have found that the Institute is a particularly good way to get new staff up to speed as well as to update the knowledge base of those already experienced in environmental issues as they relate to small and rural communities.


Nationwide support for the Institute is indicated by the large contingent of co-sponsors. These are organizations with similar interests and mandates, all joining with us to bring the most current educational opportunities to the attendees.

A sampling of these co-sponsors includes:

- Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Outreach, and Assistance Center;
- National Tribal Environmental Council;
- Southern Rural Community Assistance Program - Community Resource Group, Inc.;
- Rural Water Associations of West Virginia and Pennsylvania;
- Environmental Finance Center from the University of Maryland, Region 3; and
- National Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc.

We have been joined by as many as thirteen of these like-minded associations.

From its inception, we have provided courses addressing the needs of the Institute’s audience, modifying the curriculum according to industry changes. We addressed GASB and helped participants understand it and its effects. Of course, the 9/11 tragedy pushed emergency and disaster response to the forefront and again, the Institute addressed these issues as they pertain to small communities and small utilities. We are offering courses that address new topics such as Storm Water and Incident Command while continuing to cover financial issues and general overviews of day-to-day operations of drinking water and wastewater utilities. This year we are particularly proud to host a special panel discussion on emergency response issues related to Hurricane Katrina. Regardless of the particular topic, all the sessions are designed with small community sustainability in mind.

Seven years, and the Institute is just hitting its stride – providing educational and networking opportunities to a broad spectrum of people on a broad spectrum of environmental topics in a dynamic and informed atmosphere. 

WANTED

Training Partners to Reach Local Audiences



The National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) wants to take its training “on the road” to better serve local and regional audiences. We’re seeking to collaborate with private sector and public agency partners that want to offer training to local officials and other public employees about community environmental issues. We need your help.

If your organization or agency is aware of environmental training needs in your locale, and would like to consider working in partnership with NETCSC as a sponsor, we would like to hear from you. Please contact one of our training specialists: Craig Mains (cmains@mail.wvu.edu), Mary Alice Dunn (mdunn@wvu.edu), or Sandra Fallon (sfallon@mail.wvu.edu) or call them toll-free at 1-800-624-8301.

Examples of NETCSC’s comprehensive training packages of particular relevance include **Managing a Small Drinking Water System, Assessing Wastewater Options for Small Communities, and Solid Waste Management Options for Native American Communities.**

Managing a Small Drinking Water System: A Short Course for Local Officials is the first national curriculum directed to system board members, owners, city councils and mayors, city managers, utility directors and superintendents that incorporates capacity development issues of the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments and the security related requirements of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 (Bioterrorism Act). The 11-module course teaches decision makers how to develop or enhance their water system’s technical, managerial, and financial capacity, as well as its security and emergency preparedness. Officials learn about the benefits of hiring expert assistance as they develop their system plans.

Assessing Wastewater Options for Small Communities for Local Decision-Makers this eight-module, two-day course provides comprehensive information for local officials to evaluate a community’s current and future wastewater treatment needs and implement appropriate solutions. Officials are *continued on next page*

Mississippi water board members reported that NETCSC’s training materials helped them see immediate and concrete results. Improvements included fewer customers receiving water illegally; increased water loss accountability; decreased system debt; updated emergency response plans, long-term plans, and ordinances; and increased knowledge of funding sources.



Institute participants share experiences during the “Assessing Wastewater Options for Small Communities” workshop. Photo by Jill A. Ross.




Jane Moore, deputy director of U.S. EPA’s Office of Wastewater Management, addresses attendees during NETCSC’s 2005 Institute. Photo by Julie Black.

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introduced to guidelines for selecting and working with a consulting engineer for the development and review of engineering plans.

Solid Waste Management Options for Native American Communities is designed as a Solid Waste 101 course for tribal officials who are relatively new to solid waste management. The five-module, two-day course introduces the concepts of source reduction, recycling and composting, combustion, and landfilling; how to assess the current and future waste streams for their own tribe or community; and how to develop programs associated with each. The course includes a review of the decision making process including identifying and hiring technical experts, consultants, or technology firms to assist tribal officials.

By recognizing local training needs, and taking steps to meet them, your organization or agency is taking action toward positive change. NETCSC has the experience and the capabilities to help you bring quality training and training expertise to your locale. We're looking forward to hearing from you. 

Wyoming local officials commented that NETCSC training materials were "very topical and content-specific to their needs as council members."

NETCSC Products

The National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) offers the following products and resources. Please note that prices are subject to change.

To place an order, write to NETCSC, West Virginia University, P.O. Box 6064, Morgantown, WV 26506-6064; call (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191; fax (304) 293-3161; or e-mail netc_orders@mail.nesc.wvu.edu.

NEW PRODUCTS

To place an order, call (800) 624-8301 or e-mail netc_orders@mail.nesc.wvu.edu. Please note that prices are subject to change and shipping charges may apply.

Emergency Preparedness and Security

WWPSOM58 Ten Steps to Maintain Critical Wastewater Service and Protect Public Health in an Emergency. (poster)
\$1.00

Wastewater

TRTPCD65 Onsite Wastewater System Operation and Maintenance (Microsoft PowerPoint® presentation)
12.50.

TRBKTR14 NPDES Compliance Monitoring Inspector Training – Sampling
\$19.80

TRBKTR15 NPDES Compliance Monitoring Inspector Training – *Biomonitoring*.
\$15.60

TRBKTR16 NPDES Compliance Monitoring Inspector Training – *Overview*.
\$17.20

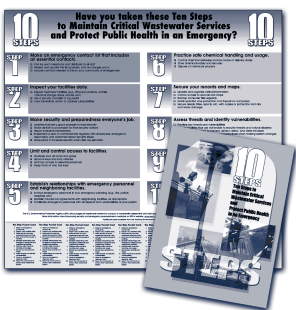
TRBKTR17 NPDES Compliance Monitoring Inspector Training – *Legal Issues*
\$23.20

TRBKTR18 NPDES Compliance Monitoring Inspector Training – *Laboratory Analysis*.
\$27.80

Drinking Water

TPPMCD66 Combination Modules 3 and 4: *Basics of a Drinking Water System/Drinking Water System Operation and Maintenance* (DVD)
\$28.40

TRBLMG06 A Guide to Asset Management for Small Water Systems
\$5.00.





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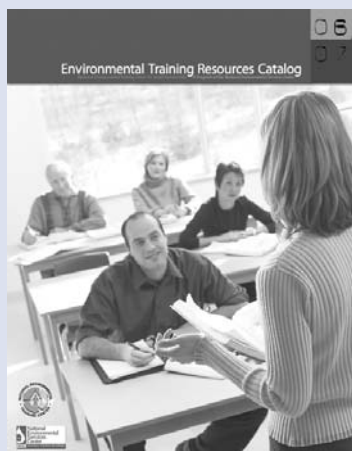
Organizational Affiliation

- Environmental Company/Manufacturer
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- Federal EPA
- Federal Agency
- International Agency
- State Organization
- National/Regional Organization
- County Health Department
- Service District
- Regional District
- Operator
- Educational Institution
- Contractor/Developer
- Consultant/Engineer
- Legal Profession
- Press/Mass Media/Newsletter
- Community
- Private Citizen

Interests/Expertise

- Wastewater
- Drinking Water
- Solid Waste
- Training
- Outreach
- Regulations
- Enforcement/Compliance
- Operation/Maintenance
- Design
- Planning/Management
- Nonpoint Source
- Research
- Finance


New NETCSC catalog available online



The National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) recently posted a new issue of its products catalog on its Web site located at www.nesc.wvu.edu/netcsc/netcsc_catalog.htm.

The *2006–2007 Environmental Training Resources Catalog for Small Communities* features more than 170 free and low-cost training products. Training packages, training aids, and training-related informational resources are available in the following topic areas:

- emergency preparedness and security,
- environmental management,
- wastewater,
- drinking water,
- solid waste, and
- training and adult education.

The catalog is available as a PDF document. Readers can download and view the catalog using Adobe Acrobat Reader. Hard copies of the catalog can also be obtained by contacting NETCSC at (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191. 



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