

THE

# LITTLE DIGGER

MINNESOTA ONSITE WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION

A Bi-Annual Publication

Fall/Winter 2024 - Vol. 39, Issue 2

## 2025 Convention promises to be "The Great MOWA Get-Together!"



Photos: (below left) Keynote speaker Hector Hernandez, (center) The Park Event Center ballroom; and (below right) Keynote speaker Dominic Mercer.



practical and personal with the following presentations: *Domestic Strength, Really?* by Dominic Mercier, Enviro-STEP Technologies headquartered in Quebec, Canada; and *Preparing Yourself for Dog Encounters and Attacks* by Hector Hernandez. *Mental Health Awareness in Our Industry* by Sara Heger and Travis Johnson rounds out the morning session.



There's nothing quite like a comfortable get-away during the depths of winter to renew MOWA members' sense of common purpose!

This year, *The*

*Great MOWA Get-Together* will be held February 3-4, 2025 at The Park Event Center in Waite Park - St. Cloud.

The Convention will bring a line-up of speakers and sessions that promises to cover a wide range of timely industry topics. Several Open Forums that will maximize networking opportunities have also been scheduled. Here's a rundown of Convention Highlights:

—The **Opening Reception** will be held from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Sunday, February 2nd at Maverick's Bar onsite at the Park Event Center.

—Events kick off Monday, February 3rd with a national **NOWRA Update** given by Minnesota's Chris LeClair, the NOWRA President-Elect.

—Monday's **Keynote Addresses** will cover the technical,

—The annual **Trade Show** will open at noon on Monday and will showcase over 20 industry vendors.

—The **MPCA Retesting Opportunity** is scheduled from 1 to 5 p.m. on Monday for all members needing this test for certification purposes.

—**28 Convention sessions** begin at 2:30 p.m. Monday, February 3rd and run through 5 p.m. Tuesday, February 4th. Most have CEUs attached that will count towards MPCA certification.

—The **Trade Show, Roe-d-Hoe Trials and Championship, Tony Ruppert Scholarship Silent Auction, and Evening Entertainment** will close out Monday.

—Tuesday, February 4th special events include a 10 a.m. **Tank Manufacturers' Meeting** followed by a noon Membership Meeting Lunch.

—Sessions throughout the Convention will include **six Open Forums** for Maintainers, Service Providers, Installers, Designers, Inspectors and LGU (Local Government Unit) reps.

—A **Board of Directors meeting** will close out the Convention.

As always, this Convention is your chance, as MOWA members, to make your needs, preferences and issues known to leadership. See you folks in February!

**Early Bird Registration is now open! Register online by January 10, 2025!**



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## A Message from the MOWA President

### 2025 promises to be another productive MOWA year!

by Jake Bell, MOWA Board President

Hello MOWA Members,

As we are nearing the end of our busy season, I would like to reflect back on the things we have accomplished and been working on so far this year. We had a great summer soils seminar hosted by Kurt and his family at Pokegama Lake Resort. It was a great turnout and wonderful venue. Kurt and his family did a great job of hosting MOWA. A big thank you is owed to Kurt's family, Tammy and The U of M staff for putting on such a great event.

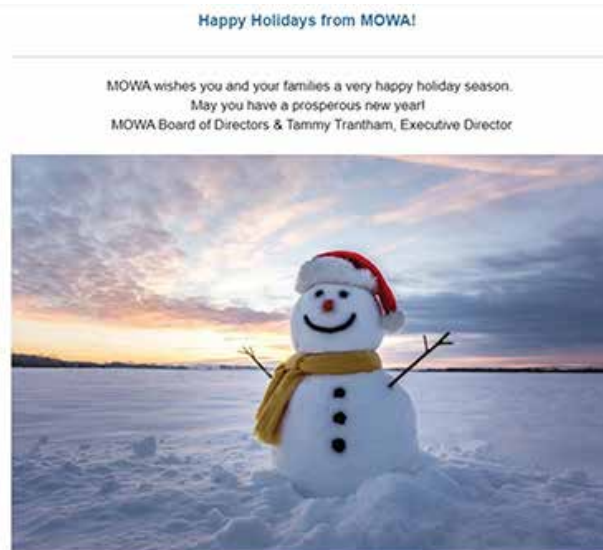
We have also been finalizing the MOWA Mentorship Program and are excited to debut that in front of the membership at our winter convention in St. Cloud. We will also have our other Committees provide updates to the membership. Our 2025 planning is well underway. We are working on the 2025 summer soils seminar. Pete along with the U of M and MOWA have been working on a series of webinars focusing on the onsite industry to have an opportunity to "Ask Me Anything". I think this is going to be great for our industry and we will need some membership help with topics and guests for the webinars as they develop.

We are finalizing the winter convention at Park Event Center which the entire board is very excited about. We are going to have a great time with some fun events at a beautiful convention center. I would like to thank the Convention Committee and especially Tammy for all of the hard work they have put into the winter conference planning. Mark your calendar for February 3-4, 2025.

I would also like to say thank you to Tammy and the Board for all the hard work they have done this year and continue to do. MOWA would not be the great organization it is without all of their dedicated time and effort. In closing, I can't wait to see everyone at the winter convention as we hand the reins of MOWA over to Rick Viita who is the President-Elect. I know MOWA will be in great hands so please take the time to say "Hi" and introduce yourself to Rick this winter. It has been a pleasure to serve on the Board and I can't wait to see where MOWA goes in the future. Stay safe and see you in St. Cloud in February!

Jake Bell

MOWA President



This is a bi-annual publication of the Minnesota Onsite Wastewater Association.  
**Editor: Tammy Trantham, Email: [mowaexec@gmail.com](mailto:mowaexec@gmail.com)**

The articles printed in the publication do not necessarily reflect the opinion of this organization. Readers are encouraged to respond to the articles with their own points-of-view. We welcome industry-related comments or articles. Information or inquires should be sent or made to any of the following:

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## 2025 MOWA Convention

The Park Event Center, Waite Park, MN

**Sunday, February 2, 2025**

3:00 PM	5:30 PM	Registration Opens - Main Entrance
3:00 PM	6:00 PM	Vendor Set-up in Glacier/Yosemite
6:00 PM	8:30 PM	Opening Reception at Mavericks Bar

**Monday, February 3, 2025**

Start	Finish	Schedule, General Session, Room: Grand Canyon, Badlands, Central Park & Rushmore		
7:00 AM	9:15 AM	Registration Opens, Main Entrance		
7:00 AM	11:00 AM	Vendor Set-up in Glacier/Yosemite		
<b>7:00 AM</b>	<b>8:30 AM</b>	<b>Continental Breakfast, Location: Grand Canyon</b>		
8:15 AM	8:30 AM	MOWA Update Jake Bell, MOWA President		
8:30 AM	8:50 AM	NOWRA Update, Chris LeClair, NOWRA President-Elect		
8:50 AM	9:40 AM	MPCA SSTS Program Update, Nicole Blasing, MPCA (1 Direct CE)		
9:40 AM	10:30 AM	Keynote: Domestic Strength, Really? - Dominic Mercier, Enviro-STEP Technologies (1 Related CE)		
<b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>10:45 AM</b>	<b>Break</b>		
10:45 AM	11:45 AM	Keynote: Preparing Yourself for Dog Encounters & Attacks, Hector Hernandez (0 CE)		
11:45 AM	12:00 PM	Mental Health Awareness in Our Industry, Sara Heger & Travis Johnson		
<b>12:00 PM</b>	<b>2:30 PM</b>	<b>Trade Show with lunch provided - Glacier/Yosemite and Yellowstone</b>		
1:00 PM	5:00 PM	<b>MPCA Exam Re-Testing Opportunity, Room: TBA</b>		
Tracks		Track I	Track II	Track III
Room		Grand Canyon	Central Park/Badlands	Rushmore
2:30 PM	3:20 PM	Maintainer Open Forum Keith Valento  (1 Direct CE)	Total Station for Construction Layout - Part 1 Rob Luers & Tony Edberg (1 Direct CE)	Toilet Paper Impacts on Septic Systems Dominic Mercier (1 Related CE)
3:20 PM	4:10 PM	Service Provider Open Forum Lucas Caldwell (1 Direct CE)	Total Station for Construction Layout - Part 1 Rob Luers & Tony Edberg (1 Direct CE)	Understanding the Purpose and Responsibility of Compliance Programs John Otterbein & Aaron Finke (1 Direct CE)
<b>4:10 PM</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>Trade Show with refreshments - Glacier/Yosemite &amp; Yellowstone Roe-D-Hoe Trials &amp; Championship Silent Auction for Scholarship</b>		
<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>????</b>	<b>Networking Social at Maverick's Bar</b>		

# 2025 MOWA Convention

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

7:00 AM	8:15 AM	Continental Breakfast Location: Main Entrance		
Room/Tracks		Grand Canyon/Track I	Central Park/Badlands/Track II	Rushmore/Track III
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	Wastewater Flows, Loads, & Related Considerations Jon Kaiser (1 Related CE)	Inspector Open Forum Rick Viita & Chris Uebe (2 Direct CE)	Uncovering Minnesota: A Journey Through Soil and Landscapes Dan Wheeler & Stacey Feser (1 Direct CE)
8:50 AM	9:40 AM	So I Got a New Vac Truck Dave Gustafson (1 Direct CE)		Wastewater Treatment Myths Jon Kaiser (1 Related CE)
9:40 AM	10:00 AM	Break, Location: Main Entrance		
10:00 AM	10:50 AM	Tank Manufacturers' Meeting, Room: Residence Inn Hotel Meeting Room		
10:00 AM	10:50 AM	Troubleshooting Pumps Jeremiah Brodie, SSPMA (1 Direct CE)	Design Open Forum Bernie Miller & Jesse Kloepfner (2 Direct CE)	Resources for Educating Property Owners Sara Heger (1 Related CE)
10:50 AM	11:40 AM	Septic Tank Installation Strategies For Success Travis Johnson; (1 Direct CE)		Excavation & Trench Safety Scott Mellum (1 Related CE)
11:40 AM	12:30 PM	Code Evolution: Catching Up with Sewage Dave Gustafson (1 Direct CE)	MPCA Technical & Policy Update Cody Robinson (1 Direct CE)	Lessons Learned from Commercial Sampling Sara Heger (1 Related CE)
12:30 PM	1:30 PM	Lunch Provided with Membership Meeting, Location: Yellowstone and Yosemite/Glacier		
Room/Tracks		Grand Canyon/Track I	Central Park/Badlands/Track II	Rushmore/Track III
1:30 PM	2:20 PM	Installer Open Forum Tony Scully & Darren Flygare (2 Direct CE)	Why What We Do Matters and the Design Process Alex Pepin (1 Direct CE)	Tools to Work Smarter, Not Harder - Part 1 Jesse Kloepfner (1 Direct CE)
2:20 PM	3:10 PM		Operating Permits - Problems and Solutions Open Forum Alex Pepin; (1 Direct CE)	Tools to Work Smarter, Not Harder - Part 2 Jesse Kloepfner; (1 Direct CE)
3:10 PM	3:20 PM	Break, Location: Main Entrance		
3:20 PM	4:10 PM	DLI Regulations for SSTS Installers and Other SSTS Professionals Part 1 John Roehl; (1 Related CE)	LGU Open Forum John Otterbein & Aaron Finke (2 Direct CE)	Multi-Metering a Control Panel & Best Installation Practices Tyler Parks & Vince Hannesson (1 Related CE)
4:10 PM	5:00 PM	DLI Regulations for SSTS Installers and Other SSTS Professionals Part 2 John Roehl; (1 Related CE)		No Session
5:00 PM	6:30 PM	Board of Directors Meeting, Room: Glacier		



# 2025 Convention Announcements!

## Attendee Registration is OPEN!

**Early bird registration deadline is January 10, 2025!**

Online Registration is preferred if you're attending the 2025 Convention.

Go to <https://mowa-mn.com/attendee-registration/>

Need to mail in your registration form?

Fill out one form (Page 7) for each person attending and send with payment to MOWA.

## Make your hotel reservations now!

*We have blocks of rooms available at the two hotels that are connected to The Park Event Center.*

### Hilton Garden Inn - St. Cloud

550 Division Street, Waite Park, Minnesota 56387  
*(off Highways 15 and 23, next door to the Park Event Center)*

Booking Link - <https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/rooms/>

Call Hotel at 320-640-7990 - Use Group Code: 930

**\$124/night + taxes**

### Residence Inn - St Cloud

450 Division Street Waite Park, Minnesota 56387

Booking Link - <https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/>

**\$134/night + taxes**




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MOWA 2025 Winter Convention
February 3-4, 2025
The Park Event Center, St. Cloud

Attendee Registration Form
Early Bird Deadline:
January 10, 2025

One form per person, make additional copies for additional individuals.

MOWA Members

Wait! Register online:

Before January 10, 2025:

Full Conference 1st Company Rep = \$325

Full Conference Subsequent Rep = \$275

After January 10, 2025:

Full Conference 1st Company Rep = \$425

Full Conference Subsequent Rep = \$375

For Business/Government members, 1st attendee registers at the "1st Company Rep" rate; all other attendees who are member of the same organization receive "Subsequent Rep" rate.

Non-Members

Join or renew your membership today to receive special member conference rates!

WAIT! Register online.

Before January 10, 2025:

Full Conference = \$405

Subsequent Rep = \$355

After January 10, 2025

Full Conference = \$505

Subsequent Rep = \$455

Registrant Information for Full Conference

First Name: Last Name:

Company Name:

Email: Preferred Phone:

Preferred Mailing Address:

City: State: ZIP:

Guest Registration Fee: This is for non-certified individuals. If you are certified, please use above pricing.

Name: Company: Fee: \$150

Name: Company: Fee: \$150

Total Amount Due: Registration \$ + Guest Fee \$ = \$

Pay by credit card: PAY ONLINE! Log in to the Member Portal on our website to register!

Please provide a phone number for MOWA to call you for payment. We no longer accept credit cards written on the forms. Phone:

Cardholder Name: Signature:

By this signature, I authorize MOWA to process fees pertaining to the MN Onsite Wastewater Convention.

Pay by check. Allow up to three weeks for processing.

Make payable to MOWA; NEW MAILING ADDRESS: MOWA, 5865 Neal Ave N, PMB #341, Stillwater, MN 55082

(Phone: 612.361.9629)

I agree to indemnify and hold harmless Minnesota Onsite Wastewater Association (MOWA), from any and all liability, loss, damage, or expense from any incident which may arise while attending any portion of the 2025 MOWA Annual Convention. If applies, I authorize any photos taken of me at this event to be published in MOWA's Little Digger and/or other MOWA-related promotional materials.

Signature: Date:



# Certification = Expertise = Professionalism

## How to Check Your Continuing Education Credits

The MPCA SSTS Search Tool is the most accurate source for SSTS licensing and certification information. Need to know expiration dates for certifications or licenses, how much continuing education you need, which DCI's your business has listed for specialty areas, or what SSTS businesses are located near you?

Check out the search! You can find it at the following link: <https://webapp.pca.state.mn.us/ssts/business-search>

### How to use the SSTS Search Tool to check your Continuing Education credits:

**1. Search your name under the "Certified Individual" tab**

**2. Click on "view" under "Education Transcript":**

Certification # Individual Name	Specialty Areas	Certification Expiration Date	Reason for Expiration or Invalid Certification	Education Transcript	Employer(s)
C9315 John A Doe	Intermediate Inspector	11/09/2027	N/A	<a href="#">View</a>	

Continuing Education Credits, Continued on Page 9



**Continuing Education Credits, Continued from Page 8**

**3. Your Education Transcript will expand. The blue bar indicates how many credits your specialty areas require. The green bar represents how many credits you have completed. And the yellow bar represents how many credits, and which type of credits, remain by your expiration date.:**

C9315      Intermediate Inspector      11/09/2027    N/A      Close

John A Doe

**Education Transcript**

- If you carry multiple specialty areas, only the highest amount of hours described below are required.\* Required hours do not add up. Maximum hours required every 3 years = 18.
- Direct does not mean that Installers must take Installer continuing education, Designers must take Designer continuing education, etc. Direct accreditation means that the training includes the administration and technical parts of Minn. R. chs. 7080-7083. Check with your training provider to determine what type and amount of credits they offer.

Required Continuing Education Hours between 11/09/2024 and 11/09/2027 to renew existing Certifications\*

Specialty Area	Option	Total Required	Minimum Maintainer Direct Required	Maximum Maintainer Related Allowed	Minimum Direct Required	Maximum Related Allowed	Minimum Soils Direct Required
Intermediate Inspector	A	18	N/A	N/A	3	9	6

Completed Continuing Education Hours between 11/09/2024 and 11/09/2027 to renew existing Certifications\*

Specialty Area	Option	Total Completed	Maintainer Direct Completed	Maintainer Related Completed	Direct (Non-Soils) Completed	Related Completed	Soils Direct Completed
Intermediate Inspector	A	0	0	0	0	0	0

Remaining Continuing Education Hours between 11/09/2024 and 11/09/2027 to renew existing Certifications\*

Specialty Area	Option	Total Remaining	Maintainer Direct Remaining	Maintainer Related Available	Direct (Non-Soils) Remaining	Soils Direct Remaining
Intermediate Inspector	A	18	N/A	N/A	3	6

**Training Event History**

Event Name	Event Date	CE Type	CE Hours	Counted Toward 11/09/2027 Renewal Requirement
(No events listed)				

**Examination History**

Examination Type	Examination Date
SSTS Intermediate Designer/Inspector	05/29/2013

- a. You will see in the picture above that John Doe has 18 credits he needs to earn in the blue bar (6 out of these 12 need to be Soils)
- b. In the green bar, you can see that John Doe has earned 0 credits
- c. In the yellow bar, you can see that John Doe still has 18 credits to earn by their expiration date

**4. You can see the training the MPCA has recorded for you under "Training Event History":**

**Training Event History**

Event Name	Event Date	CE Type	CE Hours	Counted Toward 11/09/2027 Renewal Requirement
(No events listed)				

**Examination History**

Examination Type	Examination Date
SSTS Intermediate Designer/Inspector	05/29/2013

**Continuing Education Credits, Continued on Page 10**



## OSTP To Award 10 KIGG Scholarships in 2025

### KIGG Scholarship Program Seeks Applicants for 2025 Awards

by Onsite Septic Treatment Program staff, University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota - Water Resources Center's Onsite Sewage Treatment Program (OSTP) is pleased to again provide a scholarship opportunity to cultivate onsite wastewater professionals across our industry in Minnesota. The OSTP, starting with Roger Machmeier (1928-2024), has long believed and supported the importance of educating onsite wastewater professionals in Minnesota and beyond using the common phrases Keep it simple (KISS), Keep it natural (KINN) and Keep it level (KILL). To honor this strong educational philosophy and pay it forward – we proudly announce the Keep It Going (KIGG) 2025 scholarship!

KIGG scholarship recipients will be awarded waived registration fees for select 2025 UM OSTP courses. We award a maximum of 2 scholarships per Certification workshop topic (*listed at right*) for total of up to ten awards. This is an annual scholarship with details announced each year with our educational workshop brochure/schedule. This award will cover registration expense only (any required manuals, supplies, lodging, etc. are the responsibility of the applicant). The 2025 KIGG scholarship committee reserves the right to review all submitted application materials, determine eligibility and award scholarships for education courses offered by the UM OSTP in calendar year 2025.

**2024 KIGG scholarship submission deadline for application is January 22, 2025.**

KIGG scholarship is not available for Continuing Education Credits.

Applicants may apply for up to two of the following U of M OSTP educational Certification workshops

Installing Onsite Systems - Must have passed MPCA exam Introduction to Onsite Systems before applying

Maintaining Onsite Systems - Must have passed MPCA exam for Introduction to Onsite Systems before applying

Service Provider - Must have passed MPCA exam for Introduction to Onsite Systems before applying

Basic Design of Onsite Systems - Must have passed MPCA exams for Introduction to Onsite Systems and Soils before applying

Inspecting Onsite Systems - Must have passed MPCA Introduction to Onsite Systems and Soils before applying

Intermediate Design and Inspection of Onsite Systems - Must be a certified Basic Designer or certified Basic Inspector before applying

Advanced Design and Inspection of Onsite Systems - Must be a certified Intermediate Designer or certified Intermediate Inspector before applying

#### Keep It Going Scholarship Rules

- Applicant must have completed the U of M OSTP Certification course: Introduction to Onsite Systems and passed MPCA Introduction exam.
- Applicant must be seeking a new SSTS certification (new to SSTS or a new SSTS specialty area of certification).
- Applicant can only be awarded scholarship once.
- Applicant must complete the entire scholarship application to be considered.

#### Continuing Education Credits, Continued from Page 9

##### Registering for Continuing Education

**Special Note:** Registration for Continuing Education is not handled by the MPCA. Registration is handled by accredited training providers. If you have an interest in registering for a course, wish to attend a course for partial credit, or have any other enrollment or registration questions surrounding course offerings, contact the training provider directly prior to the event.

To see the credits the MPCA has recorded for your current 3-year certification period

- Go to the Certified Individual Search on the MPCA website: <https://webapp.pca.state.mn.us/ssts/business-search>.

- Pre-Certification training that is completed in the days prior to completing an exam and used toward gaining Certification cannot be counted as continuing education training.

##### If you need to earn additional credits

- Check the MPCA's online events and meeting calendar and select Subsurface sewage treatment training from the Training and exams category drop-down menu to see all of the currently accredited SSTS events: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/events-and-meetings>.
- To enroll, you must contact the identified training provider. The MPCA cannot enroll individuals for training events.

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## A World Perspective on Wastewater Expertise

### Why What We Do Matters

by Alex Pepin, Ten Thirty Environmental Solutions

From September of 2023 until the end of November 2024, I was blessed to have the opportunity to live in the beautiful country of Indonesia along with my wife and our three children; ages 12, 9 and 5. We decided to go to Indonesia after meeting with an American family who lived there and hearing about their needs in the area with respect to environmental protection and jobs. After significant prayer and thought, we decided to move there for 14-16 months and attempt to start a business that would help provide jobs and assist in the protection of the environment and public health in the area.

Despite many, many cultural blunders and miscommunications we were blessed to be able to start a business that employs six local Indonesians and helps local schools manage their trash, teach the students how to compost, as well as provide some guidance on wastewater projects that arise with our clients.

I would like to highlight the pressing need for people with knowledge and experience in business and the wastewater and water sectors in developing countries around the world and how we can help to meet those needs. I would also like to offer encouragement to contractors and our local regulatory partners in developing a robust system that helps to protect public health and the environment. When there is a lack of professionalism within the industry and regulatory oversight it can lead to major public health and environmental consequences.

Data is sometimes difficult to come by in developing countries but according to a 2015 report from the World Bank, only 55% of the population of Indonesia has access to basic sanitation services. That number is probably higher today but even with a 20% rise that still means that a quarter of the population

*There is a large need for professionals of our expertise throughout the world.*

does not have access to even basic sanitation services. In addition, according to a UNICEF report a 2017, the study found that 89 percent of water sources and 67 percent of household drinking water were contaminated by fecal bacteria. With these numbers showing evidence of issues with proper wastewater management, it isn't surprising to hear that only 7 percent of wastewater in Indonesia is treated. These staggering statistics are mirrored in other developing countries where there is a large need for people with the knowledge of how to manage wastewater for a reasonable cost. This is where we come in as septic professionals! The truth is, Indonesia is a fairly developed developing country and many other developing countries have a much greater need than they do in these areas.

We were blessed to have been supported by people in our local church in helping us to go to Indonesia for such an extended period of time. Even short-term trips to developing countries with organizations that specialize in wastewater and water management can have an enormous impact.

The following pictures are some examples of projects that we were able to work on during our time in Indonesia. The wastewater project highlighted installing constructed wetland systems in a local hotel/restaurant that previously had surfacing cesspools. The total cost of these systems was a little under \$2,000; about \$1,000 each.

There is little if any regulatory oversight and the limitation of keeping costs extremely low makes achieving protection of public health and the environment challenging.

Why What We Do Matters, Continued on Page 13

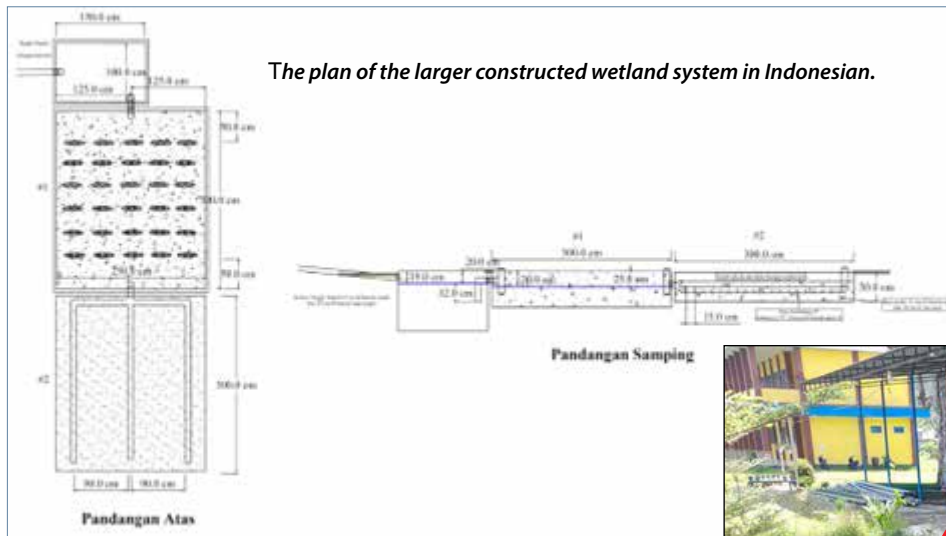


*The finished constructed wetland systems with a septic tank followed by a gravel/rock constructed wetland followed by a small seepage bed.*

Why What We Do Matters, Continued from Page 12



The before pictures show the surfacing wastewater from the systems that were eventually replaced with the constructed wetland systems above.



The plan of the larger constructed wetland system in Indonesian.

is very, very apparent that what we do matters. Thank you all for continuing to do such amazing work throughout the state and working along with MOWA to continue to promote professionalism and high standards in the onsite wastewater industry in Minnesota.

The above situation with a shallow well very close to a cesspool is a common occurrence, resulting in a source of drinking water contamination in Indonesia.

There is a large need for professionals of our expertise throughout the world. Those of us with a great deal of experience should be encouraged to share our knowledge and help address those needs. Even short trips with organizations can make impactful differences to local populations. We were blessed to have been supported by our church on our long-term trip, but there are many other options for short term trips to developing countries that can be searched online. If you would like more information reach out to me via email or when you see me at this year's conference in St. Cloud.

My time in Indonesia has made me very grateful to be part of such a great industry. In Minnesota, we may not always see that what we do matters but when you take away the standards it



The photo below right shows a shallow well (with the manhole lid on top), with a static water level of 6' below grade, approximately 20 feet from a septic tank (pipe sticking up near the corner of the building).



## MOWA Furthers Profession Through Mentorships

### MOWA to launch Mentorship Program at 2025 Convention

By Tammy Trantham, MOWA Executive Director, and Jake Bell, MOWA Board President

*Anyone you speak to in the industry would probably say that they have or would have benefited from a mentorship experience.*

Professional training in any industry raises the bar for any trade to build a positive reputation with the public. Minnesota has been a leader for years in the onsite wastewater industry with rules, regulations and trainings for its professionals. One of the requirements for professionals is to have complete a mentorship experience. Anyone you speak to in the industry would probably say that they have or would have benefited from a mentorship experience.

It is also well known that our industry is facing a workforce shortage. Even more so, as our experienced professionals are retiring, we are losing years of knowledge in the workforce. Mentorship programs allow new professionals to gain skills and knowledge to better serve their customers, the industry and the public health of Minnesota.

MOWA has worked throughout 2024 to put together this program and we plan to launch it in 2025. We have had numerous committee meetings discussing many aspects of the program and experiences from many across the state. Here we are laying out the basic information of the program. You'll see more in depth information on the website. We are seeking any additional feedback. This program will be launched after the 2025 MOWA Convention.

As professionals, we must remember that training our new professionals raises our industry to better standards. By having highly trained and knowledgeable individuals, we help protect public health and the environment.

A huge thank you to all the Committee members that provided insight into this program. With support from our MOWA Membership we hope to make this a successful and perpetual program through our Association.

#### Goals of the MOWA Mentorship Program

1. Graduate knowledgeable professionals that can adequately and responsibly install SSTS in Minnesota.
2. Build a network of professionalism that provides resources to build skills in the SSTS industry.
3. Provide or aid a professional in locating a mentor to complete the program.
4. Show the importance of being a part of the Minnesota Onsite Wastewater Association (MOWA) to continue to build programs for professionals across the state

#### Roles of Participants in the Program

##### Apprentice

The apprentice is the new professional looking for experience to fulfill the requirements of MPCA to fulfill certification. This individual is willing to learn from experienced professionals. By participating in the MOWA Mentorship Program, they are willing to complete more than the minimum requirement of MPCA. Dedication to complete the program in its entirety is required.

##### Mentor

The mentor is an experienced professional willing to train and evaluate the apprentice. This person has had extensive experience in the SSTS industry and has the time to provide knowledge to the apprentice. The Mentor will be building a new professional of the industry. They will pledge to train, educate, and evaluate the apprentice to build their skills to better serve the SSTS industry of Minnesota.

##### MOWA

MOWA will provide support to both the Apprentice and Mentor throughout the program. It will administer the program by managing the application process, locating a mentor (if needed), aid in compiling documentation for submittal to MPCA, an option to review documents prior to MPCA submittal, and provide a final report of completion of the program.

#### Program Options

##### Option 1: Current Employee of Company with Mentor

A current employee of a company is applying to be the Apprentice and the Mentor would be a person already working for that company that is qualified to be a Mentor.

##### Option 2: New Professional seeking Mentor

A new professional that is not an employee of a company and is looking for a mentor to fulfill their requirements to become certified. When an individual is looking for a mentor, they will complete the Apprenticeship Application Form and MOWA will begin the process of locating a Mentor for this Apprentice.

In this option, the Apprentice must be open to a wide geographic location and possibly travel. In order to find the best possible mentorship, flexibility in scheduling with a mentor is needed. There is also the option that the Mentor may travel to work with the Apprentice. This will depend on the Mentor and their availability to do so.

See the [MOWA Website](#) for complete task analysis requirements for the Apprentice and Mentor. Listed there are also the fees for the program. <https://mowa-mn.com/mowa-mentorship-program/>

Feedback or questions? Email MOWA at: [mowaexec@gmail.com](mailto:mowaexec@gmail.com)



# MOWA Gears Up for Webinars; Suggestions Anyone!

## Monthly webinars will be another "benefit of membership"!

**MOWA:  
Ask Me Anything  
Webinars**

MOWA is planning on hosting free webinars for its members that will address a variety of topics in our SSTS industry. The webinars will start in March 2025. There are no CEUs connected to these events. The webinars are being held to help answer questions that onsite professionals may have in a more timely manner.

The group that is putting the webinars together is looking for topics. Each webinars will target a topic that will be presented by a guest speaker for about 20 minutes. Then the session will open up for discussion for the remainder of the 60 minutes.

There is no CEU available for participating in a webinar, but the form will be a great opportunity to ask questions and get answers. The webinar format will be a learning experience and an opportunity to network with other professionals.

### What's on Your Mind?

Planners are looking for topic suggestions to spur discussion.

If you would like to submit a topic suggestion, scan the QR code (below right) with your phone and fill out the topic survey. Please be specific because that will help planners to figure out which speakers to bring to you.

Or click on the link below to access the online form:

<https://forms.gle/da29dg726jUNk6iJA>

Planners also welcome your recommendations for potential speakers. If you want to share your expertise or want to lead a discussion, please let us know.

This is a members-only benefit!



**Webinars will only be available to members, so keep your MOWA Membership current!  
Not a member yet? [Join today](#) and make the most of your membership!**

### 2025 Convention Exhibitors

*Registration is open for exhibitors to reserve spaces for the 2025 MOWA Winter Convention. Be sure to register early to get the best spots!*

*Registration includes all CEUs, meals and entertainment—for the single price of the booth fee (up to two people)!*

*For registration materials, go to [www.mowa-mn.com/exhibitor-registration/](http://www.mowa-mn.com/exhibitor-registration/)*

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*Get-Together Highlights*

- Two Keynotes and national and state updates—
- 28 Sessions with MPCA-CEU designation—
- Open Forums for Every Type of Onsite Professional—
  - Trade Show with over 20 Vendors—
  - Roe-D-Hoe Trials & Championship—
- Silent Auction for Tony Ruppert Memorial Scholarship—

*The Great*  
**MOWA**  
*Get-Together*

**2025 MOWA Winter Convention**  
**February 3-4, 2025**  
**St. Cloud - Waite Park, The Park Event Center**

*In this Little Digger*

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