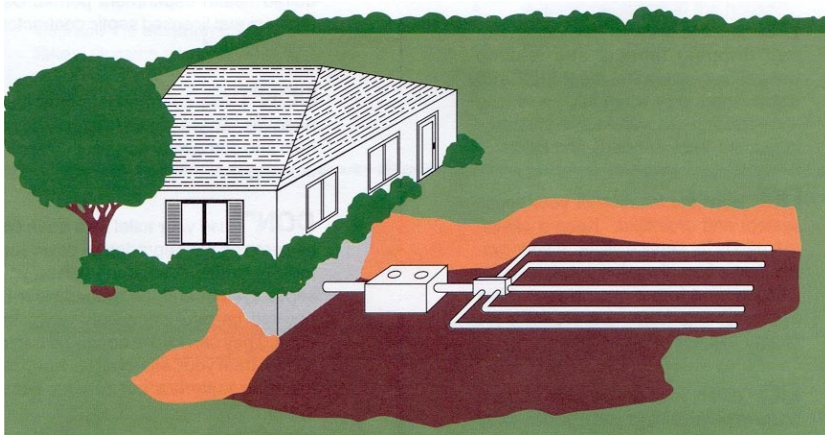


Onsite Wastewater Education Program



Project Name: Onsite Wastewater Education Program	
<i>Background/Need for Project:</i>	Nearly 50 million people in the United States use a septic tank as the primary treatment system for household waste. A properly functioning septic system (conventionally a septic tank and subsurface disposal trench, bed, or pit) is one of the most efficient treatment methods available. However, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) identified onsite/septic wastewater treatment facilities as the overwhelming activity/facility contributing to water quality impairment in Arizona -- over 90% of the identified activities. There is a need to educate onsite system owners and operators about the proper management of their systems and to educate the onsite wastewater treatment industry about proper design, installation, and maintenance practices.
<i>Location:</i>	Arizona, Guam, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, Hawaii
<i>People involved:</i>	Kitt Farrell-Poe, Edwin Swanson (ADEQ), Consortium of Institutes for Decentralized Wastewater Treatment
<i>Started/ Expected end date:</i>	2000 - ongoing
<i>Brief project description:</i>	<p><i>Project objectives:</i> The objectives of the Onsite Wastewater Education program are to empower the users, installers, maintainers, and regulators of onsite wastewater treatment and dispersal systems to make wise choices to protect human health and the environment by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) having new owner/operators understand the basics of onsite wastewater treatment, so that they can make informed decisions while purchasing a new system; (2) informing owner/operators of existing systems of what their responsibilities are in operating and maintaining an onsite wastewater system; (3) informing RV owner/operators of responsible methods of

	<p>treating and dumping of RV black water and grey water; and</p> <p>(4) training regulators and practitioners on the basics and particulars of onsite wastewater treatment.</p> <p><i>Project activities to date:</i> Since 2003, 38 workshops (24 Inspection, 9 Soils & Site Evaluation, 3 Design, and 2 Installation) have been conducted to 1522 people. Developed the manual for the soil and site evaluation course which is now the state accepted manual. Developed a design manual and am working to get it accepted as the state design manual. Developed comprehensive website to support the Onsite Wastewater Education program [http://ag.arizona.edu/waterquality/onsite]. Presented two seminars in Guam and am working with Hawaii to help them start an education program. Worked with Region 2 to assist them in educating their two territories about effective onsite wastewater treatment strategies and education/outreach.</p> <p><i>Accomplishments/Findings:</i> The Arizona Extension Onsite Wastewater Education program has voluntarily brought a national organization to the State to provide training in inspection of onsite wastewater treatment systems. The ADEQ now requires this course in order to qualify as an inspector in their Transfer of Property Inspection program. Also, the ADEQ requires soil and site evaluation education for those practitioners who are not a registered sanitarian, registered geologist, or professional engineer. The ACE Onsite Education program is one of three organizations that have completed the necessary steps to qualify as an ADEQ-accepted course AND is the only organization that conducts on-going training. Gave a presentation to Region 1 in 2006 on our activities. Conducted workshops with Land Grant colleagues (represented by regions 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6) in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico Worked to assist in raising the awareness of regulators on proper siting, installation, maintenance, and oversight of onsite wastewater systems in treating domestic wastewater.</p> <p><i>Plans for the future:</i> Work with the Pacific Islands to adapt <i>Septic System Owner's Guide</i>. Form statewide working group to improve design manual and have state adopt it as the official onsite design manual for training programs.</p>
<p><i>Outcomes:</i></p>	<p>As a result of two presentations while in Guam in 2007, three Guam regulators attended my inspection training course. Am working with Hawaii Cooperative Extension to initiate an onsite wastewater education program there.</p>