



NATIONAL COMMUNITY DECENTRALIZED WASTEWATER DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The National Community Decentralized Wastewater Demonstration Project was initiated by Congress in the FY'99 appropriations bill for US EPA, in order to “jump start” the process of technology transfer of various decentralized treatment options.

- Three demonstration projects were designated for funding: \$1.5 million for Warren, Vermont; \$3 million for Block Island/Green Hill Pond, Rhode Island; and \$5.5 million for La Pine, Deschutes County, Oregon.
- In the FY'00 appropriations bill, three additional projects were funded: \$4 million for the Florida Keys; \$1.2 million for Mobile, Alabama; and \$0.7 million for Skaneateles Lake, New York.
- In the FY'02 appropriations bill, Table Rock Lake, Missouri was designated as the seventh site. In the FY'03 bill, the following projects were funded: \$0.9 million for Colonias, Texas; \$1 million for Mud River Watershed, West Virginia; \$1 million for Upper Patuxent River Watershed, Maryland; \$1.7 million for West Philadelphia and Rodale Institute Farm, Pennsylvania; \$3.05 million for Chittenden County and Colchester, Vermont; and \$0.575 for Lowndes County, Alabama.
- In the FY'04 bill, the following projects were funded: \$1.35 for Seattle, Washington; \$1.35 for Blackstone Watershed, Massachusetts and Rhode Island; \$1 million for Boise, Idaho; \$1.35 million for Pasquotank River Watershed, North Carolina; \$0.8 million for Washington, D.C.; and \$0.75 million for Chagrin River Watershed, Ohio.

These community demonstration projects are important opportunities to advance the practice of decentralized wastewater treatment and management. US EPA reports in the 1970s and 1980s had recommended inspection and maintenance programs for onsite systems, and recent national demonstration projects focused on advanced technology installations. However, the decentralized field now recognizes that a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach is needed. Additional elements include identification of environmentally critical resource areas, risk-management methods of applying advanced treatment standards in those “hot spots,” stakeholder and community participation in integrated wastewater and land-use planning, long-term monitoring programs, and new regulatory structures that support innovation and accountability at the local level. The communities have been selected to represent a range of water quality problems and innovative solutions.

The Coordinated Information Exchange Project

The National Decentralized Water Resources Capacity Development Project (NDWRCDP) has funded a “Coordinated Information Exchange Project” for technical outreach to the community demos. The basic objectives of this “info. exchange” project are: to promote communications and information exchange among the US EPA projects, and between the demo projects and the NDWRCDP; to provide technical advice on wastewater treatment- and management-related issues to benefit the demo projects; and to gain an understanding of the gaps in knowledge that these demo projects uncover to assist the NDWRCDP in defining future national research and development efforts. Three members of the NDWRCDP Project Steering Committee have been designated for each demo site to serve as an information exchange team, and these members also serve on US EPA’s Expert Panel to review and comment on the initial grant application, and subsequent progress reports and project deliverables.

Two reports summarizing lessons learned from the demonstration projects were prepared by Valerie I. Nelson, the first based on a survey of the early projects and several site visits through 2003, and the second based on discussions of demonstration project leadership at a meeting in the summer of 2004.