



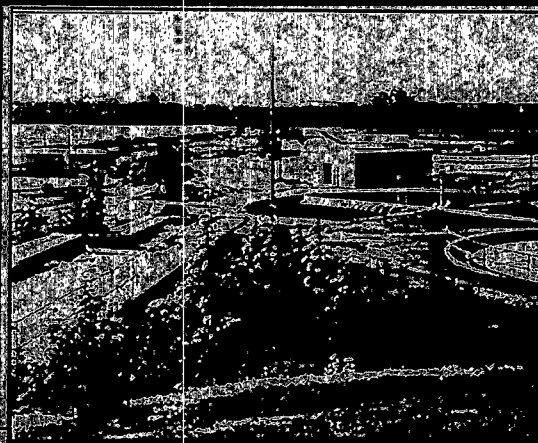
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Environmental Protection
Agency

Office Of
Water
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April 2000

Small Communities Team Outreach and Technical Assistance Programs

End of Year 1999 Accomplishment Report



Executive Summary

Protecting public health and improving water quality are the major goals of the Clean Water Act. Small communities, for the purposes of this program, (populations of 10,000 or less), Indian tribes, and Colonias often experience difficulty in achieving these goals. Many communities and tribes could avoid costly construction projects through improved management skills, adequate financing, appropriate technology, and better wastewater treatment system operation and maintenance.

The EPA's Office of Wastewater Management provides water and wastewater services to tribal and community leaders through its "Small Communities Team." The team partners with organizations to manage programs of technical assistance, financial assistance, and education & training to small communities and Indian tribes.

The team's mission is to administer programs through which small communities can access information or financial and technical assistance to achieve adequate, cost-effective wastewater systems, and to help focus and increase assistance efforts for small communities.

Small Community Team members manage the following main program areas:

- The Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) addresses management, financing, construction, and the Clean Water Act compliance needs of wastewater treatment, collection, and disposal systems in small communities;
 - ✓ *In FY 1999 RCAP provided on-site technical assistance for wastewater projects for 95 small, rural communities in 21 States. Projects included 59 facilities development, 9 management and finance, 15 operations and maintenance, and 12 planning, development, and training projects.*
- The On-Site Technical Assistance Program - 104(g) provides no-cost, over-the-shoulder operation and maintenance, financial, and technical assistance to municipal wastewater treatment plant operators;
 - ✓ *In FY 1999, the Program assisted 988 facilities, 915 of those facilities have either achieved or maintained compliance, or improved plant performance. The Program's success rate over the past year has been greater than 90 percent.*
- The National Small Flows Clearinghouse (NSFC) provides national information on collection and distribution systems, this information helps small communities meet their wastewater treatment needs;
 - ✓ *NSFC maintains four databases that contain articles from professional journals, listings of manufacturers and consultants, innovative and alternative facilities, and regulations. In FY 1999, these databases continued to expand to include information geared to community-sized wastewater facilities. Plans are being made to make more of the information available on-line.*

- The National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) supports environmental trainers who work with small communities to improve drinking water, wastewater, and solid waste services;
 - ✓ *A new drinking water course for local officials began production in FY 1999 as well as incorporation of "distance learning" components into several NETCSC courses. NETCSC also sponsored a training "Academy" to promote creation of State training centers for onsite wastewater systems. NETCSC conducted 15 training sessions with 16 co-sponsors, reaching 325 participants in 7 EPA regions and representing 12 States. NETCSC also served as a regional downlink site for 2 satellite video training conferences.*
- Decentralized Wastewater Systems are individual on-site septic systems, cluster systems, and alternative wastewater technologies. When properly sited, designed, installed and maintained, on-site/decentralized systems provide a long-term and cost-effective solution to wastewater treatment;
 - ✓ *Completion of a Report to Congress in January 1999, summarizing the project and its accomplishments and provision of financial and technical support for establishment of onsite training centers.*
- The Colonias program provides assistance to low-income, generally unincorporated communities along the U.S. / Mexico border which lack basic wastewater infrastructure;
 - ✓ *Ninety-one (91) Colonia projects were underway in Texas and New Mexico, with 32 in the planning phase, 17 under design or construction, and 5 which construction has been completed. About 89,350 Colonia residents are or will benefit from these projects in 672 Colonias.*
- The Clean Water Indian Set-Aside Grant Program provides grant funds for the planning, design and construction of tribal wastewater treatment facilities; and
 - ✓ *In FY 1999 twenty-eight (28) tribal wastewater systems were funded from the set-aside.*
- The Alaska Native Village (ANVs) Program help ANVs and rural Alaska communities fund construction of drinking water and wastewater sanitation facilities.
 - ✓ *In FY 1999 fifty-one (51) drinking water and wastewater sanitation systems were funded with the funds provided for Alaska rural and native communities.*

The team's programs help to ensure the attainment of adequate wastewater treatment services by small communities so that their water quality and public health needs are met.

For more information regarding these programs simply visit the Municipal Assistance Branch's Small Communities web-site at www.epa.gov/owm/smallc.htm, or call 202-260-5856.

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SMALL COMMUNITIES

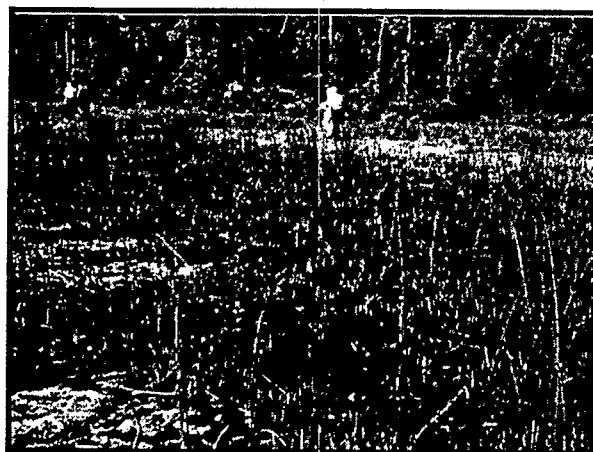
EPA defines "small communities" for this program as those that have fewer than 10,000 people and that have inadequate wastewater collection or treatment systems. Among them are communities and tribes throughout the United States as well as native villages in Alaska and economically disadvantaged areas along the United States-Mexico border. More than a million homes in America still lack basic indoor plumbing, and many small communities have central wastewater systems that need extensive repair. These conditions pose serious health and environmental problems for residents.

Team Mission:

To administer programs through which small communities can access information or financial and technical assistance to achieve adequate, cost-effective wastewater systems. To help focus and increase assistance efforts for small communities.

Team Vision:

To help ensure the attainment of adequate wastewater treatment services by small under-served communities so that their water quality and public health needs are met.



(Wetlands area)

Role of the Small Communities Team:

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Office of Wastewater Management (OWM) administers programs that can help small, rural, and under-served communities get adequate wastewater treatment and disposal systems. These programs are managed in the Municipal Support Division (MSD) by the Small Communities Team (the team). Chartered by MSD management in December 1997, the team was created to help small communities attain wastewater treatment services that meet water quality and public health standards. The team consists of program analysts and environmental protection specialists who manage program resources and activities. The team's web-site can be found at www.epa.gov/owm/smallc.htm.

While some of the programs administered by the team provide direct financial assistance to build wastewater facilities, most take the form of information development and technical expertise initiatives conducted by our partners that can help communities solve their own problems. Team activities stimulate outreach that delivers appropriate information to decision makers in needy communities. Outreach is conducted by partners who receive EPA funding for a variety of activities and products, such as newsletters, hotlines, wastewater system information, over-the-shoulder technical assistance for wastewater operators, technology and management demonstration projects, and delivery of training materials to environmental trainers, educators, and others who work with small communities.

This report highlights accomplishments of the assistance programs the team manages. It describes team programs and outreach initiatives, resources provided, and major 1999 accomplishments that helped small communities comply with Clean Water Act (CWA) requirements and improve their quality of life. Team contacts in EPA's Municipal Assistance Branch can provide specific information about the programs.

Small Community Needs

The wastewater treatment needs of small communities are significant. According to the 1996 Needs Survey Report to Congress, total documented needs for communities with fewer than 10,000 people are \$13.8 billion - 11 percent of the Nation's total documented needs. Also, small communities have greater basic infrastructure needs than larger communities: secondary treatment comprises 28 percent of the total documented needs for small communities compared to 20 percent for larger ones, and new collector sewers account for only 6 percent of the need for larger communities but 29 percent for small ones. These statistics reflect, in part, continuing efforts to extend wastewater collection and treatment to small communities. As part of this effort, the EPA 1999 Congressional Appropriations Act provided approximately \$46.7 million for small community wastewater programs administered by the team. The chart below shows how those funds were distributed.

Small Communities Team Program Funding

Program	FY 1999	FY 1998	FY 1997
Rural Community Assistance Program	\$545,000	\$545,000	\$521,000
National Small Flows Clearinghouse On-site Demonstration Program	\$1.25 million	\$1.25 million	\$1 million
Clean Water Act Indian Set-Aside Grant Program	\$6.7 million	\$6.7 million	\$6.7 million
Alaska Native Village Sanitation Grant Program	\$30 million	\$15 million	\$15 million
U.S. / Colonias Wastewater Assistance Program	Covered by Border program	\$50 million (Texas)	\$50 million (Texas)
U.S. / Mexico Tribal Border Grant Program	\$3.9 million	\$2.1 million	\$4.5 million
Operator Training Program-104(g)(1)	\$1.79 million	\$1.79 million	\$1.79 million
National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities	\$1 million	\$1 million	\$1 million
Small Community Outreach and Education (SCORE)	Voluntary support	Voluntary support	Voluntary support
National Small Flows Clearinghouse	\$1.55 million	\$1.55 million	\$1.52 million
TOTAL	\$46.7 million	\$79.9 million	\$82 million

Technical Assistance: 1999 Program Accomplishments

To help communities build and operate self-sufficient wastewater systems that comply with CWA requirements, EPA and Congress over the years have made funds available to create several information, training, and technical assistance programs. Often communities and tribes can avoid costly construction projects by improving their management skills, seeking adequate financing, selecting appropriate technology, and improving the operation and maintenance of their facilities. In FY 1999, many small communities were able to do just that through EPA assistance programs managed by OWM's Small Communities Team.

Field Assistance.....

Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP)

RCAP's small community wastewater project operates under a cooperative agreement funded by EPA's congressional add-on grant. The program is carried out through a national network of nonprofit organizations that focus on helping small, rural, and under-served communities meet Clean Water Act requirements. Many of the communities are populated by low-income minorities who have problems addressing their wastewater treatment issues. The program targets:

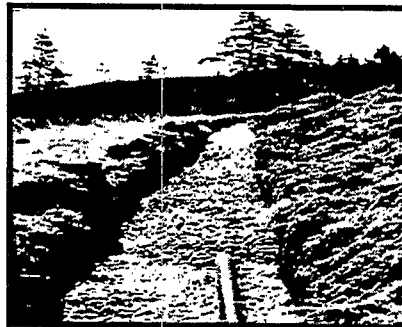
- *Communities without sewers under administrative orders;*
- *Small systems with operations and maintenance problems;*
- *Communities with individual permits and flows less than 1 MGD that are in violation of their discharge permits;*
- *Communities that need to upgrade their wastewater collection, treatment and/or disposal facilities in order to meet Clean Water Act requirements; and*
- *Small, rural communities with other management, financing, construction, operations and technical needs including, but not limited to, an inability to access public financing; a history of non-compliance; the absence of institutional capacity to implement facility improvements whether central or non-central solutions; and an insufficient financial base to construct, operate, manage and maintain facilities.*

RCAP Funding-

In FY 1999, EPA targeted \$545,000 for RCAP's technical assistance efforts. An additional \$27,250 of RCAP's in-kind contributions provided a total of \$572,250 for the small community wastewater project.

RCAP Accomplishments-

The FY 1999 accomplishments include the following:



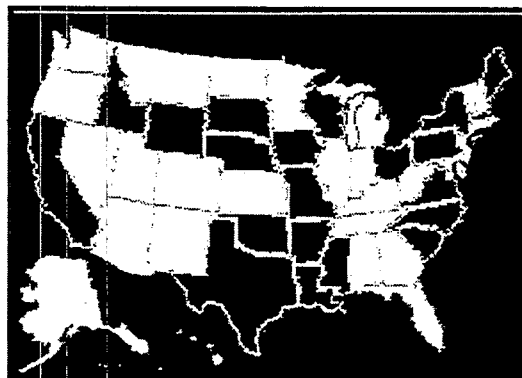
(Sewer line extension)

- *RCAP provided on-site technical assistance for wastewater projects for 95 small, rural communities in 21 States. Projects included 59 facilities development, 9 management and finance, 15 operations and maintenance, and 12 planning, development, and training projects;*
- *RCAP leveraged \$4,189,170 to assist small communities, most with fewer than 3,000 residents. A population of 105,679 directly benefitted from RCAP's assistance; and*
- *RCAP networked with a variety of coordinators and stakeholders including EPA Regional staff, community officials, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Utilities Service (RUS), and Small Towns Environment Program (STEP) personnel.*

RCAP Success Stories for selected Small Community Wastewater Projects-

- ✓ Lake Tekakwitha, Missouri
- ✓ Pendleton Mobile Home Park and Gara, Missouri
- ✓ Wright City, Oklahoma
- ✓ West Madison Utility District, Madison County, Mississippi
- ✓ Pine Valley Plantation Mobile Home Park, Belchertown, Massachusetts
- ✓ Damascus, Virginia
- ✓ Delta City, North Carolina

In FY 99 RCAP provided technical assistance for wastewater projects in the following states (AR, CA, ID, IA, LA, ME, MA, MS, MO, NE, NY, NC, OH, OK, PA, SC, SD TX, VA, WI, and WY) which are shaded on this map.

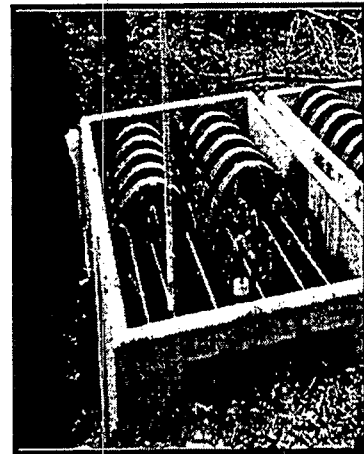


To read highlights of their accomplishments, visit RCAP's web-site at www.rcap.org.

Demonstration Projects.....

National Onsite Demonstration Project

Funded by EPA and administered through the National Small Flows Clearinghouse (www.nsfcc.wvu.edu), this multi-phased project demonstrates the effectiveness of alternative on-site water technologies (treatment of wastewater on the property where it originates, or by means of cluster systems serving several homes). The program calls for construction of on-site systems at various locations in more than 10 states. It also includes monitoring of systems performance, documentation of costs, active public education programs, and development of management approaches to assure proper operation and maintenance. The program aims to develop model programs for managing and maintaining on-site systems and for training local officials, installers, and engineers. Congressional add-on funding has provided \$6 million for the program through FY 1999. The FY 1999 accomplishments include the following:



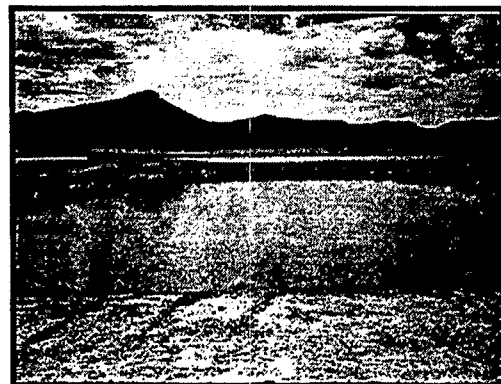
(Sand filter)

- *Completion of a Report to Congress in January, 1999, summarizing the project and its accomplishments;*
- *Provision of financial and technical support for establishment of onsite training centers;*
- *Completion of a report summarizing the results of phase I of the project;*
- *Preparation and dissemination of septic system statistical information derived from Census Bureau data bases; and*
- *Establishment of a partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission to study decentralized wastewater approaches for Appalachia.*

Wastewater Treatment Grants.....

Clean Water Act Indian Set-Aside (ISA) Grant Program

This grant program helps pay for planning, designing, and constructing wastewater treatment systems for Indian tribes and Alaska Native Villages (ANVs). All federally recognized tribes, ANVs, and tribes on former reservations in Oklahoma are eligible to apply for an ISA grant. The EPA administers this grant program in cooperation with IHS. This partnership optimizes the technical resources available through both agencies to address tribal sanitation needs. Each year, 0.5 percent of the CWA Title VI (State Revolving Fund) is set aside for construction of tribal wastewater systems. Through FY 1999, the EPA ISA Program has disbursed more than \$86 million for 176 projects.



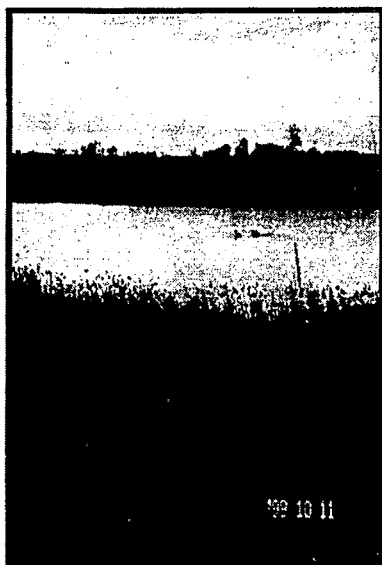
(Wastewater treatment lagoon)

The FY 1999 accomplishments include the following:

- *Twenty-eight tribal wastewater systems were funded from the \$6.7 million set-aside; and*
- *Outreach materials -- tribal wastewater success stories and a revamped Indian home-page can be accessed at www.epa.gov/owm/indian/. These tools were made available to increase tribal awareness and use of the CW ISA program.*

Clean Water Indian Set-Aside Success Stories-

- ✓ *Oglala Sioux Tribe, Pine Ridge Reservation, SD*
- ✓ *Tohono O'odham Nation, Sil Nakya Community, AZ*
- ✓ *Makah Wastewater Facility, WA*
- ✓ *Koyuk Wastewater Facility, AK*
- ✓ *Savoonga Wastewater Facility, AK*



(Wastewater lagoon and wildlife area)

Alaska Native Village (ANVs) Sanitation Grant Program
Congress and EPA created this grant program in 1995 to help ANVs and rural Alaska communities fund construction of drinking water and wastewater sanitation facilities. Of the 268 communities in Alaska, 192 are considered ANVs. More than half of these villages have unacceptable drinking water and wastewater sanitation systems to service their residents (about 75,000 people). In some villages, the occurrence of fecal contamination and communicable disease is quite high. Most of these villages have only basic sanitation systems, such as pit privies or "honey bucket" haul systems as the sole means of sewage collection and disposal. As of FY 1999, \$90 million has been made available for more than 185 sanitation systems in these communities and villages. The State of Alaska has provided matching funds equivalent to EPA's investment. The FY 1999 accomplishments include the following:

- *Fifty-one (51) drinking water and wastewater sanitation systems were funded with the \$30 million provided for Alaska rural and native communities.*

U.S. / Mexico Tribal Border Grant Program

Funding for Indian tribes within 100 kilometers (62 miles) of the United States-Mexico border was appropriated by Congress in 1996 to assist tribes with the planning, design, and/or construction of high-priority drinking water and wastewater treatment projects. Approximately \$22 million has been made available to address the pressing need for infrastructure financing on Indian reservations and on a number of Indian lands along the border. Twenty-two projects have been funded. The FY 1999 accomplishment include the following:

- *Seven projects received grant funding totaling \$3.9 million.*

U.S. Colonias Wastewater Assistance Program

Colonias are impoverished communities along the United States / Mexico border which evolved out when developers sold small tracts on marginal land in unincorporated subdivisions to low-income farm workers who could not afford adequate better housing. Unacceptable environmental and sanitation conditions, including a lack of safe drinking water and wastewater treatment services, have caused a high rate of hepatitis A and gastrointestinal diseases in these communities. Approximately 1,200 colonias, with a total population exceeding 300,000, have been identified in Texas and New Mexico. A few also exist in Arizona and possibly in California. In 1993, EPA began awarding grants to Texas and New Mexico to construct wastewater facilities and alleviate these unsanitary conditions.

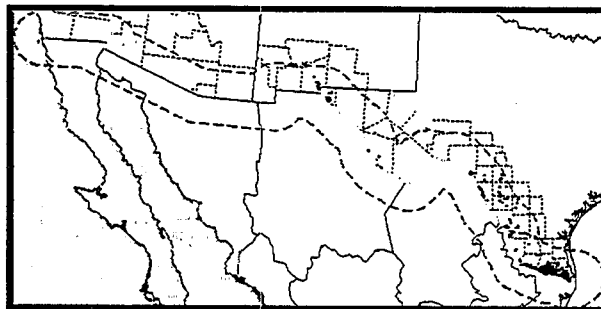
Congress has appropriated \$320 million from fiscal year 1993 through fiscal year 1998, when specific funding for Colonias was completed. Colonias are eligible for additional funding through the general border environmental infrastructure program, also funded by EPA.

Federal grants, matched by state resources, help finance construction of water and wastewater facilities in Colonias. Community general technical assistance, preparation of project proposals, overall management of infrastructure projects, technical review of project designs, and project construction management are provided by the Texas Water Development Board and the New Mexico Environment Department, which are responsible for the day-to-day program management. The FY 1999 accomplishment include the following:



(Unidentified Colonia)

- *Seventy-eight (78) Colonia projects were underway in Texas, with 24 in the planning phase and 17 under design or construction. About 89,350 Colonia residents are or will benefit from these projects in 672 Colonias;*
- *In New Mexico, 13 Colonia projects which include 8 in the planning or design phase, and 5 which construction has been completed. These projects will serve a population of 13,800 ; and*



- *EPA assisted the Texas Attorney General's efforts promoting legislation for closing the loopholes that allowed colonias to develop. The state legislature has adopted such laws and the Attorney General has taken legal action against developers who sold Colonia lots without basic water and sewer services.*

Colonias Programs Provides a Clean Start-

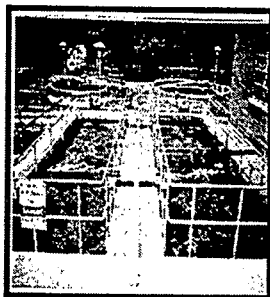
For decades, communities have existed along the United States-Mexico border lacking the most basic services that U.S. residents generally take for granted-safe drinking water, wastewater collection and treatment, paved roads, garbage pickup, and, in some cases, even electricity. One such community, Lull Colonia, located near Edinburg, Texas, did not have access to sewage treatment since the 1920s. Most of the 1,300 residents who live there did not have water service in their homes for cooking and bathing, but not for drinking-and often there was no indoor plumbing. Through the use of grants and loans from EPA, the United States Department of Agriculture, the State of Texas, and the City of Edinburg, Lull residents-having endured decades of neglect-now have modern water and wastewater facilities.

Training: 1999 Program Accomplishments.....

The Small Communities Team manages outreach programs that offer various educational and hands-on training opportunities for people living in small communities or for owners or operators of small wastewater systems. Programs focus on a variety of operator training, curricula development, outreach workshops and conferences, and peer matching activities. The fiscal year 1999 program accomplishments are highlighted below.

Operator Training Program - 104(g)(1)

Authorized under section 104(g)(1) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1982. The Program provides no-cost, over-the-shoulder, on-site technical, financial, and operation and maintenance assistance to operators of small municipality owned wastewater treatment plants. Assistance is offered to plants that discharge less than or equal to 5 million gallons of effluent per day, and are either out of compliance or in danger of being out of compliance with their wastewater discharge {NPDES} permit, or are trying to improve overall plant performance.



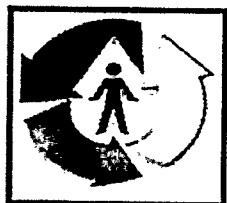
(Municipal wastewater treatment plant)

Since the Program's inception in 1982, a network of forty-seven States or State 104(g)(1) training centers have been set up throughout the United States. From that time 6000 municipal WWTPs {a modest count} have been assisted by the Program's technical trainers. Specifically in 1998 and 1999, the Program respectively assisted 999 and 988 facilities, 1805 of those facilities have either achieved or maintained compliance, or improved plant performance. Over the course of the past two years, the Program's success rate has been greater than 90 percent. The FY 1999 accomplishment include the following:

- *EPA regional offices allocated more than \$1.79 million to 48 states to continue onsite technical assistance for wastewater treatment plant operators across the country;*

- *A web-site has been developed for the program, which lists all pertinent information regarding training center and EPA regional office contacts, which can be accessed at www.epa.gov/owm/tomm.htm;*
- *The Maryland Center for Environmental Training is preparing the National 104(g) Program training center survey and Individual Regional reports. These reports will help to better the Program by identifying strengths and weakness, and how to improve problematic areas;*
- *A Tribal Wastewater and Technical Assistance Center is being established under section 104(g)(1) of the CWA. The center will aide Tribes with wastewater concerns and help to implement the Office of Water's Indian Strategy, which states by the year 2005, EPA will reduce the number of homes in Indian country with inadequate wastewater sanitation systems by twenty-five percent (25%); and*
- *Approximately 150 technical assistance providers attended the 16th Annual National Operator Training Conference, which will be held in Providence, Rhode Island from June 6-9, 1999.*

National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC)



NETCSC serves as a national training and education center for environmental trainers to improve the quality of wastewater, drinking water, and solid waste services in communities with fewer than 10,000 people. NETCSC develops new training curricula, redesigns existing curricula, and partnering with other organizations presents training courses around the country to help small communities meet Federal and State environmental requirements. NETCSC supports a toll-free technical information resource center that maintains several electronic databases and a materials repository

for environmental trainers. The center publishes a quarterly newsletter, a resource catalog, a directory of State onsite training centers, and maintains a website. Created in 1991, NETCSC operates under an EPA-NETCSC cooperative agreement funded by a Congressional add-on. It is located at West Virginia University in Morgantown, West Virginia. Its toll-free number is 1-800-624-8301. Its website address is <http://www.estd.wvu.edu/netc/netcsc-homepage.html>. The following are highlights of NETCSC's FY1999 accomplishments:

- *Training Development and Delivery. A new drinking water course for local officials began production in FY 99 as well as incorporation of "distance learning" components into several NETCSC courses. NETCSC also sponsored a training "Academy" to promote creation of State training centers for onsite wastewater systems. The event drew 26 leading trainers representing onsite training centers in 20 States and Canada as well as a regional center and the private sector. NETCSC conducted 15 training sessions with 16 co-sponsors, reaching 325 participants in 7 EPA regions and representing 12 States. NETCSC also served as a regional downlink site for 2 satellite video training conferences. Some NETCSC's courses have been approved for continuing education credits in at least 3 States. Over the years NETCSC has developed 32 courses;*

- *Training Assistance.* NETCSC training offerings earned a 95 percent customer satisfaction rating from course participants. NETCSC provided training information or products to 330 environmental professionals and expanded information in its databases on training activities, materials, and organizations. NETCSC displayed materials at a total of 26 national and State conferences and negotiated cooperative ventures with 16 national and State organization to share and distribute training information;
- *Promotions and Outreach.* NETCSC prepared and sent out 11 hard copy news releases to various news outlets and prepared 3 promotional foldouts and other marketing materials for its curricula presentations and other activities. 16 external publications carried NETCSC-related stories;
- *Website.* NETCSC's website logged 4,500 hits in FY1999 including log-ons from 30 countries outside the United States. Among them were Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Africa, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Australia, Poland, Belgium, Austria, Spain, England, Ireland, Argentina, and Uruguay. NETCSC completed 4 updates to the website including 3 links to other organizations' web-sites; and
- *Publications.* NETCSC published 4 issues of its free quarterly newsletter E-train and distributed each to 6,600 subscribers, up 300 from last year. Also published were a training resource catalog and a national directory of onsite wastewater training centers.

Outreach: 1999 Program Accomplishments

Several EPA outreach initiatives undertaken by team-managed programs brought new information, knowledge, and skills to small under-served communities. Databases, telephone hotlines, publications, and presentations assisted a variety of small community audiences with their wastewater needs. The following describes several outreach highlights for FY 1999.

Small Community Outreach and Education (SCORE)

This information network is part of EPA's information and technical assistance outreach efforts for small communities. EPA's wastewater program created SCORE in 1988 to help small communities build and maintain self-sufficient wastewater facilities that meet CWA requirements. SCORE works with States, Federal agencies, public interest and advocacy groups, and educational institutions to deliver its messages to audiences: namely that self-sufficient wastewater facilities result from appropriate technology, sound financial management and operations, pollution prevention, and public education. States play the key role in outreach delivery to their communities. EPA in past years provided small grants, most under \$10,000 to States to conduct small community outreach activities. The SCORE network includes EPA headquarters and regional SCORE coordinators as well as State and advocacy organizations. SCORE serves as a vehicle to spread the messages of the various programs managed by the Small Communities Team as well as many other EPA activities and publications.



In FY 1999, SCORE networked with other small community outreach programs in headquarters, the regions, and advocacy organizations on small community activities and products. These included team programs, the headquarters Office of State and Local Relations, the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, the Small Town Advisory Subcommittee of the Local Government Advisory Committee, the International City Managers Association (ICMA) newsletter SCAN, National Association of Towns & Townships (NATaT). The ICMA newsletter has carried several stories on Small Town publications and activities and articles have also appeared in the Water Environment newsletter. The team and regional SCORE coordinators have distributed small community publications and materials to SCORE partners. The headquarters SCORE coordinator has enlisted the services of several regional SCORE coordinators to serve as technical reviewers on courses produced by the National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities.

The National Small Flows Clearinghouse

The National Small Flows Clearinghouse (NSFC) serves as the national collection and distribution center for information on small community wastewater systems and innovative/alternative technologies. NSFC helps small communities find affordable, onsite wastewater treatment services through various means. These include a toll-free technical assistance hotline, an Internet home page with online discussion groups, computer databases, two newsletters, a journal, and technical publications and videos. NSFC helps America's small communities save thousands of dollars in consulting and construction costs while maintaining their quality of life. NSFC is the only national resource of its kind dealing with small community wastewater infrastructure. It has become a model for other agencies seeking to establish technical assistance programs for small communities. NSFC is supported by a Congressional add-on grant. In FY 1999, NSFC distributed over 100,000 products. Some highlights of its services during FY 1999 are listed below:

- *Web-site: Usage continued to increase, to over 2,500 distinct hits per month;*
- *Computer Databases: NSFC maintains four databases that contain (1) articles from professional journals, (2) listings of manufacturers and consultants, (3) innovative and alternative facilities, and (4) regulations. In FY 1999, these databases continued to expand to include information geared to community-sized wastewater facilities. Plans were made to make more of the information available online;*
- *Periodicals: The format for the quarterly newsletter, Small Flows, was revised, and refereed technical articles have been incorporated instead of publishing in a separate journal. Pipeline, for small community governments, continued to be published quarterly; and*



(Drip irrigation system)

Toll-Free Hotline: Calls to the hotline continued to increase, from 1,300-1,500 per month in FY 1997 to about 2,000 per month in FY 1999.

Sometimes, It Only Takes a Phone Call-

It all started with a phone call from Rockwall, Texas. A homeowner's association in that small community east of Dallas needed help. The communities' septic systems were failing and they knew that it was just a matter of time before they would draw the attention of regulatory agencies and face fines. They were considering forming a public improvement district and extending sewers from a nearby treatment plant. The \$11,000-per-household price tag for that option was well out of reach for many in the community. The association called NSFC and asked several questions. Using materials supplied by NSFC, along with references for several nearby consultants and state officials who could help them, the group decided on a small-diameter sewer system discharging into the treatment plant. At a cost of about \$2,400 per household, the system is saving the community about \$8,600 per connection. The group has formed a non-profit corporation, is accepting memberships in the association as a management unit, and will soon select an engineer to design its system. One phone call put a small community in touch with more than 35 trained professionals who could help them.

Team Publications:

A listing of informational material published by members of the Small Communities Team follows:

- Fact Sheet: Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) Help for Small Community Wastewater Projects, EPA 832-F-99-013, Facts Sheet #2.0, January 1999;
 - Federal Funding Sources for Small Community Wastewater Systems, EPA 832-F-97-004, November 1997;
 - Clean Water Indian Set-Aside Grant Program Success Stories, October 1999, located at www.epa.gov/owm/indian/;
 - Small Community Fact Sheets (published October 1999) on the wastewater treatment needs and financial conditions of communities with less than or equal to 10,000 people, located at www.epa.gov/owm/sc/facts.htm::
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- ✓ *The 1990 U.S. Decennial Census of Housing and Population
EPA 832-F-99-060)*
 - ✓ *The 1996 Clean Water Needs Survey (EPA 832-F-99-058)*
 - ✓ *The USDA Rural Utilities Service (EPA 832-F-99-059)*
 - ✓ *The EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund (EPA 832-F-99-057)*

Copies of these publications may be obtained by contacting the Office of Water Resource Center at 202-260-7786 or the National Center for Environmental Publications and Information (NCEPI) at 513-489-1890 or 800-490-9198, or by accessing the world wide web at <http://www.epa.gov/ncepihom>. Include the document control number with your request. You can also see <http://www.epa.gov/owm/home>.

Team Contacts

The Small Communities Team is made up of staff from the Municipal Support Division of EPA's Office of Wastewater Management. Current team members or advisors and their programs and telephone numbers are as follows:

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CWA Indian Set-Aside Grant Program

Alaska Native Village Sanitation Grant Program

U.S. / Mexico Tribal Border Grant Program

Grant Program (Sylvia Bell).....202-260-7255

Rural Community Assistance

Program, Inc. {1-888-321-7227}

Web-site: www.rcap.org

(Maria Campbell).....202-260-5815

National Environmental Training Center for

Small Communities {1-800-624-8301}

Web-site: www.estd.wvu.edu/netc/netcsc-homepage.html

SCORE (Betty Ford).....202-260-8510

National Small Flows

Clearinghouse {1-800-624-8301}

Web-site: www.nsfc.wvu.edu

NSFC On-site Demonstration Program

(Steve Hogue).....202-260-5841

U.S. Colonias Wastewater Assistance Program

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