

**On-Site Wastewater Strategy Task Force
Meeting #1
July 26, 2005 – 10:30 a.m. – Yoho Board Room
Indiana State Department of Health**

Members Present

Steve Adams, Facilitator
Chuck Andres
Bob Watkins
Richard Wise
James Sullivan
Rick Wajda
Don Jones
Terry L. Whitson

Members Absent

Dick Blazer
Bill Grant
Brad Lee

ISDH Staff

Howard Cundiff
Alan Dunn
Michelle Milliken
Teresa Watson, recording

Welcome, Introductions & Announcements

Steve Adams, Director of Strategic Development for the Office of Rural Affairs, called the first meeting of the task force to order at 10:30 a.m., in the Robert O. Yoho Board Room of the Indiana State Department of Health. He welcomed all those attending as well as explaining his role as ‘facilitator’. He also explained that the task force would meet 4 times with the first two meeting primarily for presentations by the ISDH and the Builders Association with the final two meetings dedicated to formulating the recommendations of the task force. Following those remarks, Mr. Adams asked for introductions to be made by those participating in the meeting.

Overview of Task Force Objectives

Terry L. Whitson, Assistant Commissioner for Health Care Regulatory Services of the ISDH, explained that the task force was formed to help the ISDH develop strategic objectives toward developing on-site sewage systems. He stated that another objective of the task force was break down some of the large issues into smaller components and approach the smaller objectives – not tackle entire systems. He emphasized the fact that the task force was not formed to write rules – the groups focus is a much broader focus.

He explained that the responsibilities of the task for are:

- (1) Identify problems and issues with on-site systems.
- (2) Identify problems and issues with permitting.

Mr. Whitson thanked everyone for their willingness to serve on the task force and for the time and effort involved.

Overview of Sewage Systems/Approval Process – Problems & Issues

Alan Dunn, with the assistance of a Power Point presentation and handouts, guided the task force through the history and processes of regulating sewage systems, rules and laws.

He finalized his remarks by discussing problems and issues related to on-site wastewater systems.

Comments & Discussion

Mr. Adams opened the floor to the other task force members for comments.

Comments offered were:

Some local health departments (LHDs) have shown a reluctance (refusal) to accept review responsibilities for secondary treatment and sub-surface drip systems.

Systems not defined in state rules are considered an ‘experimental system’.

There is a need for a mechanism to be in place for the conversion of an ‘experimental system’ to an ‘alternative system’ and for an ‘alternative system’ to a conventional system’.

There is no state law currently in place which requires LHD personnel to attend any training or hold any certifications, thus showing a need for education/training/certification programs for LHDs.

There is a lack of uniformity in LHD programs and policies.

A need has been shown to step up data collection.

Enforcement is much needed on operation and maintenance of systems.

State and local resources to make these changes . . . do we need fees?

Find a balance with the state’s geologic differences.

What do we do when groundwater is already contaminated?

There is nothing mandated by state or local entities at the point of a property sale relative to septic system history, maintenance or check of on-site systems.

Some guidelines or rules should be developed as to ‘how’ a home sale inspection should be accomplished.

Countywide waste management sites – why aren't they promoted? Get Purdue University and its resources involved in developing and publishing these sites.

Maintenance on systems should be mandated and should be:

- reasonable
- cost appropriate
- have the private sector involved
- show benefits
- make it as entrepreneurial as possible, and
- make it a formal process.

There is a need for training and certification for installers and have uniform requirements should be developed.

Develop performance based standards.

How do we move people away from septic systems to municipal or clustered systems?

Find out what other states are doing with similar/like issues.

Rick Wajda of the Indiana Builders Association stated his group's support for mandatory maintenance. He also noted that he knew that 'mandates' make legislators nervous.

Mr. Adams acknowledged all the comments made by the task force members and summarized three broad initiatives of the group –

- What is being done?
- Roadblocks?
- Best approaches for the future.

There being no further comments, Mr. Adams adjourned the meeting with the next scheduled meeting being August 9, 2005, 10 a.m. in the Yoho Board Room of the Indiana State Department of Health.