MASSACHUSETTS WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2019

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MASS WATERS

You'll be Surprised by What the Science of Wastewater Treatment Tells Us

Eric J. Wahlberg, Ph.D., P.E. (California), former Colorado Class A Operator

It is that time of year (Winter) when many activated sludge wastewater treatment plant operators in cold states like New England implement a control strategy passed down through the years: *Because winter is coming and microorganisms grow more slowly as temperatures go down, operators should decrease the wasting rate to have more microbes in the mixed liquor*.

While it is absolutely true that the growth rate of microorganisms decreases with decreasing temperatures, this decades-old operating strategy is absolutely, positively, unquestionably wrong.

Don't do it. Why?

In order for microorganisms to increase in numbers, they must grow at a rate greater than their loss from the system by intentional and unintentional wasting (i.e., in the WAS and effluent, respectively), death and decay. Although the numbers of microbes in an activated sludge mixed liquor that die is a topic of some debate, practically speaking, the growth rate is defined by:

$G_R = (1/SRT) + g + b$

where,

G_R = growth rate

SRT = solids retention time

g = death coefficient

b = endogenous decay coefficient.

Because both g and b are small numbers, they can be ignored, resulting in the nearly-equal-to relationship, which says the growth rate of the biomass in activated sludge is equal to 1 divided by the SRT:

$G_R \approx (1/SRT)$.

Growth rate is important because it controls sludge quality. Sludge quality is important because good effluent quality is not possible without good sludge quality.

Decreasing the WAS flow, as operators have been told to do for years in preparation for slower microbial growth that occurs in winter, **increases** the SRT. From the equation above, **increasing** the SRT **decreases** the growth rate.

Think about what has just been said: *In anticipation of a slower growth rate, operators have been told to slow the growth rate*. This cannot be right. Have you ever wondered why you have more sludge quality problems in the winter than the summer?

Because of misinformation like this, activated sludge process control has been made harder than it has to be. The optimum SRT for any activated sludge system is the lowest SRT that meets the effluent ammonia requirement and gives the best sludge quality. Set your cold-weather SRT target and know more microbes will grow, resulting in an increased MLSS concentration, in response to colder temperatures ALL BY THEMSELVES. Operations professionals should concentrate on sludge quality not sludge quantity. The microorganisms know exactly how many microorganisms the influent organics will support at any given temperature.

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How Coordinating Sewer & Stormwater System Investigations Can Reduce Costs

by Zach Henderson Woodard & Curran, Portland, Maine

A thoughtful colleague recently said, "Storm and sewer are certainly sleeping in the same bed together." In other words, the nature of these systems buried in, on, and under each other require us to consider a collaborative front in addressing both. To do this, we should take in the big picture of what we do on both sides of the clean water house.

Some of the nation's oldest cities are found in Massachusetts, which means some of the oldest sewer and stormwater systems are also found within the Commonwealth's infrastructure. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that New England cities and towns face a serious dilemma of age-worn systems. For example, a Woodard & Curran team is currently replacing and rehabilitating the City of Lawrence's sewer system where the average age of sanitary sewer pipes is 94 years old, with some pushing 140 years old.

As such, it is being required of utilities and municipal management departments to conduct Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Surveys (SSES) and Capacity, Management, Operation and Maintenance (CMOM) program assessments. The result is expanded maintenance recommendations, detailed program improvement needs, and somewhat aggressive timelines to implement rehabilitation and renewal of sanitary sewer systems. Unfortunately, despite the growing effort to address critical sanitary sewer capacity and issues with structural condition, new regulatory requirements under other clean water permits are forcing a different assessment of system deficiencies.

In Massachusetts and New Hampshire, new regulations in place for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) are often managed by utility or municipal department programs separate from that of sanitary wastewater programs. Massachusetts also has National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit primacy, which directly involves the federal government and obligates local government to comply with rigorous "national standard" requirements. The increased complexity of NPDES requirements is highlighted by the 2016 reissuance of the 2003 Massachusetts MS4 General Permit, which greatly expanded the original permit and its prescriptive requirements.

According to the EPA, over the past three decades more than 800,000 gallons of untreated waste water per day has been removed from stormwater collection systems in the Boston Harbor Watershed through correction and removal of illicit discharges, such as leaky sanitary sewer collection systems and laterals. While we have made great progress in correcting combined sewer overflows and other sanitary sewer discharges, we now understand untreated sewage is being delivered to our waterways through illicit discharges. Hence, thorough and structured investigations of stormwater collection systems are necessary.

In many New England communities, the MS4 comprises hundreds of miles of drainage pipe and ditch discharging from several hundred outfalls. The MS4 now requires field-based investigation, similar to SSES requirements, to identify and isolate sanitary wastewater leaks or cross connections. By sampling within the drainage system, field investigators can quickly isolate pipe and drainage segments compromised by adjacent sanitary sewer collection failures. Verifying direct or indirect illicit connections will allow decisions to be made regarding whether sanitary sewer collection system (or lateral) replacement, renewal, or rehabilitation is needed to abate the illicit source of cross-contamination.

It is common for SSES to be approached separately from Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) investigations. However, the objectives of both investigations are aligned. SSES investigation seeks to find structural, inflow and infiltration to prevent Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs). IDDE investigation seeks to identify direct or indirect connections that lead to cross-contamination of drainage systems from wastewater sources. Both investigations require a similar skill set and, as such, communities can reap cost and labor savings from integrating these programs. While the priorities under Inflow and Infiltration investigation programs will not always align with IDDE objectives, the benefits of coordinating these programs is obvious.

Not only will municipalities save time and money through integrating SSES and IDDE investigations, multiple regulatory obligations can be met at one time, while also coordinating prioritization and response programs. Additionally, there is a greater likelihood of successfully identifying and mitigating illicit discharges if recent sanitary sewer condition assessments, such as CCTV video, are available to IDDE Investigators.

Combining these investigation programs in targeted zones will address mobilization issues, decrease impact to the community with less traffic disruption and necessary police detail, and ultimately streamline rehabilitation programs. It is highly advisable for communities to rethink the jurisdictions of stormwater and wastewater in the context of IDDE and consider having one entity responsible for both collection system and drainage system investigations. Ultimately, the ability to address multiple program objectives across NPDES permit obligations will result in cost-savings and a shorter path to clean water.

MWPCA Training and Events

Events

Mar 20, 2019 - Quarterly Meeting, Devens Common Center, Devens, MA

Jun 12, 2019 - Quarterly Meeting, Log Cabin, Holyoke, MA

June 18, 2019 - Golf Tournament, Shaker Hills, Harvard, MA

Training

April 25, 2019—MA Grade 4 Exam Prep, Alden Training Center, Millbury MA

April 26, 2019—MA Grade 6 Exam Prep, Alden Training Center, Millbury MA

May 23, 2019 - Nutrient Removal training with Computer Simulation , Alden Training Center, Millbury MA

NEWEA's Spring Meeting & Exhibit

June 2-5, 2019 • Wentworth by the Sea, New Castle, NH

NEWEA's Spring Meeting & Exhibit is an annual three-day technical meeting for water quality professionals in the wastewater industry.

- Network with colleagues
- Learn the latest trends in technical sessions
- See the latest technologies from exhibitors
- Earn Training Contact Hours (TCHs)

The 2019 Spring Meeting & Exhibit will be held at Wentworth By The Sea in New Castle, New Hampshire. Join us for technical sessions on water quality, networking opportunities and the annual Operations Challenge competition.

We expect over 200 engineers, consultants, scientists, operators, and students to attend and participate in our annual three-day event.

We look forward to seeing you there!

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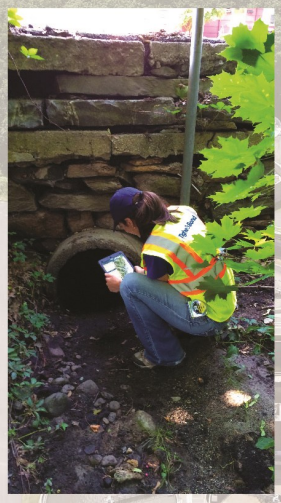

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OSHA Safety for Public Sector

On March 9, 2018 Governor Baker signed a bill updating a law to clarify employee safety requirements in the public sector workplaces, including enforcement by the Department of Labor Standards (DLS).

Effective date: February 1, 2019

Highlights: The law clarifies that public sector employers are required to provide methods to reduce work related injury and illness, which will have to meet the requirements provided under OSHA. The original law, M.G.L. chapter 149 Section 6 1 / 2 did not contain the phrasing for OSHA compliance because it was written before 1970, when OSHA was enacted. DLS will conduct safety and health inspections of public sector workplaces. In effect public and private sectors fall under OSHA guidelines, with no exemptions.

Starting on February 1, 2019 employers may get fined and DLS now has the authority to issue fines. Contact DLS within 24 hours if an accident causes a death, amputation, loss of eye, loss of consciousness, or an inpatient hospitalization at tel# 508-616-0461 or safepublicworkplace@state.ma.us. Training requirements are job specific, safety training depends on the tasks and equipment handled by employees at each facility, and employees we be required to comply with the policies and procedures established in their workplace in order to reduce work-related injuries and illnesses. For a summary visit the DLS website at www.mass.gov/dols/wshp.

Enforcement: DLS may issue a Written Warning which contains an Order to Correct when an inspection reveals a condition that could or has caused injury or an illness. Public sector workplaces may request technical assistance by contacting DLS.

From 2009-2011, more than 8,700 work related injuries for municipal workers were reported to the Massachusetts Division of Industrial Accidents. These injuries place a cost burden on cities and towns to provide medical treatment and workers compensation costs. In many cases training and methods to prevent the injury were readily available but not used.

After working for decades equally in the private and public sector, the safety umbrella for all will be equal with this new law covering guidelines for OSHA safety. I think this change was justified, and if it can protect both employees, as well as cities and towns then it seems like a win for all.

Ken Harwood
MWPCA Safety Committee

Put This On Your Calendar!

Join your fellow water professionals at the annual MWPCA Golf outing on June 18th at the prestigious Shaker Hills Country Club located in Harvard, MA.

Enjoy a day of golf on one of New England's top rated courses. 18 holes of golf, lunch, and numerous raffle prizes including 2019 Red Sox Tickets

Visit Shaker Hills at www.shakerhills.com

Calling All Operator Candidates

Each year, the MWPCA selects and sponsors one member to tour facilities and network with operators from another New England State. This year, a MWPCA member toured facilities in Maine. In 2019, the exchange operator will be hosted on a visit to Rhode Island. If you wish to learn more about this rewarding program, please contact Mickey Nowak @ mwpca2011@yahoo.com.

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Congratulations to Massachusetts Award Winners At NEWEA Annual Conference

Alfred E. Peloquin Award - Massachusetts	**David Duest**	**Winthrop**
E. Sherman Chase Award	**John Vetere**	**Melrose**
Elizabeth A. Cutone Executive Leadership Award	**Alan Taubert**	**Salem**
James J. Courchaine Collection Systems Award	**Angelo Salamone**	**Chelsea**
Past President's Plaque and Pin	**James Barsanti**	**Framingham**
WEF Service	**Susan Sullivan**	**Lowell**
Operator Award - Massachusetts	**Robert Delgado**	**Barnstable**
WEF Life Membership	**John Struzziery**	**Hull**

These Awards recognize "the best of the best" of water quality professionals from within the 2,000 -member NEWEA organization, plus additional "stars" from the Public Education, Journalism, Educational Institution, and Municipal Utility/Public Works community. A special callout to MWPCA Members Rob Delgado and James Barsanti—great work guys! To learn more about the NEWEA Awards visit https://www.newea.org/about-us/awards/ . If you know of a fellow worker who is deserving of nomination for next year make sure to let us know. All nominations are due on June 1 each year.

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Facility Profile - Barnstable Wastewater Treatment Facility

Barnstable Wastewater Treatment Facility
Location: Barnstable MA
Startup Date: Primary Design – 1936, Secondary Design – 1980
Design Flow: 4.2 MGD
12 Month Rolling Average Flow: 1.63 MGD
Grade: 6
Type of facility: Biological Nutrient Removal Activated Sludge using the Modified Ludzack Ettinger design
Process Description: Flow arrives to the roof of the BWPCF Pretreatment Building via force mains from 27 pump stations that serve the villages of Barnstable and Hyannis. It goes through a mechanical bar screen and aerated grit chamber before flowing by gravity through two 60 ft. diameter primary clarifiers and into three aeration trains with fine bubble diffusers and 10 hp axial flow pumps capable of returning 3.7 MGD back to the anoxic zone. Secondary clarification takes place in one 85 ft. and two 70 ft. diameter clarifiers with the secondary effluent flowing into the chlorine contact chambers where it is disinfected with sodium hypochlorite before being pumped by 50 hp effluent pumps to a network of rapid infiltration sand beds covering approximately 27 acres.
Discharges To: Rapid infiltration sand beds
Sludge Handling: Gravity Belt Thickeners
Disposal: Liquid sludge for incineration
Staff: 13 Total. 2 Admin, 2 Lab, 9 Operations.
Certified Operators: The Barnstable team includes 10 (Four Grade 7, Four Grade 4, Two Grade 2) certified operators, three with grade 4 collections and three with laboratory analyst certificates (Two Grade 2, One Grade 1). In addition, the operators possess CDLs and hoisting licenses (1B, 2B, 3A) to operate the Vac-Con, tractor, crane trucks, and monorail hoists in the maintenance of two wastewater treatment plants, 27 pump stations, and 55 miles of sewer. All team members are CPR/AED/First aid trained and a few hold OSHA 10, OSHA 30, and HAZWOPER certification as well.
Unique Features: Unlike the majority of WPCFs designed to be in a low area and close to receiving water, BWPCF is located on a hill and away from any water bodies. No flow arrives to the plant via gravity but instead flow arrives by force mains to the rooftop of the pretreatment building and flows by gravity through the treatment process. The plant is therefore less vulnerable to coastal inundation and clarifiers are kept above the water table and do not require ballast or flap valves to keep them from floating out of position.

NEIWPCC NEWS

Spring 2019 MWOT Courses Open for Registration – The Spring 2019 Massachusetts Wastewater Operator Training (MWOT) courses are published on NEIWPCC's web site (https://portal.neiwpcc.org/training-calendar.asp) and are available for immediate registration. Courses include the traditional 6-week Basic Municipal Operations course, 3-week Intermediate Municipal Operations, and 4-week Advanced Municipal Operations course as well as Industrial Wastewater Treatment options, Basic Wastewater Math, Wastewater Pumps and Hydraulics, and Basic Wastewater Laboratory. Review sessions will not be offered this term. However, MWPCA is offering one day exam preparation classes in **April 2019**. For more information, please visit http://www.mwpca.org/training/neiwpcc__mwpca.

2019 is a Renewal Year – Wastewater license renewals must be submitted to NEIWPCC by **December 31, 2019**. Haven't met your 20 TCH (training contact hour) for this renewal period? Check out the one and two-day Spring courses offered throughout Massachusetts starting in **March 2019**. For more information, please visit NEIWPCC's training calendar https://portal.neiwpcc.org/training-schedule.asp.

(continued on page 9)

Time To Explain Discharge Limits

Wastewater discharge limits seem to get lower and lower with every NPDES permit renewal. Often new parameters accompany new permits. Many of us who have worked in the field for decades have seen permits go from BOD and TSS limits to additional parameters of phosphorus, nitrogen, and a host of metals. The new and lower limits often mean greater treatment costs, either through enhanced process changes or new construction to meet these limits.

How does one explain existing or new concentration limits to local officials, rate payers, and the general public; many of whom don't know the difference between milligrams/liter, micrograms/liter, and nanograms/liter, especially during those trying times of budget increases to meet treatment requirements?

One effective way to explain this is to put these concentrations into a unit that they can more easily comprehend: time.

Milligrams per liter (mg/L) is often referred to as parts per million (ppm). About 11.6 days contains one million seconds. One second taken from 11.6 days would be 1 part per million or 1 mg/L. Most of the conventional pollutant limits, Total Suspended Solids (TSS), Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Total Phosphorus (TP), and Nitrogen (N) are measured in mg/L. The wintertime average ammonia-nitrogen monthly permit limit at Upper Blackstone is 20 mg/L or no more than a twenty second block of time out of 11.6 days.

Micrograms per liter (ug/L) is often referred to as parts per billion (ppb). About 32 years contains one billion seconds. One second taken from 32 years would be 1 part per billion or 1 ug/L. Metal limit concentrations in NPDES permits are typically in ug/L. Our maximum daily zinc limit is 91.3 ug/L. In terms of time, this is equivalent to 91.3 seconds or 1.5 minutes out of 32 years. This is a tiny amount but seems huge when compared to our cadmium limit of 0.2 ug/L or two tenths of a second over 32 years.

Nanograms per liter (ng/L) is often referred to as parts per trillion (ppt). Parts per trillion is equivalent to one second out of about 32,000 years or 1 ng/L. Mercury analyses in environmental samples are often measured into the nanograms per liter range as are many residual medicines and endocrine disruptors (hormones or chemicals mimicking hormones) found in our rivers, streams, and lakes.

Educating local officials, rate payers, and the general public to better understand the NPDES limits, and the extent that we must treat wastewater helps us all work together toward the common goal of protecting the environment and ultimately our drinking water.

I'd like to thank Mickey Nowak for inviting me to write for the MWPCA newsletter. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, feel free to contact me at TLoftus@UBWPAD.org .

Tim Loftus is the Laboratory and Pretreatment Manager at the Upper Blackstone in Millbury, MA.

(NEIWPCC NEWS continued from Page 8)

Save the Date – 2019 Northeast Onsite Short Course - The 6th Northeast Onsite Wastewater Short Course and Equipment Exhibition will be held on **April 2-4, 2019 in Mystic, Connecticut**. This event is sponsored by NEIWPCC, the Yankee Onsite Wastewater Association (YOWA), and other regional organizations. Learn about the latest technology developments and research for the onsite wastewater treatment industry. The conference is beneficial for Massachusetts Title 5 professionals and wastewater operators who maintain small systems. TCHs for both will be awarded. For more information, please visit http://neiwpcc.org/shortcourse .

Massachusetts Management School – The fifth program sponsored by NEIWPCC, Mass DEP, and MWPCA starts in **March 2019**. During the next year, participants will get management experience and build professional networks while working towards graduation in Spring 2020.

Operator Certification Exams - Computer-based testing locations for Massachusetts wastewater certification exams now include: Auburn, Boston (2 locations), Fall River, Framingham, Holyoke, Lawrence and Springfield. Are you curious or intimidated about taking a Computer-Based Test (CBT)? Watch the YouTube video showing what the experience is like on the day of your exam appointment. The video link can be found at: http://www.abccert.org/testing_services/Computer-BasedTesting.asp

For More Details

Massachusetts Wastewater Operator Training and Certification: http://neiwpcc.org/learning-center/massachusetts-wastewater-operator-training-certification/

NEIWPCC Training Calendar: https://portal.neiwpcc.org/training-calendar.asp

For more information or questions on NEIWPCC or the MWOT program, please contact us at training@neiwpcc.org or at (978) 323-7929.

Welcome New Members! *Nov—Jan*

David Langlais

Anastasia Rudenko

Marjorie Merisier

Sean Lainey

James Waddington

Jesselyn Dugas

Paul Bianco

Peter Beaulieu

Jason Fleury

Andres Hurtado

MWPCA at the 2019 Annual NEWEA Conference

More than 30 MWPCA members attended the Annual NEWEA Conference in Boston on January 27 -30. Member Rob Delgado from Barnstable received the MA Operators Award on Wednesday at the Awards Ceremony - Great Job Rob! Members Mike Williams and Scott Urban from Holyoke were presenters at the Technical Sessions and members Mickey Nowak, Karla Sangrey, and Tom Groves were judges at the Student Poster Contest. You probably saw member Charlie Tyler out and about with camera ready to document the event for NEWEA. Many MWPCA BOD members attended as vendors and moderators. 20 MWPCA members including James Waddington, Matthew Lewis, Jonathan Roushia, Michael Smith, Briana Dougherty, Jeffrey Gamelli, Sean Lainey, Dennis Reidy, Mark Ready, Timothy Drumm, Kenneth Gagnon, William St. Laurent, Richard Dolata, James Gavin, Marcel Tremblay, George Poske, Robert Harden, Brian Fortin, and Wayne Rezendes attended as part of the MWPCA Operators Day program. Thanks all for flying the MWPCA flag at this important conference.

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MWPCA is searching for someone to fill the following positions:

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If you are interested in joining our team, please email us at mwpca2011@yahoo.com

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Join the fun! Like what you see? Want to get even more out of it? Nominate yourself or a friend for a MWPCA Director or committee position. It doesn't have to take a lot of time, it's fun, and you can help keep the MWPCA fires burning. How? It's simple. Call or email Charlie Tyler at 508-904-4117 (leave Voice Mail) or charleswtyler@msn.com and recommend yourself or someone else for a position or just join us for a board meeting to see what it's all about.

MWPCA
P.O. Box 561
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Thanks Tom!

Tom Azevado receives a proclamation in honor of his many, many years of service as the MWPCA Events Coordinator. The Proclamation was given to Tom at the January Board of Directors Meeting