

OWTS Ad Hoc Committee Quarterly Update

January to March 2023

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) Ad Hoc is to consider input and recommendations received from OWTS stakeholders, including other public entities (e.g., water quality control boards, fish and wildlife agencies, etc.) and community members regarding the OWTS regulations. Received input will be reviewed by Permit Sonoma staff and County Counsel to: (i) revise the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) regulations; and (ii) evaluate potential options. Permit Sonoma anticipated bringing the revised Manual to the Board of Supervisors in January 2023, however, delays have changed this date to August 2023.

Ad Hoc Members

Supervisor Hopkins
Supervisor Rabbitt

Assigned Staff

Tennis Wick: Lead
Barbara Lee, CAO Climate Deputy
Nathan Quarles, Deputy Director
Michael Makdisi, Analyst/Ombudsman

Meetings Held

02/08/2023 – The meeting scheduled for this date was held on 02/06/2023 and considered an impromptu update meeting
03/30/2023 – Quarterly Ad Hoc meeting to discuss next steps in producing the updated OWTS Manual as well as public outreach.

Status

Permit Sonoma staff used the February meeting to keep the committee apprised of the delays in progress due to the January flood event and other unforeseen activities.

With the new building codes in place allowing for waterless toilets, staff is working on guidance documents for the public.

Staff shared that the RFP for re-writing an “intended approach” OWTS Manual continues to move forward.

The committee directed staff to provide responses to input received during the Lower Russian River Citizen’s Advisory Group (LRRACAG) meeting so that the ad hoc can review and forward responses to the group.

During the March quarterly meeting, staff and Counsel explained upcoming changes to Chapter 24 related to the OPR program as well as removing some legacy code. Staff will update Supervisors prior to public communication.

Also in March, staff explained that the responses to the LRRACAG comments are still incomplete. There are some specific areas of the policy needing refinement. First is defining and clarifying how to provide a “best fit system” for customers. And second, is how to address the smaller lots without adequate space for the required reserve area. Staff

is working with the water board for acceptable solutions. Tennis agreed to attend the next LRRCAG meeting and explain these issues causing the delay.

Staff also provided the ad hoc with scopes of work for an author to rewrite the OWTS Manual, as well as one for a facilitator to manage the public outreach process.

The amended Well Ordinance is being heard by the Board on April 4. Both Supervisor are looking forward to quantifiable recharge data being collected by the GSAs.

Implementation of the Management Review was discussed, and Tennis mentioned the limited income sources for Permit Sonoma. The budget will impact the requests for implementation, and Supervisors indicated their support.

Staff informed the ad hoc that another staff has resigned from the well and septic division which will impact performance data. The good news is that a contract is nearly signed for plan review which should show in productivity in the future.

Staff will continue their work in all the above areas and the ad hoc will convene again in June.

The OWTS Manual is tentatively scheduled to be heard by the Board on August 22.

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| Upcoming Meetings |
| 06/2023: To be determined |