

County Level On-Site Activities
Kae Arrington,
NCDENR-OSWW

Statewide, approximately half of North Carolina's 8.7 million citizens are using on-site wastewater systems for waste disposal. In the last 13 years, over four-dozen innovative on-site wastewater systems and products have been approved through a rigorous review process. Each year approximately 50,000 new authorizations to construct wastewater systems are issued in North Carolina. Only 56% of these are conventional gravel systems. Yet other than an occasional survey, the decision making process regarding modification, suspension, or revocation of innovative system status relies almost entirely on anecdotal "evidence" from the local environmental health programs and system installers.

Recently approved revisions to the laws and rules governing sewage treatment and disposal systems in North Carolina require the local health departments to include significant additional information regarding system installations and malfunctioning systems in the on-site activity reports they submit to the On-Site Wastewater Section each month. The counties now record exactly how many of which systems (down to model # and manufacturer) are being installed. Additionally, detailed information about every malfunctioning system evaluated by the local health department, including malfunctioning system and replacement system types, system age at malfunction, soils, type of distribution, design flow, and cause of failure is also required. The report format has been revised to capture this data and is being utilized by the local health departments.