

Someone must be responsible for operation, monitoring and upkeep of your wastewater treatment system. This may well be the homeowner for an individual system. However, for multiple-household and community systems, this important function is going to require a *responsible management entity*, with the legal authority and administrative capabilities to make these arrangements and be accountable.

An organizational structure is necessary to facilitate the ownership and/or management of these more complex wastewater treatment systems. This chapter identifies some organizational tools to help a community implement a wastewater project. It discusses the need for an organizational structure, the kinds of organizational structures available, and the pros and cons of each kind.

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Ownership of the System

The primary responsibility for a wastewater treatment system is always with the owner. Homeowners have traditionally had the responsibility for owning and managing the individual on-site systems on their own property. As more complex systems have been developed, management of these systems has become more complex as well. Today there is emphasis on managing systems to improve performance that also underscores the need for more accountability.

More and more multiple-household on-site treatment systems are being used to provide effective wastewater treatment for communities. These systems offer new and more complex ownership and management challenges. Citizens expect accountability in the design and management of these systems because of the volume of wastewater treated and the potential for major problems.

No matter who owns the system, one thing is definitely clear—it is in the best interests of the owners and the community to see that everything is covered.

Why You Need an Organization

All of us have organization in our lives. We may have fairly routine schedules for sleeping, working, eating and raising our families, but we may also have complicated organizations in our lives just to get things done—otherwise there would be chaos.

Organization is also needed for a wastewater project. Many landowners just want to get their system fixed and be done with it. However, when there are multiple landowners and properties involved, a legal and responsible entity is usually needed to work on behalf of the community.

This entity, existing or new, can be used to:

- provide continuity and sustainability for the project.
- acquire property and easements where necessary.
- obtain and administer financing.