

RUSSIAN RIVER

GLOSSARY

Monte Rio/Villa Grande Wastewater Solutions Pilot Project



* Definitions taken directly from the newly proposed Sonoma County OWTS Manual v.8.0

** Definitions adapted from the newly proposed Sonoma County OWTS Manual v.8.0

Acronyms and Definitions A- Z

At Grade System* is an OWTS dispersal system with a discharge point located at the preconstruction grade (ground surface elevation). The discharge from an at-grade system is always subsurface.

Advanced Protection Management Program Area identifies the geographical area where septic systems are subject to special conditions that are designed to meet state requirements for septic systems near impaired water bodies.

Advanced Treatment** is an approved measure that utilizes special designs and/or additional technology to treat the effluent to a higher level than a conventional system. Also see Pretreatment.

Alternative OWTS** is an approved non-standard OWTS that has demonstrated in the non-standard experimental phase to function in such a manner as to protect water quality and preclude health hazards and nuisance conditions and is capable of producing an equal to or greater quality wastewater effluent and improved performance of and siting for effluent dispersal than a standard OWTS.

APMP* means Advanced Protection Management Program.

Bottomless Sand Filter is an experimental raised dispersal system that consists of a raised sand bed supported by an impermeable containment structure where the bottom surface is partially below ground and forms the absorption surface for final dispersal of wastewater into native ground.

CAG means Citizens Advisory Group.

CAO means County Administrators Office.

CARD means Climate Action and Resiliency Division.

Contact:
michael.makdisi@sonoma-county.org



Cesspool* is an excavation in the ground receiving domestic wastewater designed to retain the organic matter and solids while allowing the liquids to seep into the soil. Cesspools differ from seepage pits because cesspool systems do not have septic tanks. The term cesspool does not include pit privies or out-houses.

Cluster System. See Community OWTS System.

Code Compliant OWTS** is a system that is in conformance with the County OWTS Manual. A Code Compliant OWTS can be new or existing.

Community OWTS System** (aka Cluster System) is an OWTS that accepts wastewater from buildings or structures on two or more parcels or an OWTS shared by buildings or structures under separate ownership whether or not they are on the same parcel. A community OWTS may be either privately or public owned or operated.

Community System is wastewater infrastructure that serves multiple buildings or structures under separate ownership. This term is inclusive of all shared systems, such as community OWTS systems (aka cluster systems), sewer systems and WWTPs.

Composting Toilet** is a self-contained waterless toilet designed to decompose non water-carried human wastes through microbial action on a carbon source and store the resulting matter for further treatment and reuse/dispersal.

CWA means the federal Clean Water Act.

D5 means County Supervisorial District 5 (current supervisor is Lynda Hopkins).

Dispersal System* is a leachfield, seepage pit, mound, at-grade, subsurface drip field, evapotranspiration and infiltration bed, bottomless sand filter, sand fill trench or other type of system for final wastewater treatment and subsurface discharge.

Drain field or Leachfield* is a system of rock-filled trenches also known as leach lines and/or disposal lines, or beds or infiltration chambers that distribute treated sewage effluent for absorption into the soil.

Effluent* is sewage, water, or other liquid, partially or completely treated or in its natural state, flowing out of a septic tank, aerobic treatment unit, dispersal system or other OWTS component.

EPA* means the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Expansion Area*. See Reserve Replacement Area.

Experimental OWTS** is a non-standard OWTS deemed conditionally acceptable by the RWQCB, subject to increased performance monitoring and evaluation, prior to acceptance as an approved non-standard Alternative OWTS.

Impaired water bodies* are those surface water bodies or segments thereof that are identified on a list approved first by the SWRCB and then approved by the EPA pursuant to Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act.

Impairment Area** consists of parcels completely or partially within 600 linear feet from the top of a watercourse bank in the horizontal (map) direction on either side of an impaired water body listed pursuant to section 303(d) of the CWA and identified in the State OWTS Policy.

LAMP* means Local Agency Management Program.

Local Area Management Program is the written explanation about how the local/county septic regulations comply with state policy, allowing for the implementation of alternative septic rules to the state rules to accommodate local conditions.

Leachfield*. See Drain field.

Mound System* is an aboveground dispersal system (covered sand bed with effluent leachfield elevated above original ground surface inside) used to enhance soil treatment, dispersal, and absorption of effluent discharged from an OWTS treatment unit such as a septic tank. Mound systems have a subsurface discharge.

MR/VG means Monte Rio and Villa Grande

New OWTS** is an OWTS proposed for construction in compliance with the County OWTS Manual.

Non-Conforming OWTS** is an OWTS that has a septic tank and dispersal system and was in compliance with the septic laws, regulations or codes when constructed and which is not in compliance with the County OWTS Manual. OWTS constructed prior to OWTS regulations may be considered Non-Conforming OWTS.

Non-Standard OWTS** OWTS** is a type of OWTS that utilizes a method of wastewater treatment that may or may not include a conventional septic tank and/or method of wastewater dispersal other than a conventional drain field for the purpose of producing an equal to or greater quality wastewater effluent and improved performance of and siting for effluent dispersal than a standard OWTS. There are two types of non-standard systems. See Alternative OWTS and Experimental OWTS.

NSF** means National Sanitation Foundation International (a product testing, inspection, and certification organization).

OWTS* means Onsite Wastewater Treatment System(s) (typically a septic system).



Onsite Wastewater Treatment System(s) (OWTS)* is an individual dispersal system, community collection and dispersal systems, and an alternative collection and dispersal systems that use subsurface dispersal. The short form of the term may be singular or plural. OWTS do not include “graywater” systems pursuant to the Health and Safety Code Section 17922.12. Commonly referred to as septic system(s).

OWTS Failure* is when effluent is surfacing or sewage is backing up into plumbing fixture due to the inability of the disposal field to accept and absorb effluent into the soil.

OWTS Manual is the County of Sonoma’s regulatory, procedural and technical details that govern individual OWTS (aka septic systems).

OWTS Policy* is the California State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Control Policy for Siting, Design, Operation, and Maintenance of OWTS.

Permit Sonoma* is the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD).

Pretreatment** is a form of supplemental treatment to improve the wastewater quality prior to dispersal.

Pretreatment unit or device** is an NSF listed and certified and County-approved Advanced Treatment Unit that provides pretreatment of wastewater. Pretreatment units are also referred to as supplemental treatment units.

Repair OWTS** is an OWTS that is operating marginally or the system or a system component has failed. A “repair” would require a component(s) replacement and/or re-building to make corrections so the OWTS operates as it was originally designed.

Replacement OWTS** is an OWTS that has its treatment capacity expanded, or its dispersal system added onto or replaced.

Reserve Replacement Area* is an unencumbered portion of land that is reserved for the installation of future OWTS, in the event of primary OWTS failure. The reserve replacement area must be suitable for an OWTS as demonstrated with acceptable percolation test, groundwater conditions, and adequate depth of soil. Reserved Replacement area is sometimes referred to as expansion area.

RRCSD means Russian River County Sanitation District.

RWQCB* means the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Section 303(d) refers to Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act, which authorizes the federal Environmental Protection Agency to assist wwtates in listing impaired waters and developing TMDLs for impaired waterbodies.

Seepage Pit* is an excavation in the ground filled with drain rock which receives the effluent discharge from a septic tank, or OWTS treatment unit, designed to permit the effluent to seep through its bottom and sides. Seepage pits are typically substituted for a leachfield at severely constrained sites serving existing dwellings.

Septic System*. See Onsite Wastewater Treatment System.

Septic Tank* is a water-tight covered receptacle designed and constructed to receive the discharge of sewage from a building sewer; separate solids from the liquid; digest organic matter; store digested solids through a period of detention and allow the clarified liquids to discharge for final subsurface dispersal.

Standard OWTS** is a type of OWTS consisting of a septic tank for primary treatment of sewage, followed by a system of drain field trenches for subsurface dispersal of effluent into the soil. A standard OWTS may utilize gravity flow or a pump system to convey effluent from the septic tank to the drain field.

Subsurface Drip is a nonstandard dispersal system that consists of pressurized pipes that deliver precise doses of effluent to shallow subsurface native ground.

Supplemental Treatment Unit** means and OWTS or component of an OWTS, except a septic tank or dosing tank, that performs additional treatment of domestic wastewater to decrease the constituents of concern before they reach primary treatment components or the final effluent dispersal field. Supplemental treatment units encompass pretreatment units.

SWRCB* means the State Water Resources Control Board.

Tier 3 refers to the State OWTS Policy requirements for systems within the APMP area.

TMDL* means Total Maximum Daily Load.

TMDL Action Plan (aka the TMDL, implementation plan or plan of action) is a plan to restore and maintain clean surface waters. Based on the calculated limit for a pollutant that is impairing a water body, the Action Plan allocates reductions needed to meet water quality standards among the pollutant sources in the watershed and describes how these reductions could occur.

Total Maximum Daily Load is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards.

Watercourse* is a definite open channel with bed and banks within which water flows either perennially or intermittently, including overflow channels continuous to the main channel. A watercourse shall include both natural and man-made channels.

Waterless Toilet (WT)** is a toilet specifically designed to receive non-water-carried human waste; includes composting, incinerator, pit, chemical & vault toilets.

WDR means Waste Discharge Requirement.

WT* means Waterless Toilet.

WWTP means Wastewater Treatment Plant.

