



Planning for the Future: Success Stories From Wastewater Management Programs

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Outline - Planning for the Future



- Identifying the Issue – Need for Future WWTF Managers
- Where it all Began
- How the Programs Evolved
- Lessons Learned
- Questions/Next Steps

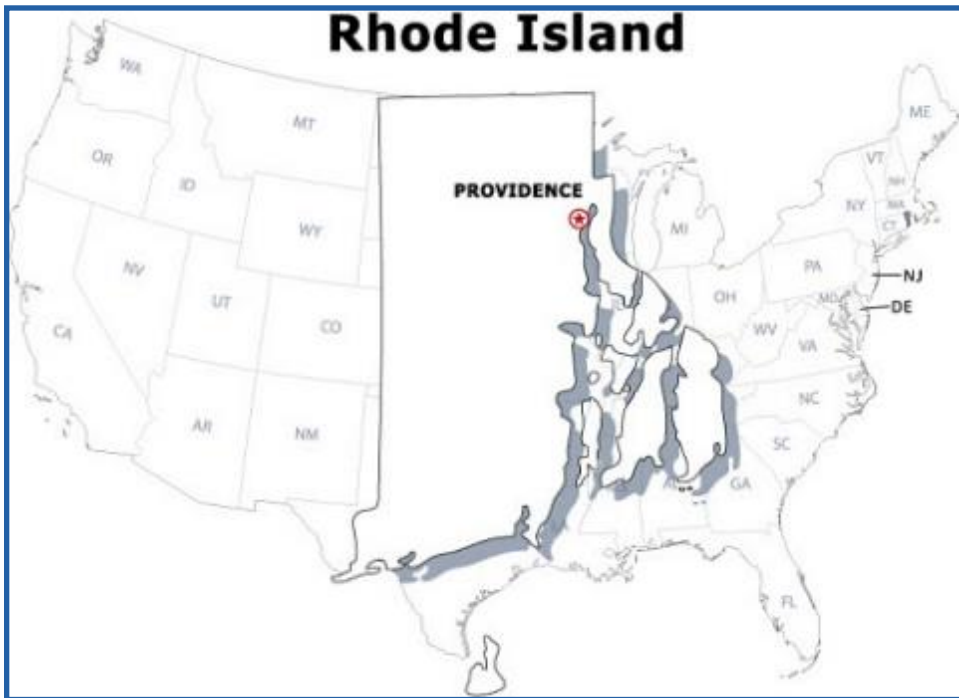


Identifying the Issue

- High percentage of current WWTF managers nearing (past?) retirement age
- Need to retain historical knowledge
- Need for succession planning
- Many potential managers not trained in, or never planned to be managers
- No existing full training program in place



Where it All Began



Always Remember, the
Ocean State was first!



RI WW Operator Boot Camp: A Succession Planning Tool

- First started in 2007
- Build the knowledge base, confidence and contacts of potential future WWTF managers.
- A program of trainings on a variety of topics with homegrown industry experts.
- Year-long format, 1-day/month – various locations, instructors utilizing local experts and trainers
- Need to find good candidates
- Candidates named through management or self nomination, then selected by the RI operator association.



RI WW Operator Boot Camp

- Keep costs low or free
- After several years, changed name of program to Wastewater Leadership Boot Camp
- To date, RI has run the program 6 times – latest concluded in 2018
- Approximately 80 graduates to date
- Looking forward to a new class in Fall 2020
- A Trailblazer for Management Training Programs !!!



Rhode Island Operator Boot Camp: A Succession Planning Tool

First Class Graduation Day, NWPCA Clambake,
September 2008



Rhode Island Operator Boot Camp: A Succession Planning Tool

Year 2



Rhode Island Leadership Boot Camp: A Succession Planning Tool



Class of 2017/2018



Rhode Island Leadership Boot Camp

- Model for other states to duplicate
- Write-up in July 2009 TPO magazine

IN MY WORDS

Advancement Planning

A 'BOOT CAMP' PROGRAM HELPS WASTEWATER TREATMENT OPERATORS IN RHODE ISLAND PREPARE TO MOVE UP AND REPLACE PLANT MANAGERS HEADED FOR RETIREMENT

By Ted J. Rulseh

While clean-water agencies worry about finding the next generation of treatment plant leaders, a group in Rhode Island has acted.

The New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC), the Narragansett Water Pollution Control Association (NWPCA), and the state Department of Environmental Management (DEM) have collaborated to organize a Wastewater Operator Management Boot Camp, now completing its second year.

The DEM operates the boot camp, which is designed to help promising treatment professionals build the diverse skills they need to thrive as plant superintendents or in other leadership roles.

Coordinating the program is Bill Patenaude, principal engineer in the DEM Office of Water Resources. Patenaude explained the program, its aims and its successes to date in an interview with *Treatment Plant Operator*.

Q: What was the rationale for the boot camp?

Patenaude: For some time, I have been aware of the need for people more education and experience and help them build confidence, so that when they had to step up to the plate, they would know how to swing.

Q: How did you go about organizing the boot camp?

Patenaude: We used to receive training grant funds from the federal government. We would transfer those funds to the NEIWPCC and work with them to develop our training plans, and they would administer the training for us. For a long time, we had classroom training, and some site-specific or problem-specific training programs.

Rhode Island doesn't have a requirement of retraining for certification renewal. As a result, we saw our training numbers go down. When the federal government began pulling back and eventually cut off the operator training money, we had to come up with another approach. We reached out to the NEIWPCC and worked with them to develop the boot camp.



Bill Patenaude



MAINE

- Built off of Rhode Island success
- 11 Years Running !!!
- “Management Candidate School” - MCS
- Existing training network in place - JETCC
- Joint Environmental Training Coordinating Committee – a contract training program administered by NEIWPCC



Maine's MCS Program

- First year of program 2009
- Program coordinated by JETCC
- Modeled from RI with changes – needed to be self sustaining (\$)
- Year-long program, held one day per month
- MCS classes all held in one location
- Year 2+ incorporated Drinking Water operators
- Multiple sponsors:
 - MeWEA, MeDEP, MWUA, and Me DHHS/CDC



Maine's MCS

Fall 2009 (Year 1)



Maine's MCS Program

- As of September 2019, 194 Graduates
- MCS Grads have gone on to become:
 - JETCC Trainers
 - Board Members
 - MeWEA & MWUA Leaders
 - Superintendents
 - Chief Operators
 - Trustees
- MCS commemorative recognition pin





Massachusetts Wastewater Management Training Program

- Modeled after Rhode Island and Maine
- First year 2010
- Year-long, monthly 1-day trainings
- Either superintendent or self-nomination
- No military name for program
- Most classes held in one location



Massachusetts Wastewater Management Training Program

- 5 years of programs – current class ends March 2020
- 69 graduates to date – 21 pending
- Attempted “a la carte” version after first 2 years
- MassDEP and NEIWPCC co-lead trainings
- MWPCA sponsorship
- Course subsidized from NEIWPCC contract agreement for MassDEP for Operator Cert program
- Graduation at MWPCA Quarterly Meeting



Massachusetts Graduation Class Year 1



Massachusetts Management Program



2017

2019



Connecticut Wastewater Management Leadership Program

- Same premise as RI, ME, and MA
- 10-month program, monthly classes
- Coordinated through state wastewater association (CWPAW)
- CWPAW organizes speakers & logistics
- NEIWPCC handles program admin
- First Year 2012



Connecticut Wastewater Management Leadership Program

- Classes held in one location
- Five years of programs, approx. 95 graduates
- Graduation at annual CT/NEIWPCC Managers Forum in Nov.



Typical Management Course Topics

- Performance and Project Management
- Labor and Media relations
- Microscopic observation -- “Bio 101”
- Collection system CMOM
- Budgeting
- Giving presentations
- Water quality, water/wastewater regulations
- Fundamentals of engineering & blueprint reading
- Field trips - Tour of Deer Island Plant (Boston) or job shadowing



Lessons Learned

- NEED a champion or sparkplug
- No two programs need to be alike – each state does what works best for that state
- Expansion to include Drinking Water operators can bring more students and sustainability
- Expect most effort in year 1
- Expect curveballs



Lessons Learned

- What happens in Boot Camp stays in Boot Camp
- Need Operator Association involvement
- Need appropriate superintendent involvement
- Use local experts whenever you can
- Good idea to rotate locations of training
- Work with your Certification Board for licensure incentives or rewards.



Lessons Learned

- Need partnering organizations/sponsors to make work and help sustain programs
- Students/Supervisors ARE willing to pay for this type of training
- Can't rely on sponsor funding or free training
- May reach saturation point – may not need to run a program every year



Lessons Learned

- Participant presentations built into the programs added value
- Requirement of Sacramento Course – “Manage for Success” added expense/value to program.
- Placement rate is very high – no formal numbers.
- Relationships and network built over program durations is INVALUABLE!



Unexpected Benefits

- Professional pride soared
- Superintendents saw improved appreciation for management issues.
- Participants have strong ties with regulators and others in program.
- Participants advocate professionalism.
- *“This is the first important thing I’ve achieved since high school.” – RI Boot Camp Graduate*



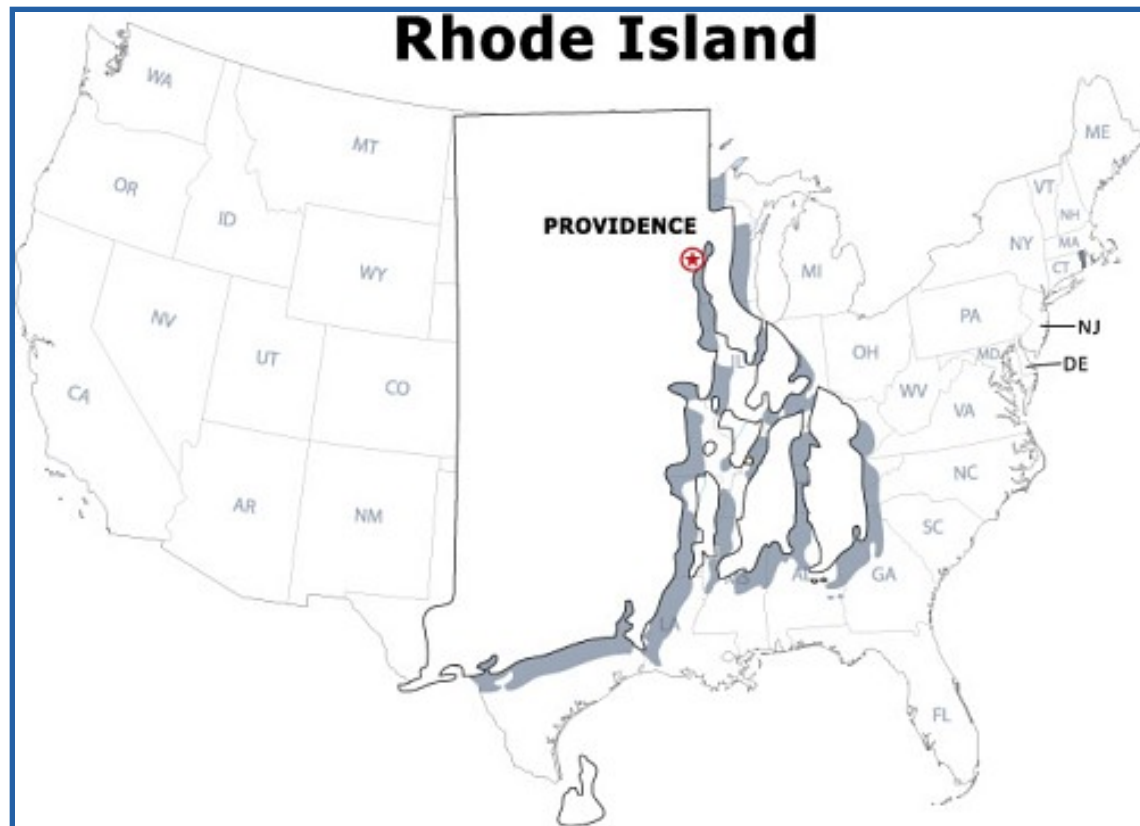
Other Business/Next Steps

- NH and VT have also run programs
 - NH – three classes to date
 - VT – one class, start up funding from state
- Next Steps:
 - Fall 2020 – new programs for ME, RI and CT
 - Spring 2021 – new program for MA
 - Management “201” Training – state or regional training for graduates of programs



Management Programs

Remember, the Ocean State was first! (RI)



Questions?





New Hampshire - 2011

