



Make the Most of Being Here

By John Downey, MAWEA Board

The summer has seen a visit to The Capitol, two visits to The State House, testimony given on funding our future, revision of our bylaws, a visitor hosted from New Hampshire, and three additions to leadership, including our first vice president since Ben Smith. As the board looks to round out the executive team to its original strength of four, I thought it would be a good time to talk about the benefit of membership, or, more properly, making the most of being here.

We came together 60 years ago to exchange experiences, ideas, and best practices. The concept was to support each other's professional development as we progressed in our own careers. This has certainly been true in my case, and I hope it has been in yours. There are many ways that this can occur; attending training and quarterly presentations, hosting an exchange operator, contributing to the newsletter, participating in the management class, serving on a committee, and volunteering to educate the community you serve. Another way is the one we haven't tried yet; it's the idea you have, the interest you'd like to pursue, the project you'd like to see realized. And to get started, all that requires is you. The board and your fellow members are open to hearing your ideas.

We are the state operators' association. We're here because you are, and we want you to make the most of your presence. Email us at info@mawea.org and let us know what's on your mind. The exchange of good ideas has always been at the core of our mission. We look forward to hearing yours!

Thanks again for being here.



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MAWEA Trade Show Recap

By John Downey, MAWEA Board

We'd like to thank everyone who joined us on May 18th for the Annual Trade Show at Wachusett Mountain. This year's event featured the election of two new directors to the Board, Larry Scola of Carlsen Systems and Daphne Short of NEIWPCC, and our first Vice President since Ben Smith, Jay Waddington of Woodard & Curran. John Downey of Veolia Brockton and Peter Lyons of Woodard & Curran were also reelected to three year terms.

The Board thanks retiring directors Mike Burke of Veolia, whose service included three terms as our president, and Jen Lichtensteiger of NEIWPCC, recipient of this year's Charles W. Tyler Service Award.

Thanks to our DEP liaison John Murphy for



MAWEA President Denise Descheneau welcomed attendees to the 2025 Trade Show.

arranging the show's technical presentation, "Cyber Front Lines: 2025's Evolving Threat Landscape", presented by Massachusetts State Police Detective Lieutenant Brian Gavioli. Thanks to Lieutenant Gavioli for explaining the issue and bringing resources we need to manage it.

John Murphy of MassDEP provided an introduction to Lieutenant Brian Gavioli's Cybersecurity presentation.





Massachusetts State Police Detective Lieutenant Brian Gavioli presented "Cyber Front Lines: 2025's Evolving Threat Landscape"

Thanks also to Kelly Olanyk and Joanel Claudio of Veolia Springfield for bringing back the Operations Challenge pipe cutting to the show, and representing MASS CHAOS. Your Ops Challenge

Team for 2025 are:

Scott Urban, Holyoke

Kyle Schultzki, Holyoke

Justo Cabrera, Springfield

Joanel Claudio, Springfield

Kelly Olanyk, Springfield

Of course, thank you to our show sponsors; these partners make a lot of this possible, and we are grateful for their support.

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And thanks to you! We hope to see you all again next May. We are planning for more vendors, so watch for the date and make your plans early!

Over twenty vendors were in attendance to showcase their water industry products and services to the nearly 150 attendees.



MAWEA Presentation & Tour

Aeration System Upgrade with Ammonia Based DO Control System



Springfield Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility
September 10, 2025; 9:00AM–1:00PM – Earn 4.0 TCHs

Thinking of upgrading your aeration system and/or adding nutrient sensors and analyzers? Join us for a tour on September 10th that will explore the recent aeration upgrade at the Springfield Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (SWSC) to learn how they were able to optimize treatment processes, ensuring compliance with discharge limits and minimizing environmental impact.

The Project

The Springfield project centered on upgrading the facility's secondary treatment system to enhance nitrogen removal, ensuring compliance with new NPDES permit limits. AECOM provided a detailed analysis of influent flows using data from SWSC and Veolia, that allowed for the reduction of mixed liquor return (MLR) pumps needed per aeration basin while still achieving superior nitrogen removal. This optimization combined with Hach's system that uses both an open and closed loop controller to adjust DO concentration in real time through continuous measurement of ammonia load, allowing the treatment process to maintain consistent effluent ammonia values while lowering aeration energy requirements, led to significant cost savings. The Springfield facility's massive aeration basins, each 600 feet long and 100 feet wide, also underwent upgrades, including the addition of baffle walls to create distinct treatment zones, installation of mixers in anoxic zones, and replacement of aging ceramic diffusers with modern EPDM diffusers.

- 8:30 AM Registration**
- 9:00 AM Welcome**
Denise Descheneau, MAWEA President
John Murphy, MassDEP – Training News
- 9:15 AM Technical Presentations by AECOM and HACH**
- 10:30 AM Tour of the aeration upgrade at Springfield Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility**
- 12:00 PM Working Lunch with question-and-answer time with Veolia, AECOM, and HACH reps**
- 1:00 PM Adjourn**

Registration Information

Member - \$45
Non Member - \$80 (incl. membership)
Registration includes lunch and tour

SPACE IS LIMITED (Max 20pp)

Credit cards accepted online. You may also register online and pay by purchase order or send a check (made payable to MAWEA) separately.

Register Online

Coffee and Lunch sponsorships available.

This event is pending approved for 4.0 TCHs. Operators are responsible for both properly registering by 9:15 A.M. and picking up their TCH documentation at the conclusion of the technical sessions. TCH documentation left at the conclusion of the event will not be mailed. Cancellation Policy: Due to guarantees, no refunds will be granted after August 22, 2025. Any cancellations are subject to a 25% cancellation fee.

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MAWEA Awards

By John Downey, MAWEA Board

We are pleased again this year to present the MAWEA Awards for the categories of Laboratory Excellence, Service (the Charles W. Tyler Award), and Operator of the Year. This program, after a too long hiatus, returned in 2024 and we are grateful for your participation.

For those unfamiliar with the program, I thought sharing this year's winning nominations would provide a good introduction. These nominations vary a bit in length and detail, but they share the theme of ownership, recognizing nominees who made group success their responsibility.

The first nomination provides us the essence of this profession. In my early conversations with plant superintendents, I was struck with how much they had to master over their careers, often without formal support, to effectively serve their communities and their crews. This year's winning nomination for Laboratory Excellence underscores the value that individual initiative plays, not so much in personal development, as in benefit to the those around us. It is further telling that the winner does not formally hold the position recognized, but made a significant and lasting impact on it.

Laboratory Excellence Award

Patricia Sullivan, Amherst WWTP

Submitted by Andrew Brace

"I am nominating Tricia Sullivan for the Laboratory Analyst Excellence Award. I am the Division director of the Amherst, MA WWTP and I am the supervisor of 11 staff including Tricia. Tricia started here 3 years ago in March 2021 as an Operator in Training. Tricia quickly fulfilled all her license requirements which include a Grade 4M Wastewater License, 2A hoisting license, and CDL Class B with Tanker endorsement and she was promoted to Treatment Operator in a little over 1 year. Since then, Tricia has obtained her Grade 6C Wastewater License and has trained for and has been participating in the afterhours on-call program to respond to wastewater emergencies. The 6C license and participating in on call are requirements

of the town of Amherst Operator II position, as well as helping out at the WWTP in some more specialized ways. By fulfilling these two requirements and also helping out in special ways by being very proficient with lab work and sewer collections system work, Tricia was promoted to Operator II in May of 2023 and she has been running weekend shifts and some holidays in a supervisory role since August 2023. In her first year, Tricia used her higher educational background in natural sciences and her lab experience from some internships to help us and be a lab backup for when the lab tech had time off. Tricia started out being a backup for basic tests like pH testing, TSS, fecal coliform, Chlorine dpd, etc. Over time Tricia was exposed to more in depth tests including nitrogen testing using Hach kits and spectrophotometry, and BODs (setting them up and reading them). Fast forward to today and Tricia is a full lab backup and can do all tests, including all of the more difficult and more in-depth tests. She has also helped with inventory of lab supplies, helped with ordering of lab supplies, and helped with training of other staff in laboratory tasks so there are more backups. Tricia joined the Town of Amherst wastewater department at a time of extreme turnover. She started the same month and week in which the Division Director retired after 39 years. Two weeks prior to her starting, the Division Supervisor/Assistant Chief Operator had departed the town and moved onto a new job. A little over 1 year after Tricia's start date, the lab tech of 8 years departed and moved on to a new job. After the departure of the lab tech, Tricia was instrumental in helping with the successful operation of the department. Tricia, in addition to her primary responsibilities as a wastewater treatment operator, was able to step in and help with all the lab testing. The lab position was vacant for sometime and fast forward a bit and Tricia played a significant role in the training of the new lab tech who came into the position as entry level right after college. Tricia also played a major role in helping us to do the WET testing and the DMRQA testing which we had to entirely figure out on our own since the previous lab

tech had departed at a time that wasn't around these two events so there was no real procedure or transfer of knowledge about these tests. Tricia has also helped out in other departments and has helped the town environmental scientist with some projects including field sampling and lab testing. She has also helped to train a few drinking Water Treatment staff on how to do E.coli testing. Tricia even went so far as to write a simple to follow SOP on her own initiative for the water treatment staff on how to do the bacteria on their own. Occasionally the water treatment department brings over some samples to the wastewater lab since we have the testing supplies and apparatuses to test fecal coliform and E.coli. In continuing her excellent work performance and work ethic in relation to lab work, Tricia recently took the NEWEA Laboratory Analyst Certification Program class in January 2024 and shortly after took the voluntary lab certification exam and passed. For all the reasons explained above I feel that Tricia has made contributions that have been extremely beneficial to our facility. I also feel she has gone above and beyond the call of duty as she excels at lab work while also being very versatile and being a great operator and great at sewer collection system work as well."

Charlie Tyler has been a member, leader, and ally of our industry's associations and the people in them through his career. His service to the operator community has been recognized with several awards, through numerous committee appointments, presidencies of MAWEA and NEWEA, and selection as a WEF Fellow in 2020. If you have attended association gatherings with any frequency, it is likely Charlie took your picture. It is this commitment to the whole of our community that the Charles Warren Tyler Service Award seeks to recognize.

Charles W. Tyler Service Award

Jennifer Lichtensteiger, NEIWPCC

Submitted by John Downey

"For her continuous enthusiastic support of and involvement in the Association's programs, her

work on behalf of our members, operators across the state and throughout the region in furthering their professional development, her service to both NEBRA and the NEWEA Contaminants of Emerging Concern Committee to address the most pressing technical challenges facing our industry, and for her valued presence on and contributions to the Association Board, I nominate Jennifer Lichtensteiger for the Charles W. Tyler Service Award for 2025".

"If You Know, You Know"- five words that define a particular club, imply a specialized knowledge, recognize the uncommon experience. Liz's nomination for Operator of the Year evokes this. Facilities are unique. Everyone's wastewater is different. Every process has its eccentricities, challenges and secrets. We all have the basic tools to run a system- how many of us, on our own, carry the system?

Operator of the Year Award

Carl Thurston, Chicopee WWTF

Submitted by Liz Batista

"Has single handily kept the Chicopee Wastewater facility afloat with his dedication"

And so it is not the number of words in the nomination, it is the meaning and emotion behind them that convey the achievements of the nominees. We hope you will consider recognizing a coworker or colleague for the difference they make at your facility, or in our community. Recognizing the efforts and accomplishments of our coworkers encourages emulation and builds a stronger community.

The Awards Committee welcomes your nominations, and your ideas for additional award categories.

2025 Operator Exchange - Wolfeboro WWTF

By Cody Daigneault, Wolfeboro, NH WWTF

I'd like to start out by thanking the New Hampshire Water Pollution Control Association (NHWPCA) for selecting me for this year's Wastewater Operator Exchange Program.

I am a grade II wastewater treatment plant operator in the state of New Hampshire. I have been operating at the Wolfeboro WWTF (which averages around three hundred thousand gallons per day) for all four years of my career in wastewater treatment, so this has been an amazing opportunity for me to see how larger treatment plants operate on a day-to-day basis.

This was a three-day trip, which included tours of three different wastewater plants throughout the state of Massachusetts. During this time, I was welcomed and treated very well by both the MAWEA organization and the staff of the wastewater plants where the tours took place. In between tours, I was accompanied by Denise Descheneau and John Downey for meals and daily debriefings. They made sure every day that I was satisfied with my meals and that I was comfortable in my lodging during my stay, which I appreciated.

Day one included two plants: Lowell Regional WWTF and Upper Blackstone CW. The Lowell Regional WWTF was undergoing a plethora of upgrades throughout their system, both at the plant itself and with the combined sewer overflows located around the Lowell region. This facility used many processes and pieces of equipment that I haven't seen in person before, including screw pumps, rotary drum thickeners, and a centrifuge.

After touring the Lowell facility, Denise and I made our way to Upper Blackstone. This facility averaged a daily flow of 39.7 million gallons in 2024. At the start of my tour, I was taken to a hill that overlooked the entire facility. This was the first time I had seen a wastewater treatment plant of this scale and was blown away at the size of it when comparing it to the facility that I work at. What stuck with me most from this tour was seeing their multiple hearth furnaces and their robust air pollution control system.

The third and final tour took place at the Greater

Lawrence Sanitary District. This facility is reported to treat about 30 million gallons of wastewater per day, along with roughly 75,000 gallons of septage. This facility is unique in that it is considered "net zero", meaning that since 2021, the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District has been completely self-sufficient from grid supplied power. This facility produces, on average, 70,000 kWh of electricity each day! They have achieved this by using their biogas (produced by the digesters on site) to fuel their heat and power systems.

Overall, this was an amazing experience for me. As someone from a small facility who hadn't visited many other plants before this trip, it was very beneficial to me. I learned and saw so many new things, and my eyes were opened to some of the possibilities of what wastewater treatment plants can do to protect their communities and surrounding environments.

I would greatly encourage any operator, from one just starting their career, to one with decades of experience, to take part in the operator exchange program. Whether you operate at a smaller facility like Wolfeboro, or a larger one like the ones I toured throughout Massachusetts, you will find this program beneficial. We work in a field where no matter how long you've been in it, you will always be learning something new. The operator exchange program provides an opportunity for education and experience that would otherwise be difficult and costly to achieve on your own.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my time with the operator exchange program, and I'd like to finish this with a special thanks to Denise Descheneau and John Downey for accompanying me throughout my visit, and thanks to the MAWEA organization for making this possible.

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MAWEA 2025 Golf Outing

By John Downey, MAWEA Board

Thanks to all our volunteers, the club staff, and the 27 foursomes who took to the course at Heritage in Charlton on June 11th.

Each year, this event gets bigger, and all of you are making that possible.

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for their continued support of this event and the Association.

Congratulations to our winning team: Bob Mack, Steve Richard, Tara McManus, and Jimmy Casey.

We'll be asking you to join us again next June, so look for our Save the Date and we will see you on the course!





MAWEA Testimony on S.2542

By John Downey, MAWEA Board

On June 3rd, President Denise Descheneau joined the MWWA Executive Director Jen Pederson and Brewster Water Superintendent Paul Anderson to appear before Massachusetts' Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to offer testimony on legislation relative to funding our future, MA H.1022/S.563.

That committee held another hearing July 15th to hear testimony on similar legislation, S.2542, An Act to build resilience for Massachusetts communities. MAWEA offered written testimony, drafted by Government Affairs Chair Mickey Nowak, and submitted by Denise on our behalf. The text of this testimony can be found on pages 14 and 15.



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Pictured: Fields Point WWTF



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Senator Becca Rausch, Senate Chair
Representative Christine Barber, House Chair
Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street Room 215
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Rausch, Chair Barber, and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Massachusetts Bill S.2542, An Act to build resilience for Massachusetts communities, particularly for its critical investments in clean water and drinking water infrastructure. As a concerned group, the Massachusetts Water Environment Association ([MAWEA](http://mawea.org)), representing the wastewater treatment community in Massachusetts, believe this legislation is a vital step toward ensuring the safety, health, and resilience of our communities in the face of growing environmental challenges.

S.2542 addresses a small portion of the urgent need to modernize and protect our state's water infrastructure, which is essential for public health and environmental sustainability. By allocating additional funding for infrastructure improvements, the bill will help communities across Massachusetts safeguard drinking water and waterways while enhancing resilience against extreme weather events. These investments are crucial, given the aging infrastructure and the funding gap identified by the Water Infrastructure Advisory Committee. The funding gap is \$10.2 billion for drinking water, \$11.2 billion for clean water and \$18 billion for stormwater. The Commonwealth's water infrastructure is aging and requires improvements and replacement to continue to provide the essential services of potable drinking water and sanitation. Much of the water-related infrastructure in the Commonwealth is beyond its useful life. We have pipes in the ground that were put in in the late 1800s/early 1900s. Many treatment plants were built in the 1970s at the advent of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act (much of it with 90% federal grant funding) and are no longer sufficient to meet today's standards.

Water and wastewater facilities are also facing expensive challenges dealing with PFAS chemicals. Wastewater biosolids (sewage sludge) are being increasingly scrutinized and demonized as a source of PFAS. Wastewater treatment facilities do not add PFAS during their treatment processes, but this class of contaminants may enter the wastewater stream through industrial and residential sewer discharges. PFAS is found in biosolids that are generated at various points in the treatment chain. Biosolids disposal in Massachusetts currently is limited to incineration, land application as fertilizer or landfilling. The fate and environmental transport of PFAS through these disposal options is far from clear and much more

research is needed before it can be determined whether any of these choices pose a significant risk to health or the environment. Land application as fertilizer is a great benefit to agriculture and is generally much preferred to alternative sources of fertilizer. Decisions made to curtail any biosolids disposal options must be based on science and facts. Approximately 55% of the 165,000 dry tons of biosolids that Massachusetts produces are sent out of state for disposal. The state urgently needs more in-state disposal capacity. It should be noted that if land application is banned, landfilling biosolids would be a costly endeavor totaling millions of dollars – dollars that would be borne almost entirely by ratepayers. Further, landfilling biosolids leads to the emissions of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas and would only be a temporary solution as other states implement their own regulations for PFAS found in biosolids.

Access to clean and safe drinking water is a fundamental right, and Massachusetts has a long history of leadership in environmental protection. Bill S.2542 builds on this legacy by addressing the many billions in funding needed for clean water infrastructure maintenance and repairs, as identified by the EPA's Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey. By investing in these projects, the Commonwealth can begin to prevent contamination from pollutants, ensuring that all residents, especially those in underserved communities, have access to safe drinking water and clean waterways.

I urge you to support the passage of Bill S.2542 to strengthen our state's infrastructure, protect our water and wastewater resources, and promote equitable access to clean water for all Massachusetts residents. This legislation is a practical and necessary investment in the health, safety, and future of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership on this critical issue. I respectfully request your support for this bill and look forward to seeing its positive impact across the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,



Denise Descheneau
MAWEA President



10 Tower Office Park
Suite 601
Woburn, MA 01801

CALL: 781-939-0908

FAX: 781-939-0907

EMAIL: info@mawea.org

Welcome to the Board!

By Jay Waddington, MAWEA Board

Hello, I'm Jay Waddington, the newly elected Vice President of MAWEA.

I have been a member of the organization since 2018, back when it was still the MWPCA. I graduated from Fitchburg State College with a B.S. in Environmental Biology. After college, I worked in various jobs, from selling furniture to an environmental chemist. Most wastewater professionals I've spoken to seem to have stumbled into this field, and my story is no different.

I was starting to work at an Ocean Spray facility and during orientation they mentioned they had a WWTP on site. I thought to myself, I could do that, and began studying for the license exam. I started my wastewater career in 2014 operating package plants for CHA Tech Services. I then moved on to work for Whitewater, starting as a Preventative Maintenance Tech and eventually rising to the level of Lead Operator.

Since January 2024, I have been with Woodard & Curran as the Plant Manager for the Concord Wastewater Treatment Plant, the world's first CoMag system. I hold wastewater licenses in Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire, as well as Lab Analyst and Collections System Operator certifications from NEWEA. I am also a graduate of NEIWPC's Wastewater Management Training Program.

I have met a lot of great people in my years in wastewater and look forward to becoming more involved in this community.