

September 2009

Southeast RCAP Board of
Directors Meeting

Progress in North Carolina

NRCAP: A Contractor for Southeast
Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.



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Statistics in North Carolina

USDA Technitrain
8 projects
4 workshops completed

OCS
3 projects

EPA Wastewater
1 project
1 workshop completed

EPA Drinking Water
1 project

EPA Smart About Water
1 project
2 workshops completed

Hundreds Volunteer for Annual NRCAP Project



Volunteers working in the trenches for those in need.

Once again, NRCAP Community Resource Coordinator Rich Holder worked with volunteer Christian youth service groups to hand dig 10 septic repairs in three counties within Western North Carolina. The NRCAP Western North Carolina Septic Repair Program is a service-learning program that provides volunteer groups with education on onsite wastewater treatment techniques. In addition to gaining technical knowledge, the volunteer groups are provided an opportunity to understand southern Appalachia, see collaboration among a wide variety of public and private organizations, and pursue a lifelong dedication to community service. The program is committed to protecting public health, environmental and natural resources, and addressing poverty issues in Western North Carolina.

In total Rich worked with over 500 volunteers to hand dig 2,600 linear feet of septic system drainfields, and seven tank holes. The volunteers not only improved the resident's septic needs, but also their living conditions by repairing roofs, floors, and bathrooms. Youth volunteers, from as far away as Ohio and Florida, logged over 15,000 hours of swinging a mattock, shoveling, and raking to complete the systems. The group showed enormous dedication by enduring poison ivy, snakes, bees, chiggers and the intense summer heat while on vacation helping those less fortunate.

Many thanks have to go to the several partners involved in the project including: ReCreation Experiences, Emanuel Lutheran Appalachian Servant Event, NC DENR Wastewater Discharge Elimination (WaDE) Program, Land of Sky, Council of Governments, WAMY Community Action Agency, NC Clean Water management Trust Fund, Buncombe County Environmental Health, Madison County Environmental Health, Yancey County Environmental Health, Infiltrator Systems, Inc., and Drillers Services.

Outstanding Attendance at NCRCAP Summer Workshop Series: Responsible and Effective Oversight of Consulting Engineers

NCRCAP held four regional workshops across the state this summer, titled 'Rural Water and Wastewater Projects: Responsible and Effective Oversight of Consulting Engineers.' The workshops drew over 200 participants and representatives from over 160 local governments and water and/or wastewater utilities.

Workshop participants heard a variety of perspectives on selecting and working with paid consultants to get the services their community needs. Presentations included first-hand accounts of a criteria-based selection process, effective development and use of preliminary engineering reports, contract negotiation, and financial management. Funding for the workshop series came from the NC Rural Economic Development Center and SERCAP.



Attendees at the final workshop held at the Old Rock School in Valdese, NC.

NCRCAP Healthy Homes for All / Hogares Sanos Para Todos Program Strengthens as Remarkable Growth Continues

In June 2009, NCRCAP's Outreach Coordinators Margaret Wurth and Marcia Perritt developed and implemented a survey for medical providers on blood lead testing procedures. The goal was to identify barriers and facilitate an increase in testing rates. Through a partnership with the local health department, NCRCAP obtained responses from all medical practices serving pediatric patients in Chatham County. Then, NCRCAP created a report of the survey responses, and presented it to a statewide committee of environmental health professionals on August 7. On September 18, NCRCAP will facilitate the first of a series of ten professional development trainings for Chatham County medical providers on the latest scientific research about lead exposure and testing. The trainings will help NCRCAP solidify partnerships with medical professionals to work collaboratively to end childhood lead exposure.

NCRCAP continues a community health outreach program started in October 2008 with support from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Margaret Wurth and Marcia Perritt trained four Latina community members to work as lay health advisors or *Promotoras de Salud*. Promotoras are well-respected community leaders who receive training on a specific health issue, and then bring knowledge back to the community through informal social networks. After NCRCAP trained Promotoras on lead poisoning prevention, the Promotoras began making in-home outreach visits to low-income Latino families in Chatham County. To date, the Promotoras have visited 130 families in their homes, educating a total of 330 individuals. Through outreach at community events, health fairs, baby showers, and support groups, the Promotoras have reached additional individuals bringing the total to over 700 Chatham County residents educated by this program. By equipping community members with the skills and training to serve as well-informed advocates, the program builds the capacity of the local community to address public health and environmental quality issues.

NCRCAP was thrilled to recently be awarded an Environmental Education Grant for \$50,000 from the EPA for the Promotora program. This will allow Margaret and Marcia to expand the program further with plans to recruit two additional community members to join the initiative. With this money new training programs can begin to include education on source water protection, integrated pest management, alternatives to pesticides, and other environmental health issues.