

MEMBER PROFILE

Jennifer Andersen
Manager, CAWT

Name of Organization: Centre for Advancement of Water and Wastewater Technologies (CAWT, Fleming College)

Owners: Not applicable

Services/Mandate: The CAWT specializes in water and wastewater research. Our goal is to help industry partners get their technologies to market.

Service Area: Our partners and projects are largely Ontario-based, but have spanned across Canada, North America and around the globe. We have facilities onsite, offsite, and provide field testing services as well.

Number of Years in Role: The CAWT was established in 2002. I have been at the CAWT since 2013 and managing various aspects of it since 2015.

What got you started in the onsite wastewater industry?

I have an extensive background in environmental research, including an MSc in molecular ecology. Following career opportunities leading research and stewardship programs I found and applied for a position at the CAWT in 2013. Since that time, I have had the pleasure of overseeing and gaining direct hands-on experience on a wide range of onsite technologies. My interest has grown from overseeing the projects to working more directly with industry partners on the business development side.

Give us one reason/secret for your success.

Hard work, dedication, and an acumen for business development. Working with industry partners is what I love most about my job; guiding them on how to get to the next stage of development and finding the resources needed to support those initiatives. I firmly believe having a passion for what you do is critical to your success and the success of where you work.

What was the most challenging onsite job you worked on or participated in?

Our newest facility in Minden Hills has been the most challenging. This facility has been designed to validate onsite wastewater treatment systems. Like so many others, the pandemic significantly delayed our ability to construct and launch this site. Not only did we experience restrictions due to



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government and college closures, we had so many challenges obtaining materials on time and dealt with increasing costs of infrastructure and equipment. Outside of the construction challenges, we faced several challenges operating the site and getting it up and running for the first time, as is common with any new infrastructure. I am so pleased with how far that site has come, our ability to work with changing and fluctuating wastewater concentrations, and most importantly to have this site completed and ready for partners to use.

If you could change one thing about the onsite/decentralized industry, what would it be?

Research and development is so important and such a crucial component to so many companies, industrial professionals, and governing bodies. It can also be incredibly expensive and time intensive. Finding funding for our partners to support these types of initiatives is always a challenge. I would love to see more investment towards supporting the certification and validation of onsite technologies. This would have significant impact on so many companies, particularly SMEs, and lead to more innovative technologies getting into market.

Where do you see the onsite industry going?

It will continue to evolve, not just in the technologies used to treat onsite wastewater but in the regulatory requirements overseeing them. As environmental concerns became heightened following the pandemic, we saw an increased awareness of wastewater research and subsequently the technologies used to treat and monitor them; particularly those aimed at emerging viruses and pathogens. I believe much more attention will be given towards the onsite wastewater sector.