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## **WELCOME MESSAGE**

**at the North East Residuals and Biosolids Conference**

**October 22, 2014 • Marriott Hotel, So. Portland, Maine**



I want to take a moment to welcome you to Maine.

Rather than talk about how important resource management is to Maine, I thought I'd tell you the story of where you are right now from the perspective of solid waste, stormwater, and wastewater management.

The Sable Oaks Marriott is one of over 1200 in the Marriot hotel chain, many of which are LEED certified. Not this one, unfortunately, but this facility has its own initiatives. Paper, cardboard, plastic and glass at this property are recycled, and the Sable Oaks uses coffee cups made from post-consumer recycled paper for meeting events. Right now, behind this facility are 12 bins in which they collect food waste, which will be sent to the anaerobic digester at Stonyvale Farms in Exeter, Maine. Several other local organizations including Zero Food Waste and Garbage to Gardens are looking to improve food waste recycling in the Greater Portland area. This is an ENERGY STAR® certified property, achieved in part by replacing light bulbs with energy-efficient ones. Water use reduction has resulted from installing sensors and water conserving faucets in all public restrooms, and low-flow showerheads and toilets in guest rooms. Landscaping at the Sable Oaks incorporates multiple rain gardens for stormwater treatment and management and automatic sprinkler systems with moisture sensors so they don't run when not needed. Like today.

Solid waste from this property goes to the ecoMaine waste-to-energy facility, located 2.2 miles away, which is owned by 21 communities in southern Maine and has contracts with 32 more. The rolling average recycling rate for all of these communities- not including commercial facilities- over the last 12 months is just under 29%. The facility produces up to 110,000 megawatt-hours of electricity annually — enough to power about 14,000 homes for a year- and with a market value of \$3.7 million.

More about stormwater, since that seems highly appropriate. This property is located within a unique stormwater management area called the Long Creek Restoration Project, focused on the watershed of the Long Creek which includes parts of South Portland, Portland, Westbrook, and Scarborough. Long Creek discharges to the Fore River, which itself discharges to Casco Bay- site of fishing, lobstering, and recreation activities. The Long Creek Restoration Project was created when a relatively obscure part of the Clean Water Act called the "Residual Designation Authority" or RDA was used by the Conservation Law Foundation and other groups to petition USEPA to manage stormwater from private properties to improve water quality in Long Creek, and not rely only on municipal stormwater programs to achieve this goal. The Long Creek project is one of just three RDA projects in the United States, and is administered by the Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District. Within a quick walk from this

property, on a nicer day, you could tour such existing stormwater practices as rain gardens (also called bioretention), bioswales, porous pavement, subsurface infiltration systems, and gravel wetlands with more being planned, and the retrofits of traditional stormwater systems and structures. Many projects were accompanied by stream restoration and low impact landscaping.

The phrase Long Creek has another meaning- it's also the name of the sanitary sewer pump station that manages flow from this facility and the Maine Mall area. We're very close to the City of Portland, but wastewater from this hotel is actually treated by the City of South Portland. Wastewater flows in a combined system by gravity- about a mile and a half- to the Long Creek pump station, which is the largest in South Portland's collection system. This pump station was upgraded a few years ago to substantially increase its storage of combined flow during wet weather events, reduce energy use, and add green infrastructure. This CSO project has done a lot, in conjunction with the Long Creek stormwater project, to improve water quality in Long Creek.

The South Portland Water Resource Recovery Facility, as the wastewater treatment facility is called, has a permitted average daily flow of 9.3 MGD of treated effluent to Casco Bay, making it by my count the 4<sup>th</sup> largest in Maine by this metric, and can enter bypass mode when influent flows exceed 22.9 MGD.

And now, what you're here to learn about today: as much as possible, biosolids from the South Portland Water Resource Recovery Facility are received by the Biosolids Composting facility operated by the Lewiston-Auburn Water Pollution Control Authority (LAWPCA), which many of you toured yesterday. LAWPCA provides composted biosolids for beneficial reuse to approximately 20 Maine farms. Biosolids from South Portland that can't be composted at LAWPCA are managed by the Casella Organics Hawk Ridge facility, and landfilled only when necessary.

I hope that this resource overview of today's conference site has provided a unique and different context to those of you visiting us from afar, and demonstrates that in Maine, we take very seriously the number of ways in which we need to manage our resources.

Thank you for joining NEBRA and NEWEA for today's conference, and enjoy your visit to Maine.