

MEMBER PROFILE

Crystal Barnes

North Bay-Mattawa Conservation
Authority (NBMCA)



CRYSTAL BARNES
North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA)

Name of Business/Organization: North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA)

Owners: Governed by a 12 member Board of Directors appointed by the Councils of its 10 member municipalities.

Services/Mandate:

The NBMCA is a community-based not-for-profit organization mandated to conserve, restore, develop and manage renewable natural resources on a watershed basis. Core responsibilities are derived from the Ontario Conservation Authorities Act. Specialty roles have been delegated to NBMCA through other legislation including the Ontario Building Code and the Ontario Clean Water Act. NBMCA is 1 of 36 Conservation Authorities in Ontario and 1 of 5 located in Northern Ontario.

Service Area:

NBMCA is designated under the OBC Part 8 to conduct inspections, issue sewage system permits, and investigate violations across Nipissing District and the Parry Sound District (with the exception of the Township of the Archipelago). This includes unorganized territories within those districts and a portion of Algonquin Park.

Number of Years in Operation: North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA) was founded in 1972 by the Province of Ontario and the NBMCA's 10 member municipalities.

What got you started in the onsite wastewater industry?

I didn't see myself in this industry at first. Since I've been old enough to walk I've been fishing many lakes with my family and learned at a young age how important our resources are and how much we depend on them. It wasn't until I finished high school and went tree planting in BC that I got serious about wanting to

preserve and conserve our natural environment. A few years after post-secondary school I saw the job ad for a Trout Lake Septic Re-inspector at NBMCA and applied. Even though it had nothing to do with Limnology (my passion at the time) I realized it was a different way of saving and conserving the health of our lakes...the rest is history.

Give us one reason/secret for your success?

I would have to credit my success to all the wonderful sewage system installers I work with. Over the years I've managed to build close, professional relationships with them. Paying attention to their needs and being on time for inspections is something they really appreciate; it makes their business run smoothly and efficiently as well as ours. At the same time, I'm able to teach them the needs of the CA as environmental managers and regulators. It really is a two way street.

Where do you see the onsite industry going?

I'm not going to lie, I'm a little worried! Many of our very experienced installers are reaching retirement age or are already there. There is definitely a need for some fresh blood in the industry or at least in our area. We need more young individuals who won't be intimidated by the new technology to learn the trade.

What can the onsite industry do to improve?

In northern Ontario we have a large number of very simple cottages, cabins, trailers, and hunt camps creating a high demand for greywater treatment. The problem is these structures are in remote areas, typically with silty clay soils or bedrock making it impractical to build a monster greywater pit. This leaves the public to deal with their greywater in their own manner creating many problems for us as environmental regulators. I would like to challenge our innovative sector to create an effective, certified unit that would be easily transported and installed, with a small footprint.