

Wastewater & Wipes: Adversaries or Allies?

Cynthia Finley

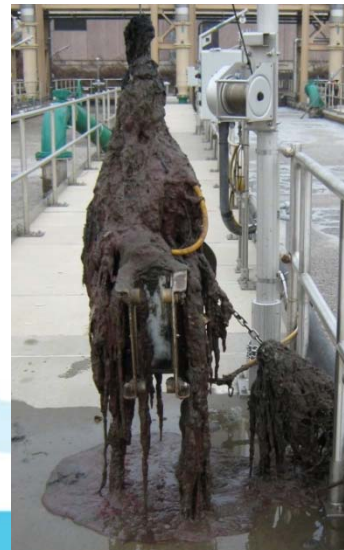
Director, Regulatory Affairs

National Association of Clean Water Agencies

May 15, 2014

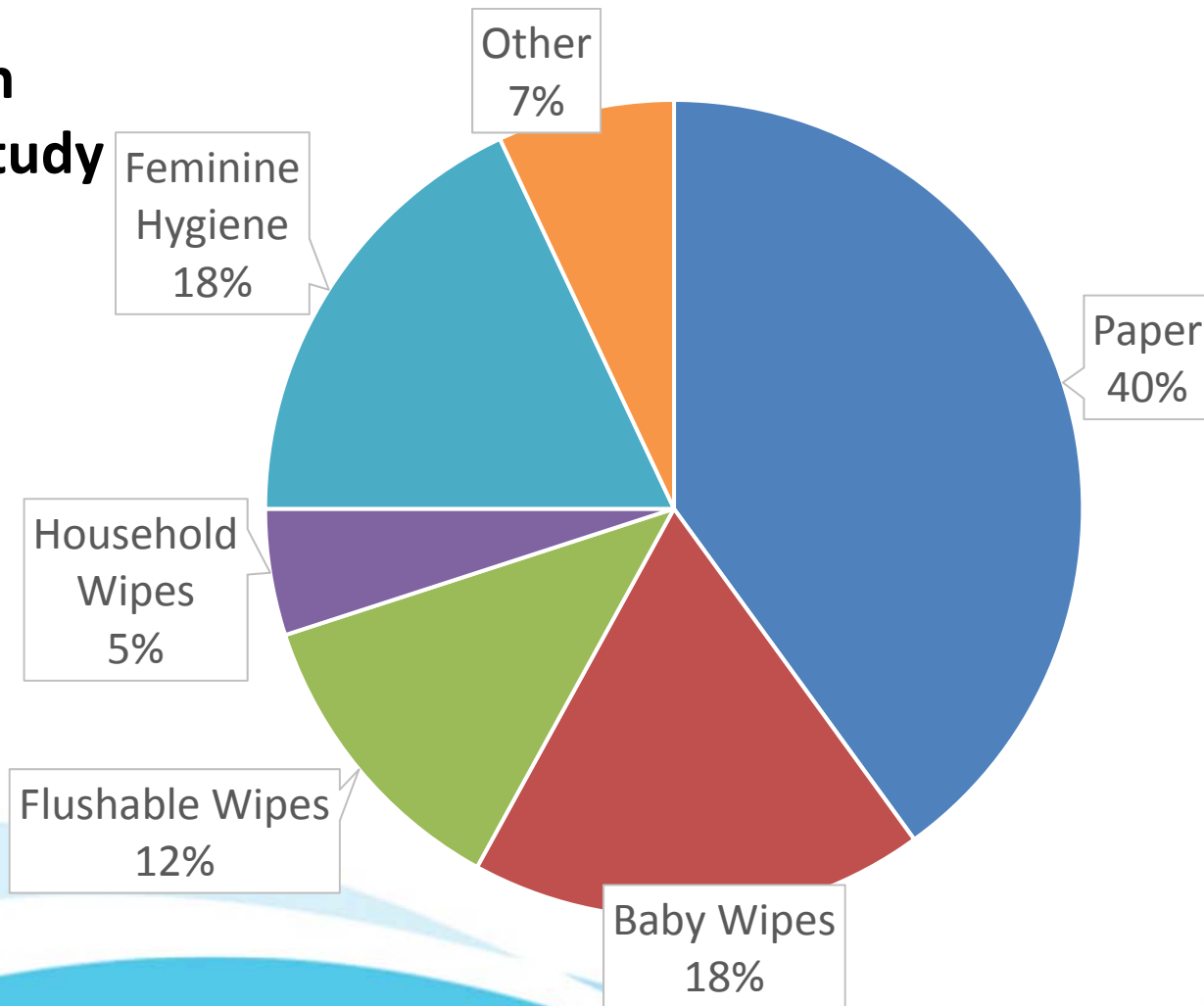


“Wipes in the Pipes”



“Flushable Wipes Clogging Pipes”?

Maine Collection System Study



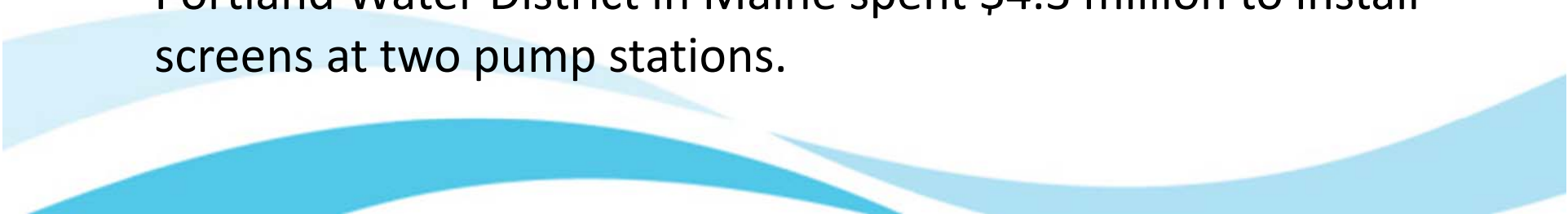
Costs to Clean Water Agencies for Non-Dispersible Materials

Vancouver, WA


- \$1.86 million in 2008-2013
 - Capital investments on pump retrofits - \$1.16 million
 - Deragging costs - \$128,000/yr
 - Additional electrical costs - \$30,000/yr
 - Disposal costs for 429 tons of material - \$25,600



Costs to Clean Water Agencies for Non-Dispersible Materials

- Clean Water Services in Oregon spends approximately \$120,000 dealing with problems from these products.
 - The Orange County Sanitation District in California has spent \$2.4 million in the past five years on new equipment, and over \$300,000 in one year to unclog pumps.
 - Columbus Water Works in Georgia spent \$550,000 in the last two years on new in-line grinding equipment and spends \$250,000 each year on additional operations and maintenance costs.
 - Portland Water District in Maine spent \$4.3 million to install screens at two pump stations.
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NACWA's Involvement with Wipes

- 2008 – First email from a utility about problem
 - 2009 – Issue raised in several sources:
 - Emails from two NACWA members
 - Pretreatment Coordinators Yahoo Group
 - 2009 – NACWA surveys members to determine extent of problem
 - 2010 – NACWA and WEF set up joint workgroup
- 

NACWA's Involvement with Wipes

- 2012 – APWA organizes meeting with Costco
- 2013 – NACWA/WEF members review INDA draft 3rd Edition Flushability Guidelines; NACWA comments on draft
- 2013 – WEF webinar with 600 registrants
- July 25, 2013 – NACWA, WEF, APWA, and INDA have face-to-face meeting





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Wipes in the pipes snarling sewers

Kirsti Marohn, USA TODAY

7:57 a.m. EDT July 17, 2013


1400
201
29
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(Photo: Kimm Anderson, St. Cloud Times)

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ST. CLOUD, Minn. -- They are touted as disposable and even flushable, but disinfecting wipes are causing headaches for operators of city sewer systems.

The products appeal to consumers in part because of manufacturers' claims that they can be conveniently flushed down the toilet. But their cloth-like material doesn't break down in the sanitary sewer system like toilet paper and can block sewer lines, clog equipment and increase cities' maintenance and repair costs.


STORY HIGHLIGHTS



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BREAKING: Watch Live Local Coverage of San Diego Blaze

'Fatberg' dead ahead! 15 tons of slime and wet-naps clog London sewer

BY NIDHI SUBBARAMAN





SAWS
@MySAWS

 Follow

^_^ MT @MikeTaylorShow: Thanks @MYsaws for this pic. A giant, concrete strong mass of butt wipes. Stop flushing them! pic.twitter.com/DjDKVZxPxR

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6:42 AM - 19 Sep 13

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UF/IFAS Miami U.C.U. @MiamiUCU

19 Sep

#Wipeberg? ^_^ MT @MikeTaylorShow: A giant, concrete strong mass of butt wipes. Stop flushing them! pic.twitter.com/MFrQdaHGLK

[Details](#)



Mike Taylor @MikeTaylorShow

19 Sep

@MiamiUCU @MySAWS Nice to get support in the 305. Your beaches and coffee are exquisite. No butt wipes in the commode!

[Details](#)

Toilets Are Not Trash Cans!

NACWA Campaign to Protect Our Pipes,
Pumps, Plants, & Personnel



Protecting Our Pipes, Pumps, Plants, & Personnel



Wastewater/INDA Technical Workgroup

- Focusing on flushability issue
- INDA, NACWA, WEF (Water Environment Federations), and APWA (American Public Works Association)
- 6 representatives from wastewater, 6 from INDA
- Three in-person meetings, concluding in August



Definition of “Flushable”?



Public Education on What Should Get Flushed?

*The 3 Ps:
Pee, Poop, and Toilet Paper*



Maine Consumer Education Pilot

“Save Your Pipes: Don’t Flush Baby Wipes”



www.SaveYourPipes.org

Consumer Education in Oslo

Manhole Covers:
“Bæsj, Tiss, Dopapir”
 (“Poop, Pee, TP”)



Improved Labeling



Improved Labeling



Improved Labeling



The image is a mockup of a website for 'Shittens', which are disposable mitten-shaped moist wipes. The website has a blue background with a white diamond pattern. At the top, the brand name 'Shittens' is written in a large, blue, bubbly font with a pink outline, next to a cartoon white mitten character with eyes. Below the name is the tagline 'Disposable mitten-shaped moist wipes!'. A navigation bar contains links for 'ORDER NOW!', 'Testimonials', 'FAQ', 'Privacy', 'Contact', and 'Home'. The main content area features a 'LIMITED TIME ONLY!' banner. On the left, there is a quote from Mark Cuban: 'Shittens! Everybody needs one!' with a small photo of him. In the center, it says 'BUY 1 PACKAGE OF SHITTENS' and 'INCLUDES 20 DISPOSABLE MITTEN-SHAPED MOIST WIPES FOR ONLY \$9.95 plus S+H'. To the right is an image of a blue package of Shittens wipes and a single white mitten. A large red 'ORDER NOW!' button is at the bottom right of the main section. At the bottom of the page, there are four icons representing different users: 'For Baby' (baby icon), 'For Pets' (dog icon), 'For Grandpa' (wheelchair icon), and 'For You' (toilet icon). The Shittens logo and cartoon character are repeated in the bottom right corner.

-Are Shittens flushable?

This is what we like to call a "grey area" (brown area?). Can you flush them? ... While many wipes advertise "flushable," all we hear about are the stories of destroyed septic systems across the country. You know your plumbing best and we'll trust you to make the best decisions for your household. At your own risk, septic-ly speaking. We're going to "Shitten our ass" and not recommend it.

Improved Labeling



[VerdantWater](#): [@GetShittens](#): Would you pls tweet photo of [Shittens](#) package w DNF instructions? Ones I've seen were vague, snarky. MT [@NoDigMaine](#) 9:23pm, Feb 02 from Twitter for iPad



[GetShittens](#): [@VerdantWater](#) [@NoDigMaine](#) thanks so much for that info! We are kinda new to the wipes biz. On our next run we will have it. Appreciate it 1:09pm, Feb 03 from Twitter for iPhone

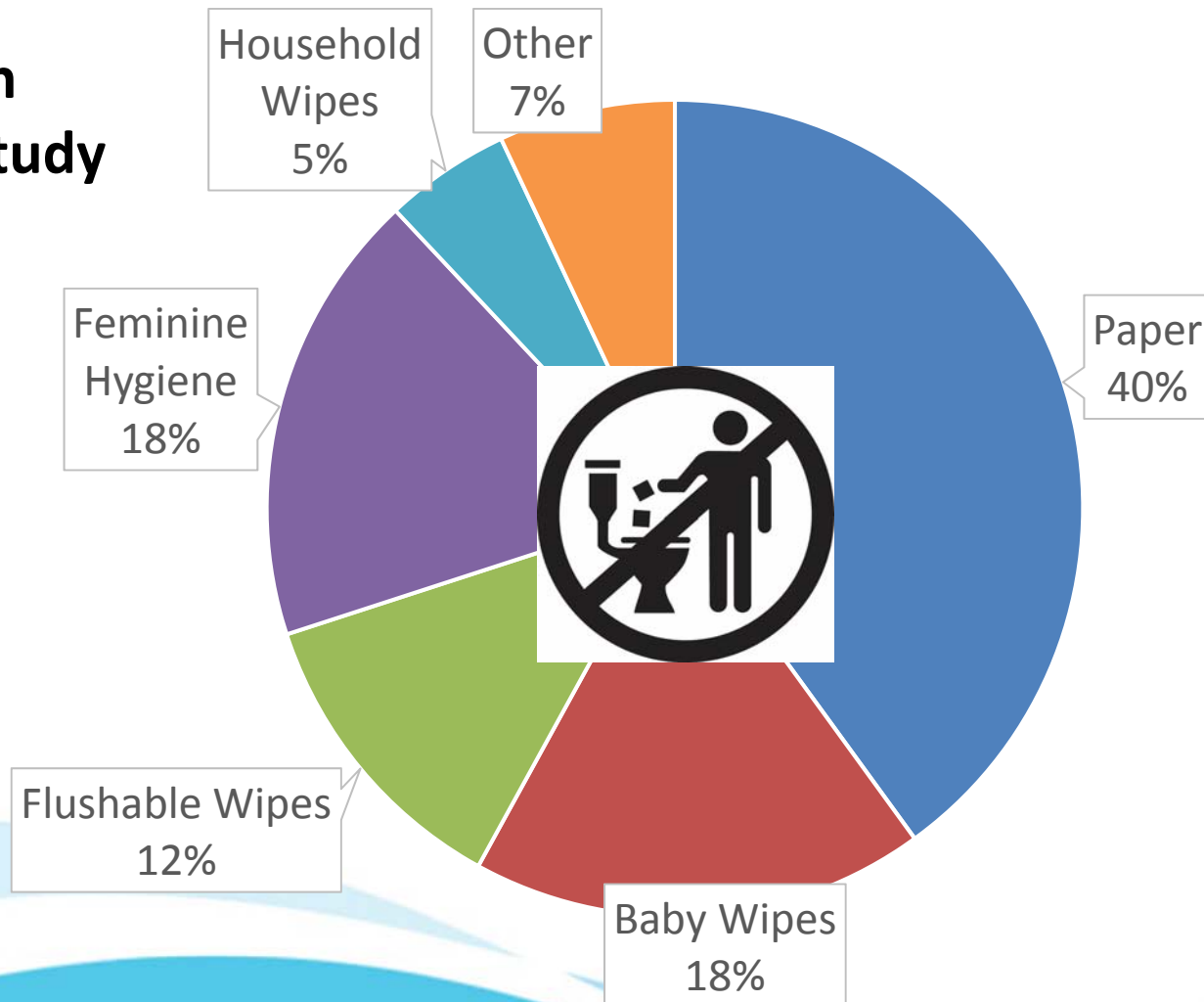


[VerdantWater](#) 1:22pm via Twitter for Android

[@GetShittens](#): We look forward to it- would make us damn happy. Right [@NACWA](#), [@WEForg](#), [@NEWaterEnv](#)?!! [@ScottFirmin](#) [@neorsd](#) [@NoDigMaine](#)

Work with Manufacturers/Retailers on Other Products

Maine Collection System Study



www.nacwa.org/flushables

The screenshot shows the NACWA website interface. At the top, the NACWA logo is on the left, followed by social media icons (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Email) and a search bar. On the right, it says 'Welcome Cynthia' with a dropdown arrow. Below the header is a navigation bar with five categories: ABOUT NACWA, WATER QUALITY, OPERATIONS & WET WEATHER ISSUES, UTILITY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, and UTILITY OF THE FUTURE. Each category has a corresponding image. On the left side, there is a 'Issues' section with a list of links: Home, My NACWA, About NACWA, Issues, Water Quality, Operations & Wet Weather Issues, Utility & Resource Management, Utility of the Future, Member Pipeline, Conferences & Professional Development, Awards, Marketplace, Publications, News & Media, and Clean Water Careers. The main content area is titled 'Flushable Wipes and Other Non-Dispersible Products'. It contains a paragraph about the collection of materials on 'flushable' wipes and other products that may not disperse in the sewer system, mentioning NACWA, APWA, and WEF. It also includes a link to 'What You Can Do To Help' and a section for 'Upcoming Events' listing the 'National Pretreatment & Pollution Prevention Workshop' and the 'Summer Conference & 44th Annual Meeting'. There is also a 'Join a Committee' section with a 'Sign-up Form' link. At the bottom, there is a 'Quick Links' section with a link to 'What You Can Do To Help'.

NACWA

Search...

Welcome Cynthia ▼

Issues

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Member Pipeline
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Clean Water Careers

Flushable Wipes and Other Non-Dispersible Products

This collection of materials on "flushable" wipes and other products that may not disperse in the sewer system is being used by NACWA, the American Public Works Association (APWA), and the Water Environment Federation (WEF) in conversations with retailers and manufacturers of these products. NACWA members and other wastewater utilities may also find these useful in their efforts to reduce the problems caused by these products.

Do you have materials to add to this page? If so, please send them to Cynthia Finley at cfinley@nacwa.org.

What You Can Do To Help

Does your utility have problems with wipes and other non-dispersible products, and would you like to help with our national advocacy efforts? If so, please take photos of the problem and complete a **Non-Dispersibles Incident Report**. Two versions of the report are available:

Upcoming Events

- **National Pretreatment & Pollution Prevention Workshop**
May 14 – 16, 2014
The Depot Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel [↗](#)
Minneapolis, MN
- **Summer Conference & 44th Annual Meeting**
July 13 – 16, 2014
The Nines [↗](#), Portland, OR

Join a Committee

- [Sign-up Form](#) ➔

Quick Links
[What You Can Do To Help](#)