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## WASH Rotary Action Group Annual Meeting

**Saturday, 28 June 2025**

**9:00 am Chicago / Central Daylight Time (UTC -5)**

(Check your local time here <https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/meeting.html> )

To participate in the Annual Meeting, you **NEED TO REGISTER** in advance by going to:  
<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/dZOKsKNpRLOlgnuBSzUg8A>

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**Editor's Note:** If you are interested in Rainwater Harvesting, then this WASH Newsletter is Solid Gold. Stew Martin, Technical Officer for the WASH Rotary Action Group, has combined his 17 years of WASH Experience with Artificial Intelligence software to provide an excellent resource.

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## Rainwater Harvesting 101

By Stew Martin, WaSH Cadre & WASH-RAG Technical Officer

In my 17 years of doing WASH projects, I've learned a lot about many things. When it comes to water supply, I find many Rotary members forget to consider rainwater.

Rain can be a great source of water - the sole source, or a supplemental source - in many regions of the world. Investigating climate, rainfall, uses in the community you serve and what others have tried (and failed or succeeded) can be very beneficial. It can save Rotary lots of money, time and trouble, and also provide more sustainability and climate resilience.

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## Key Aspects, Insights, and Know-How

For newcomers, understanding the Multiple Uses of Water (MUS) approach is crucial for improving water management in rural Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). This approach integrates domestic and livelihood needs, ensuring efficient water use. Here's a summary of key aspects, insights, and know-how for implementing MUS in such settings:

### Key Aspects of MUS

1. **Integrated Water Use:** MUS combines drinking water, small-scale irrigation, and livestock watering to enhance livelihoods and food security.
2. **Sustainability:** Ensures groundwater sustainability and maintains water quality for drinking purposes.
3. **Cost Recovery:** Encourages payment for water services to support maintenance and operation.
4. **Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:** Involves various government departments and international organizations to implement and manage MUS systems..



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## Podcasts, PowerPoint, and Prose

Organizations, including Rotary, still use a lot of printed materials. Videos are being used more and are a great way to get across information.

One medium source that has become popular is Podcasts. Listen to this 24-minute podcast that explains Rainwater Harvesting.

[Click Here.](#)

At World Water Summit 16, Stew Martin provided a great introduction to Rainwater Harvesting. You can view his PowerPoint presentation. [Click Here.](#)

Listen to this 3-minute podcast, by Stew Martin, called Buckets, Barrels, & Rotary. [Click Here.](#)

To read the Prose recited by Stew, use the Read More link.

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## Scope, Size, and Sustainability

By Stew Martin, WaSH Cadre & WASH-RAG Technical Officer

In deciding whether and how to collect rainwater, the most important aspects to consider are the local context: climate and how it is changing, water uses, the spread of the community. Remember likely increased future water demand once people have plentiful safe water. What methods of construction does the community currently use - bamboo and machete? Rock or stone with cement mortar? Could they acquire and use interlocking stabilized soil blocks (ISSB)? Are local contractors already good making ferrocement tanks with rebar and cement? What materials and tools are in local hardware stores or shops?

Investigate other water sources that exist now and noodle over whether RWH will be a supplement or a main source. Examine at the pattern of homes and public buildings in the community where people comfortably walk and how far things are away (local eyes plus Google Earth can help).

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## FAQ on Rainwater Harvesting (RWH)

by Stew Martin with help from AI software Perplexity

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) provides a comprehensive overview of Rainwater Harvesting (RWH), including its basics, implementation, and how to promote it as a Rotary global grant project. It's designed to inspire Rotarians and Rotaractors to take action and collaborate for impactful humanitarian projects.

### What is Rainwater Harvesting (RWH)?

Rainwater Harvesting is the collection, storage, and use of rainwater for various purposes such as drinking, irrigation, sanitation, and groundwater recharge. It's a sustainable solution to water scarcity and can be adapted for both rural and urban settings.

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## Taking the AI Rainwater Elevator

Creating an AI generated Elevator Speech on Rainwater, using Perplexity

By providing the AI software (Perplexity) the following Question:  
*Imagine a brief conversation between a WASH-RAG ambassador (promoting and explaining importance) and a lay Rotarian who "wants to do good in the world". Write a 30 second elevator speech that is catchy, inviting, has a bit of humor - and will excite the Rotarian to learn more then do a RWH project.*

You get the following Answer:

*Here's a catchy, inviting, and humorous 30-second elevator speech from a WASH-RAG ambassador to a fellow Rotarian interested in "doing good in the world":*

*"Hey there! Did you know there's gold falling from the sky—well, liquid gold anyway? I'm talking about rainwater harvesting—catching raindrops to change lives. Imagine giving families clean water at their doorstep, kids spending more time in school instead of fetching water, and communities growing veggies year-round. Rotary clubs around the world are tapping into this ancient yet genius solution—simple roofs, local materials, big smiles. Even local governments love it! Want to help turn raindrops into hope? Let's chat more about how your club can make a splash!"*

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## Sample RWH system in Rural Nigeria

We provided AI software with the following very specific question:

*Design a RWH system in a rural community in Nigeria with moderate rainfall. Use community empowerment, local methods and materials, make it sustainable long-term, demonstrate that it is a Rotary project, involve the local government to approve, supervise and provide tech support - and provide long-term sustainable impact on the needs of households. The community has 200 houses, a primary school, a mosque and a small community center. It is about 2 miles across, slightly hilly. Meet national and international WaSH standards.*

It provided the following:

Here's a practical and sustainable design for a Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) system tailored for a rural community in Nigeria with moderate rainfall, aligning with Rotary International's principles, engaging local government, empowering the community, and meeting national and international Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WaSH) standards.

### Project Overview

**Location & Community:** A rural Nigerian community, moderately rainy climate, slightly hilly terrain, about 2 miles across. The village has around 200 households, a primary school, a mosque, and a community center.

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## Is Rainwater Safe?

Ensuring that rainwater harvesting (RWH) output is safe for human consumption involves several steps to minimize contamination and maintain water quality. Here are some of the best ways to assure RWH output is safe:

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## Handling Rainwater Contaminants

by Stew Martin and Perplexity “Deep Research”  
(**NOTE:** See some personal tips from Stew at the bottom)

**Prompt:** Some people believe that rain water is pure and has no contaminants. is this true? When it falls from the sky does it collect pollutants, acids or chemicals? When it lands on metal roofs in LMIC rural villages, what debris or contaminants are added to the rainwater? If it should be treated, what is the best way to treat or filter the water to make it potable for human consumption? Keep in mind that households income and budgets are very small.

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## What is the role of government & officials?

*How can they focus donor efforts on best practices, assure the work is well done, improve their staffing and budgets to support those government initiatives, provide an environment in which WASH projects and programs can flourish, and more.*

Local, regional, and central governments play a crucial role in ensuring that donor-supported rainwater harvesting (RWH) projects are effective, sustainable, and aligned with best practices. Their roles include:

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## Rainwater Harvesting Checklists for different scenarios:

1. School - at a rural primary or secondary school, ranging from 200 to 1,000 students
2. HCF - a RURAL Health Care Facility
3. A single household with seven family members, chickens, goats, and one cow
4. A whole rural community in an LMIC with between 200 and 1,000 households.



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Here are tailored checklists for each rainwater harvesting (RWH) scenario. Each checklist addresses technical needs, community involvement, behavior change, water safety, and long-term sustainability, with practical steps and examples for rural contexts in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

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## Calendar of Events

4 June 2025 - [Water Cooperation and Diplomacy Webinar](#)  
21 Jun 2025 - **World Water Summit 17, Calgary**  
21 Jun 2025 - **WASH Ambassador Meet & Greet - Calgary**  
21-25 Jun - **WASH HUB - Calgary**  
21-25 Jun - **Rotary Convention - Calgary**  
28 Jun - **WASH-RAG Annual Meeting (Virtual)**  
24 - 28 Aug - World Water Week (Stockholm)  
15 Oct 2025 - Global Handwashing Day  
24 Oct 2025 - World Polio Day  
19 Nov 2025 - World Toilet Day  
22 Mar 2026 - World Water Day



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Submit your stories, videos, and pictures for upcoming Newsletters to us at [info@wash-rag.org](mailto:info@wash-rag.org).

WASH-RAG reserves the right to edit stories for length and content. By submitting a story you give us permission to publish and make public your contact information including but not limited to your email or club's website.

The WASH Rotary Action Group is pleased to consider partnerships with any corporate supporter. Due to the unique attributes of water sources and water provision, accepting corporate support does not imply an endorsement of any particular water technology. Rotarians, Rotary Clubs, and Rotary partners must evaluate any technology to determine if it is the best solution for the conditions where the program will be implemented. The WASH Rotary Action Group can provide guidance about where different technologies work best, but Rotarians and Rotary clubs must decide how to implement their programs.

This Rotary Action Group is recognized and operates in accordance with Rotary International policy, but is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International. To learn more please contact the WASH Rotary Action Group by email at [info@wash-rag.org](mailto:info@wash-rag.org) Thank you.

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