

## **PRETREATMENT CORNER**

### **The Next Pretreatment Coordinator?**

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An interesting service came to light as I was doing research for this column and I thought I would share it with you. There is a company named Environmental Canine Services, LLC in Michigan that has trained dogs to sniff out sewage. One of the company owners made a presentation at the 2010 National Association of Clean Water Agencies annual industrial pretreatment workshop. The dogs have been scent trained to sniff out sewage and surfactants. Their primary focus to date is to search out illicit discharges in storm sewer systems.

So why canines? We hear about search dogs trained to find live people as well as human remains. Then there are the K-9s trained to search out narcotics, accelerants, criminal evidence such as guns and money, and explosives. Dogs can even be trained to sniff out gas leaks, water leaks, utility pole rot, various foodstuffs such as grease trap overflows, VOCs, toxic molds and gypsy moth eggs. The scent training is only a screening tool but it may potentially save money by not having unnecessary tests conducted on discharges suspected to have fecal contamination or other toxics.

WERF is sponsoring a research study in California in which dogs will help identify local sources of fecal contamination in storm drains. The study is a joint effort by municipal, academic and private consulting entities. The research project is entitled 'Canine and Microbial Source Tracking in Santa Barbara, CA'. More information about this project can be found at WERF's website at [www.werf.org](http://www.werf.org).

While this work by the K-9s is still in its infancy, could it someday expand to other scent training such as to aid pretreatment coordinators in industrial facility inspections to find illicit wastewater discharges or hidden chemical storage areas? Of course, dogs would probably not be allowed to enter food manufacturing facilities for sanitary reasons but just imagine all of the possibilities! Your canine friend could also be your next co-worker!