

## Do you have a septic system?

Homes that are not serviced by public sewers usually have an onsite septic system. An onsite septic system stores solid waste and allows liquid waste to filter back into the ground.

### Failing septic systems can cause...

- Property damage  
sewage backups into your yard or basement  
collapsed septic tanks
- Odor
- **Surface and ground water pollution**
- Disease transmission potential
- Costly repairs/replacement



Source: mlive.com May 14, 2013

### Failing Septic Systems and *E.coli*

In 2014 the Ingham Conservation District found ***E.coli* levels that exceeded Michigan's Water Quality Standards (WQS)** at several sites within the Upper Grand River Watershed, including Onondaga and Leslie Townships. These levels indicate bacterial pollution that can pose a health risk to people who swim, fish, work and play in the water. One source of *E.coli* is faulty septic systems. To raise awareness, this brochure is part of a series going out to landowners in key areas within the watershed where high *E.coli* concentrations were found. Additional brochures addressing agricultural practices and pet waste are also available.

The Ingham Conservation District received a grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to monitor *E.coli* levels in several tributaries in the Upper Grand River Watershed. The Upper Grand Bacteria Reduction Project has been funded by the MDEQ project #2012-0024, through a US EPA Section 319 grant.

To learn more about this project and where we go from here, contact our office or visit our webpage:

Ingham Conservation District  
1031 W. Dexter Trail  
Mason, MI 48854  
info@inghamconservation.com

Contact us at :

**517-676-2290**

or visit:

**[www.inghamconservation.com](http://www.inghamconservation.com)**

A special thanks to our partners:

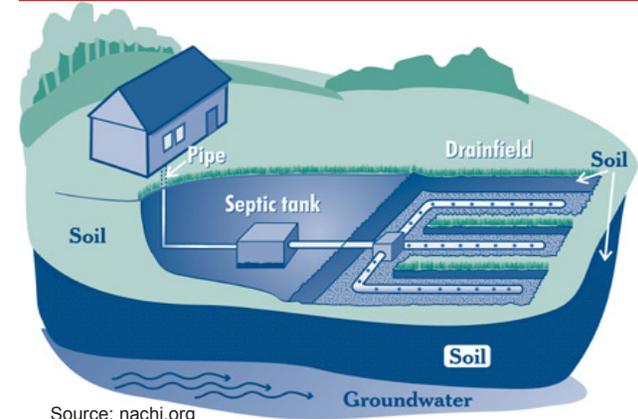
**Michigan Department of  
Environmental Quality**



**Jackson County  
Conservation District**



# Protecting our Water by Understanding our SEPTIC SYSTEMS



Source: nachi.org

## Save Money and the Environment

The Ingham  
Conservation District  
promotes and  
practices stewardship  
of our natural  
resources by serving,  
educating and  
empowering our  
community





Upper Grand River Tributary, photo taken by M. Beloskur, 2008

## Upper Grand Bacteria Reduction Project

In 2014 the Ingham Conservation District monitored *E.coli* levels in tributaries of the Upper Grand River. Levels exceeding Michigan's Water Quality Standards (WQS) were found at all sampling sites, several within Onondaga and Leslie Townships.

To meet Michigan's WQS for recreational water use, no individual sample may exceed 300 coliform forming units (cfu) per 100mL of surface water and the 30-day geometric mean for a site may not exceed 130 cfu/100mL.

Regular inspections and maintenance of your septic system, as well as good general septic system practices, can save you money and reduce the amount of bacterial

# General Septic System Recommendations

## Do >>>

- Practice water conservation
- Limit use of garbage disposal
- Check household products for septic system suitability
- Keep surface of drainfield properly drained
- Have septic system cleaned as needed (usually every 3-5 years)
- Keep records of all inspections, pumping and repairs

## Don't >>>

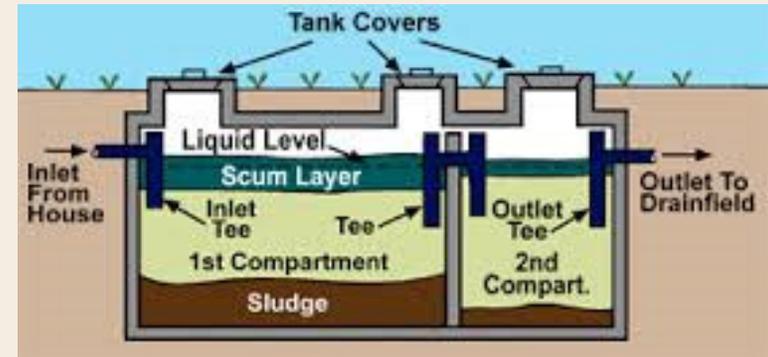
- Put fats/oils down the drain
- Flush indigestible materials (such as diapers, wet wipes, floss, feminine hygiene products, plastic and rubber)
- Dispose of prescription drugs
- Excessively use harsh chemicals (such as bleach, disinfectants, solvents, paint, thinners and pesticides)
- Overload the system by running too much water at once
- Allow rainfall to flow into the system
- Install automatic sprinklers over drainfield
- Plant trees/shrubs in the septic field
- Install impermeable surfaces (such as concrete) over the drainfield
- Compact the ground over the drainfield

**Chemical waste disposal into septic systems, such as many cleaning products, contain harmful ingredients to plants and wildlife.**

### Find a service provider in your area

To find a septic system inspector in your area, check out the website below:

[http://www.deq.state.mi.us/shr/hauler\\_directory.aspx](http://www.deq.state.mi.us/shr/hauler_directory.aspx)



Source: *Basic Principles of Onsite Sewage*, Washington Department of Health, 1991

## Inspection and Regular Maintenance Benefits

### A routine checkup looks for >>>

- Signs of failure
- Leaks
- Broken pipes
- Extent of buildup

### Pump out frequency depends on >>>

- Tank size
- Household size
- Water use
- Garbage disposal use