

Septics Edition

Second Flush (MRA only), "tIssue" #1

Spring 2012



"Marine Recovery Area" for Clallam County

The MRA is located in eastern Clallam County as highlighted on this map. It was established for this area because parts of Dungeness Bay are closed for commercial and recreational shellfish gathering, and there are bacterial pollution problems in some of the streams that empty into the bay. Human waste, most likely from poorly functioning or failing septic systems, are contributing to these problems according to recent research.

INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS? READ ON...

Over the past few years there has been quite a bit of discussion and information about the onsite septic system inspection requirement. The law – *already in effect* – requires homeowners to properly maintain their septic systems and have them inspected on a regular basis (WAC246-272A-0270 & CCC41.20.170). This means, at minimum,

- * conventional gravity systems are to be inspected every 3 years
- * all others (those with a pump) are to be inspected annually

The Clallam County Environmental Health septic inspection program currently is focusing on homeowner education and voluntary compliance. While the program has seen good results, there are still many systems that are in need of an inspection. If your system has not been inspected recently, please make arrangements to do so. A list of qualified inspectors and maintenance providers can be found on the O&M website listed below, under "Licensing." Properties in the *Marine Recovery Area* must have a professional inspection before the homeowner may qualify to inspect their own system. Details on the Do-It-Yourself inspection training program will be in a future issue of this newsletter.

Just pumping your tank does NOT qualify as an inspection! In fact, having your system inspected may show that your tank does not need pumping at all. And, an inspection now could save you costly repairs in the future!

Onsite Septic Systems as a "Green" Technology

Is it really Earth Day Every Day when you're on a septic system?

When properly designed, installed and maintained, septic systems replenish the groundwater by recycling the water you use indoors. The vast majority of the water you flush is conserved, helping to maintain local water supplies.

One key to septic systems being able to recharge groundwater **safely** is found in the soil under the drainfield. Soil particles trap and remove most pathogens and pollutants in wastewater, and microscopic organisms naturally found in soil (such as bacteria, protozoa, and fungi) feed on the organic matter.

On the other hand, the ability of soils and receiving groundwater to handle contamination is limited. For example, when there is a high water table at the site of a drainfield or extra-coarse soils, contaminants will not be so easily removed. Special technology or other conditions are required when needed to meet appropriate treatment standards.

Finally, some compounds found in hair products, insect repellent, medicine, etc., can't be completely removed even in the best of soils. This is true for nitrogen as well and is one reason individual septic systems are not used in higher-density suburban settings.

Heavy chemicals such as cleaning agents and bleach are hard on the septic system itself by killing the good bacteria in the tank – so "lighten up" and follow the *Clean Green Guidelines* on page 2.

Modern regulations for the design and placement of septic systems are written to protect public health – *and "Mother Earth!"*

**"GREEN
CLEANING"
recipes on
back!**



Clallam County Onsite Program Websites

- Onsite septic systems (OSS) in general: <http://www.clallam.net/HHS/EnvironmentalHealth/onsite.html>
- O&M program; inspection requirements: http://www.clallam.net/HHS/EnvironmentalHealth/onsite_om.html
- Septics Edition newsletter (all issues): <http://www.clallam.net/HHS/EnvironmentalHealth/ehnewsletter1.html>
- To order an "as-built" drawing: http://websrv7.clallam.net/forms/eh_asbuiltrequest.php



The Water Column

Green Cleaning Methods: Safe for Septic Systems & the Environment

“Green Cleaning” is using cleaning products that don't endanger you, your children, your septic system or the environment. For example, commercial cleaning products sometimes contain toxic chemicals, or irritants that can trigger an asthma episode. The products recommended here are effective, inexpensive, safe for you and your septic system—and the environment.

Green Cleaning Shopping List:

- ▲ Baking soda
- ▲ White vinegar
- ▲ Liquid castile soap (a mild soap made of olive oil and sodium hydroxide)
- ▲ Scouring pad
- ▲ Spray bottle (for water)
- ▲ Cotton washcloth or a sponge
- ▲ Cotton rag without much lint

Toilet bowl cleaner

♥ Baking soda
♥ Liquid castile soap
Sprinkle baking soda inside the bowl as you would any scouring powder. Add a couple drops of soap. Scrub with a toilet bowl brush and finish outside surfaces with a damp cloth or paper towel sprinkled with baking soda.



Drain cleaner

♥ 1/2 cup baking soda
♥ 1/2 cup white vinegar
♥ Teakettle of boiling water
This recipe will free minor clogs and helps to prevent future clogs. Pour baking soda down the drain first, then vinegar. Let fizz for a few minutes. Then pour the boiling water. Repeat if needed. If the clog is stubborn, use a plunger. If very stubborn, use a mechanical snake.



Clean Water Herald—Septics Edition Spring 2012

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Landlords and ladies! Please share with your renters!

The address used is the taxing address on record in the Clallam County Assessor's Office for one or more properties that are (or are likely, according to land use information) utilizing an onsite septic system.



The Clean Water Herald is a periodic newsletter supported by members of the Clean Water Work Group, to inform and promote good stewardship of our shared natural resources.

SPRING CLEAN

Earth Day was April 22nd...
A great occasion to have your septic system inspected!

<p>“Septics Edition” Volume 2 (Second Flush) is published by the friendly staff at Environmental Health Services, a division of the Clallam County Health & Human Services Department. Contact us at the courthouse, 360-417-2258, or visit www.clallam.net/envhealth</p> <p>This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under assistance agreement PC-00J32601 to Washington Department of Health. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the EPA, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.</p> <p><i>30% post-consumer content recycled paper</i></p>	<p>Septics 101 <u>Online</u></p>	<p>A 30-minute video and quiz are available through the link below. When you've completed the course and quiz, print and save your Certificate of Completion.</p>		
<p>Take Septics 101 online or register for in-person classes at http://www.clallam.net/HHS/EnvironmentalHealth/onsite_septic101.html (if you don't have internet, register by leaving a message at 360-417-2529)</p>				
<p>Septics 101 <u>In-Person</u></p>	<p>May 22 June 12</p>	<p>6:00 - 8:30pm</p>	<p>Dungeness River Audubon Center; west end of Hendrickson Rd., Sequim</p>	
<p>Septics 201 <u>Coming soon</u></p>	<p>Also known as Do-It-Yourself (DIY) inspection training. This class will, pending pilot test results, train the homeowner how to perform a certified inspection of their septic system.</p>			