

Septics Edition

Clallam County Environmental Health

Vol. 3, Issue 2, Winter 2014

OSS Owner's Survey Says!

In summer 2013 Clallam County Environmental Health (EH) conducted a survey of homeowners who have onsite septic systems (OSS) to see how much they know about their system and the County's septic system programs. And the response was beyond expectations -- **2,138** surveys were returned! EH staff wishes to thank all who completed a survey; we value your feedback. While opinions varied greatly, some general themes emerged:

- The greatest benefit of septic maintenance for homeowners in order of priority was peace of mind, avoid cost and hassle of repairs, prevent pollution, and preserve your investment.
- Many homeowners do not know whether their property is located inside or outside the Marine Recovery Area (MRA).
- OSS owners may not understand the requirements or reasons for a certified septic inspection.
- Homeowners do not have their septic system inspected because of the cost and because they do not understand that it is the law and a practical necessity.
- OSS owners consider the septic newsletter, *Clean Water Herald-Septic Issue*, and the septic classes valuable.
- OSS owners, as a result of EH outreach, are becoming more careful about what goes into their septic systems such as chemicals, detergents, and toilet tissue. They also understand the importance of limiting and spreading out water usages.
- OSS owners want online Septics 201/Do-It-Yourself septic system inspection certification.
- The majority of survey respondents are willing to pay at least \$10/year for an OSS management program. They support fines for those not following inspection requirements and support enforcing existing laws.
- OSS homeowners prefer to receive information about septic system care and maintenance through a magazine or newsletter mailed to their home.



DING! SURVEY SAYS “It is time to get Septics 201 online!” And we agree! It is time for Do-It-Yourself! Environmental Health invites you to visit our Septics 201 “Do-it-Yourself” Septic System Inspection Program Homepage at

www.clallam.net/Septics201DIY

Get registered and certified to inspect your own septic system and submit your inspections online. See page 2 for more details.

WELCOME TO SEPTICS 201!

The survey report is under review. When finalized, it will be made available for viewing on the Clallam County EH website. The link will be provided in our next newsletter.

Do-It-Yourself Septic System Inspection Program

Developed by Clallam County Environmental Health Division

OSS Owner's Survey Says! . . . (part 2)



. . . it is time to **officially** launch the Septics 201 DIY Homeowner Septic Inspection Program Website! www.clallam.net/Septics201DIY

The Septics 201 DIY homeowner septic inspection program was developed by EH staff, providing OSS owners with a cost effective option to comply with state septic inspection regulations. Successful completion of Septics 201 DIY allows OSS homeowners to perform ***their own septic inspections*** without having to pay for a certified septic inspector.

Septics 201 classes were first offered in 2008/09 in a classroom setting but could not accommodate large numbers of people nor allow a convenient way for homeowners to report their inspection results. EH developed an online website version of Septics 201 to address these limitations.

Septic 201 classes and the on-line Septics 201 DIY are part of the County-approved septic system inspection training and certification program that covers conventional gravity, pressure distribution, sand filter, and mound systems. Other system types such as aerobic treatment units, biofilters, and all systems with proprietary devices are **ineligible** for DIY inspections and **must** be evaluated by a professional. If you live in the **Marine Recovery Area (MRA)**, your septic system **must** have a current professional inspection on file at the County before you are able to proceed with Septic 201 DIY certification in Clallam County. After the initial professional inspection, MRA homeowners may qualify to inspect their own septic system if they meet the other criteria. Clallam County requires Septics 101 (in-person class or www.clallam.net/Septics101) as a prerequisite for Septics 201 DIY.

The online Septics 201 DIY course can be found at www.clallam.net/Septics201DIY. The course and materials are best accessed using a high speed internet connection. This online class consists of a 25 minute long video divided up into 10 short chapters followed by an exam. Homeowners must complete the exam and answer at least 80% of the questions correctly to become certified to inspect ***their own septic system***. Once certified, homeowners will be able to submit their inspection records to the County over the internet.



Environmental Health invites residents and homeowners in Clallam County with an onsite septic system to visit our Septics 201 “Do-it-Yourself” Septic System Inspection Program Homepage at www.clallam.net/Septics201DIY.

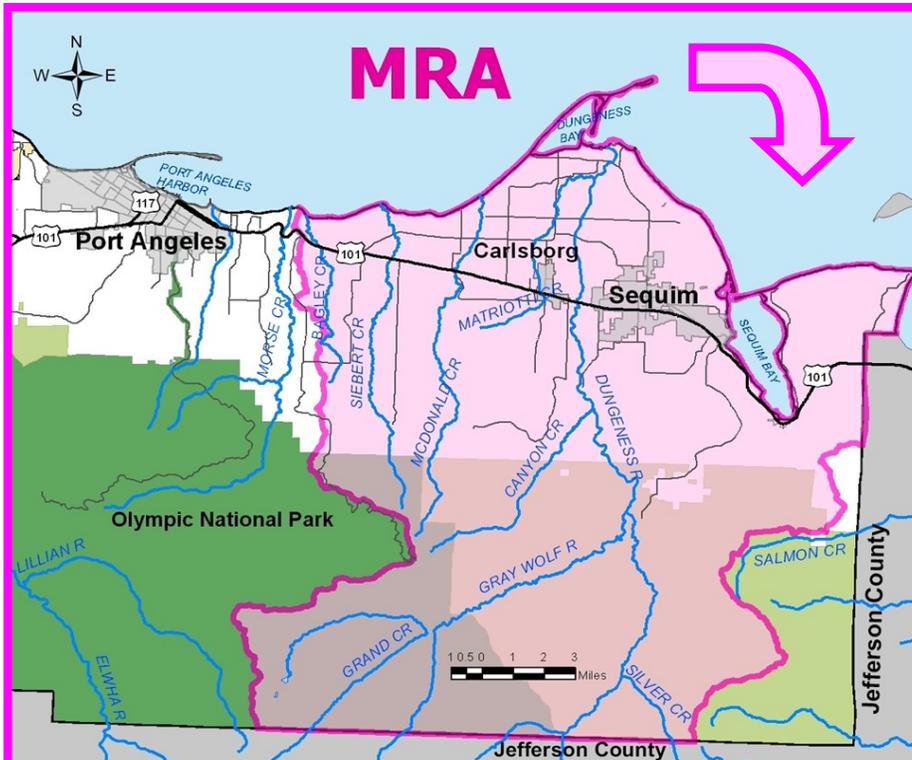
There are many links to resources on this new website that guide you through the process as well as links to contact EH staff. If your septic system is **not eligible** for Homeowner DIY inspections, you will receive an automated message with the reason for ineligibility and will not be able to complete the registration process.

If you have suggestions, questions, or believe the information about your septic system is in error, please contact us via email using the contact EH links on the website or by phone at (360) 417-2506. With the help of the homeowners using the program, we hope to continue making the website and online inspection form easier to use.

OSS Owner's Survey Says! . . . (part 3)

DING! SURVEY SAYS : “MRA or not?”

According to the survey, that question seems to cause quite a bit of confusion. The **Marine Recovery Area (MRA)** is an area of the county that was created in response to the downgrading or closure of commercial shellfish beds. You don't have to live on the water, near water or even be able to see water to live in the MRA. Specifically the boundaries are the Bagley Creek watershed east to the county line, and from the National Park boundary north to the water. More simply put, if you have a **Sequim** address, you live in the **MRA**. If you live east of **Bagley Creek Road**, you live in the **MRA**. If you live east of Deer Park Road, you may live in the MRA.



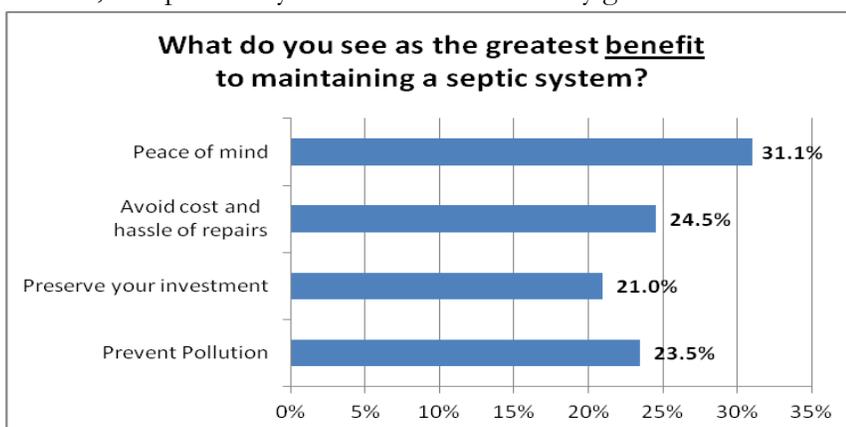
REMEMBER: Homeowners in the MRA must have a recent professional inspection on file before their septic system is eligible for the Septics 201 DIY. The other requirements for septic inspection are the same as the rest of Clallam County and Washington state: all gravity systems must be inspected every three years; all other septic system types are to be inspected annually.

More information on system eligibility can be found in the **Summary of Septic System Inspection Requirements** on the EH website at www.clallam.net/septic.



DING! SURVEY SAYS “Peace of Mind”

Survey respondents expressed various opinions on the benefits of having a septic system inspection. The most important benefit to having a septic system inspection of the four for consideration was peace of mind. Other benefits were avoid cost and hassle of repairs, prevent pollution, and preserve your investment. All very good reasons!



DING! SURVEY SAYS “Inspection vs. Pumping?”

Pumping is not the same as Inspection. There is a big difference. **Pumping** empties the septic tank. An **Inspection** entails checking the tank for leaks, measuring scum and sludge to determine need for pumping, checking the d-box and pump controls when present, and evaluating the drainfield. State regulation WAC 246-272-0270 requires that all septic systems be inspected.

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Inside this Issue:

- ◆ **OSS Owner Survey Results**
- ◆ **DIY Website goes live**
- ◆ **Do you live in the MRA?**



**SEPTIC SYSTEM CARE
 BEGINS WITH YOU**

This newsletter is mailed to onsite septic system owners in Clallam County using property owner addresses on file with the Clallam County Assessor's Office. If you have received this newsletter erroneously, please contact us.



Spring Events

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.

Septics Edition Volume 3, Winter 2014 is published by the friendly staff at Environmental Health Services, a section of the Clallam County Health & Human Services Department. Contact us at the courthouse, 360-417-2506, or visit our website at www.clallam.net/septic.

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<p>Septics 101 <u>Online</u></p>	<p>This 30-minute video is posted on the Washington Dept. of Health website, and linked from our Septics 101 page www.clallam.net/Septics101</p>	
<p>Septics 101 In-Person</p>	<p>Wed., March 5th., 6-8:30pm Tues., Sept. 9th, 6-8:30pm <i>Use link above to register or call us at 360-417-2506</i></p>	<p>Dungeness River Audubon Center, Hendrickson Road</p>
<p>Septics 201 <u>Online</u></p>	<p>Do-It-Yourself (DIY) inspection training online www.clallam.net/Septics201DIY</p>	
<p>Septics 201 In-Person <i>(for those without high speed internet connection)</i></p>	<p>Wed., March 19th, 10am-1pm Mon., May 19th, 5:30pm-8:30pm Tues., Sept. 23th, 5:30pm-8:30pm <i>Limited space available. Use link above to register or call us at 360-417-2506</i> Prerequisite is Septics 101 (in-person or online) and Septic System Eligible for DIY</p>	<p>Dungeness River Audubon Center, Hendrickson Road</p>