

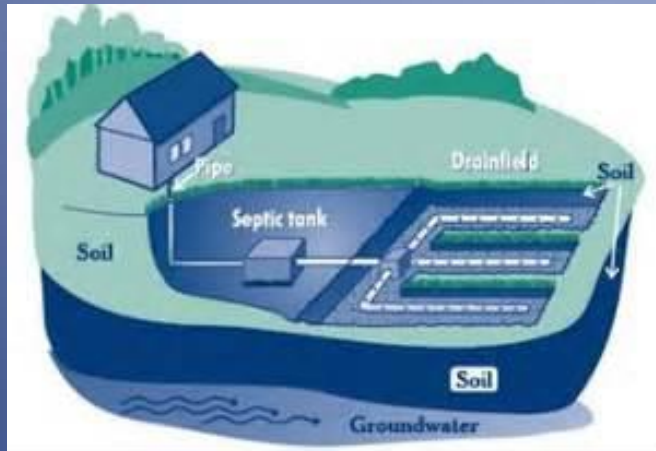
NW Indiana Septic System Coordination Work Group

SEPTICSMART WEEK 2015
September 21-25



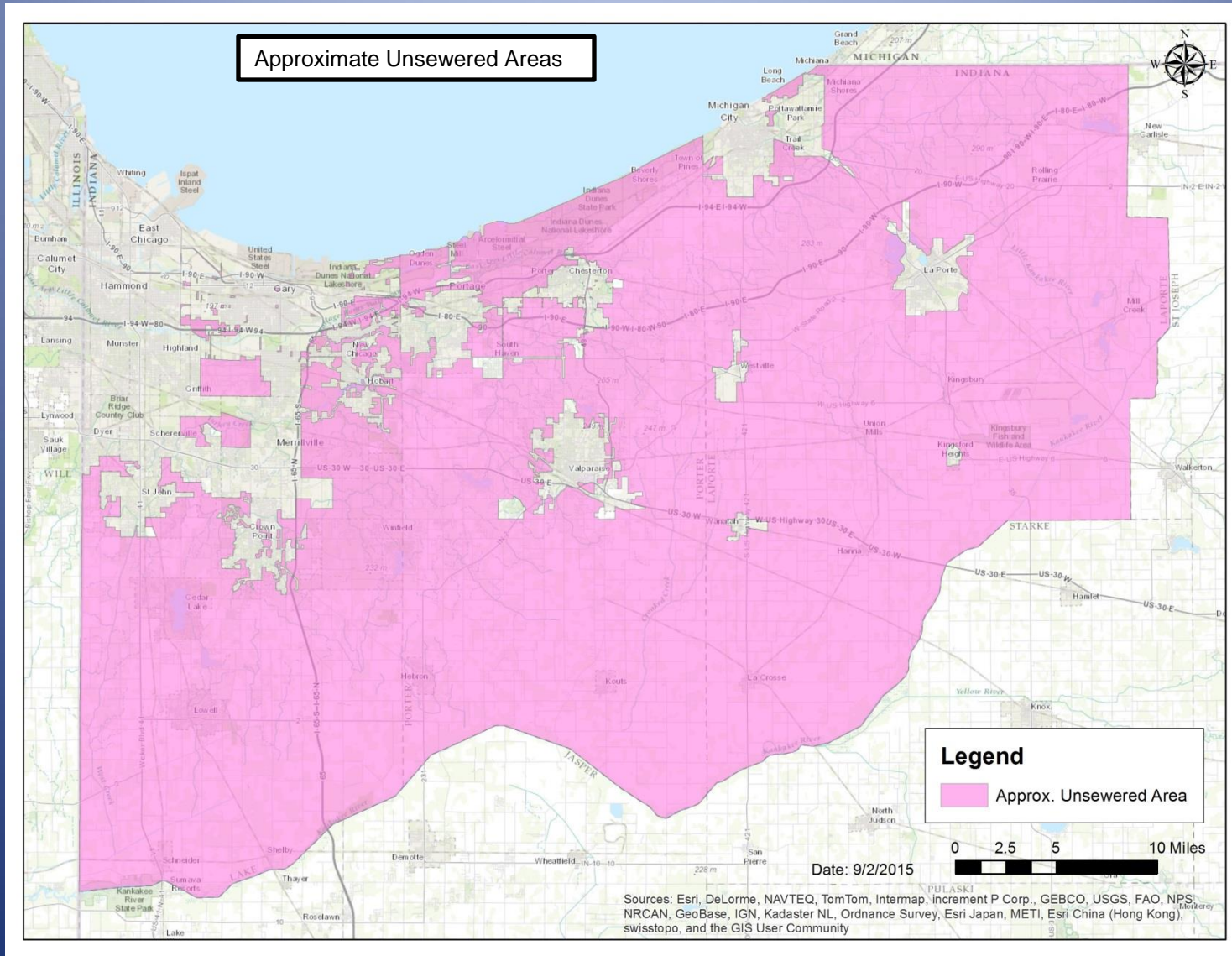
NIRPC Environmental Management Policy Committee
Meeting September 3, 2015

Many communities in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties rely wholly or partially on septic systems for their wastewater treatment needs.



Failing septic systems can be potential sources of threats to human health and water quality. Proper care and maintenance is critical to septic system function and long term performance.

2015 Draft Map of Three County Septic Served Areas



Estimated Number of Septic Systems in the Three County Area – Approx. 60,000

The NW Indiana Septic System Coordination Work Group

The NW Indiana SSC Work Group comprised of federal, state, and local governments/ agencies, not-for-profit groups, and interested individuals has been meeting since early 2013 to develop collaborative plans and implementation strategies to address the potential impacts of failing septic systems on local water quality and public health.

- IDEM
- USEPA
- Indiana State Dept. of Health
- County Health Depts.
- NIRPC
- Urban Waters Federal Partnership
- Coastal MS4s
- Coastal SWCDs
- Save the Dunes
- Sea Grant
- Coastal Communities
- Septic System Owners
- Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program

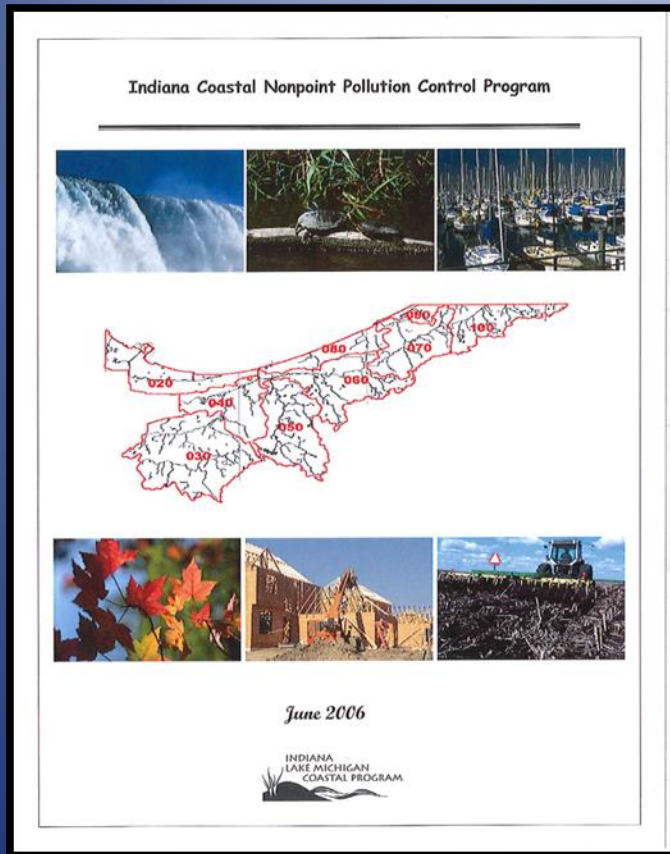
The Indiana DNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program provides staffing and coordination assistance for the Work Group as part of the Indiana Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program.

Indiana Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program

Onsite Disposal System (Septic System) Management Measures are included in the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program (also known as 6217)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) determine if states have met all the measures in the Coastal Nonpoint Program

- Indiana has not yet met the measure for ensuring that Operating Septic Systems are inspected at a frequency adequate to ascertain whether the system is failing.



The NW Indiana Septic System Coordination Work Group 2015

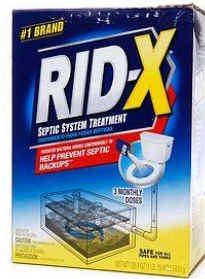
- ❖ Focus Groups – Septic System operation and maintenance awareness
- ❖ County Ordinances/Point of Sale Inspections
- ❖ Watershed Mapping & Monitoring to identify potential septic system impacts on local waterways
- ❖ Coordination and information sharing between nonpoint source pollution programs and projects
- ❖ Outreach and Education/EPA SepticSmart Week
- ❖ Innovative approaches and funding to address failing septic systems

Focus Groups - Ongoing Research

Septic System Maintenance & Regional Homeowner's Perspectives

- Study developed in 2014 to address the questions: *Do some people in Northwest Indiana fail to properly maintain their septic systems, and if so, what can public agencies do to help overcome these barriers?*
- Data was collected through a series of focus groups and surveys.
- Final analysis to be released later this year.

Teaser: What is popping up on people's minds so far?



* This is not the solution

Support and Promote EPA SepticSmart Week at the State and Local level.

SepticSmart Week 2015 - September 21- 25

Join with the Lake Michigan Coastal Program and the NW Indiana Septic System Coordination Work Group to support the annual EPA SepticSmart Week. Help get the word out with printed and on-line materials from the EPA Septic Smart Program on proper septic system operation and maintenance.



Pass a supporting resolution through your City Council or Board. Provide a link to the EPA Septic Smart Program and downloadable outreach materials on your website or Facebook page. Offer septic system education workshops. There are many ways to participate.

Communities in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties will be contacted to promote Septic System Awareness Week through resolutions and/or distribution of education materials. EPA Septic Smart educational materials will be distributed through the Septic System Coordination Work Group. Educational presentations on septic system operation and maintenance can also be scheduled. Participating communities will be recognized as partners promoting SepticSmart Week. For more information on how to get involved or receive education materials for distribution contact:

Dorreen Carey, Special Projects Coordinator, IDNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program. Phone: 219 921-0863 Email: dcarey@dnr.in.gov



EPA SepticSmart Web Page: www.epa.gov/septicsmart

Septic Smart education materials include single page fact sheets, booklets, door hangers, and tri-folds in English and Spanish.



Participating governments, agencies, organizations and individuals will distribute the EPA SepticSmart outreach materials during SepticSmart Week and provide links to the EPA SepticSmart web page with the message that regular care and maintenance of septic systems can prevent failure.

- Newspaper, Radio, Television
- Web, Facebook, Blogging
- Mailings
- Banners
- SepticSmart Brochures
- Presentations
- Resolutions

Join With Us to Get the Word Out!



Do Your Part, Be SepticSmart:
The Do's and Don'ts of Your Septic System

Learn these simple steps to protect your home, health, environment and property value:

Protect It and Inspect It:

Do:

- Have your system inspected (in general) every three years by a licensed contractor and have the tank pumped, when necessary, generally every three to five years.

Think at the Sink:

Don't:

- Pour cooking grease or oil down the sink or toilet.
- Rinse coffee grounds into the sink.
- Pour household chemicals down the sink or flush them.

Do:

- Eliminate or limit the use of a garbage disposal.
- Properly dispose of coffee grounds & food.
- Put grease in a container to harden before discarding in the trash.

Don't Overload the Commode:

Don't:

- Flush non-degradable products or chemicals, such as feminine hygiene products, condoms, dental floss, diapers, cigarette butts, cat litter, paper towels, pharmaceuticals.

Do:

- Dispose of these items in the trash can!

Shield Your Field:

Don't:

- Park or drive on your drainfield. The weight can damage the drain lines.
- Plant trees or shrubs too close to your drainfield, roots can grow into your system and clog it.

Do:

- Consult a septic service professional to advise you of the proper distance for planting trees and shrubs, depending on your septic tank location.

Don't Strain Your Drain:

Don't:

- Conserve your water use by using your dishwasher, shower, washing machine, and toilet at the same time. All that extra water can really strain your septic system.

Do:

- Save the use of water generating appliances. This can be helpful especially if your system has not been pumped in a long time.
- Remove more water efficiency by fixing plumbing leaks and consider installing bathrooms and kitchen faucet aerators and water-efficient products.

For more SepticSmart tips, visit: www.epa.gov/septicmart

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Do Your Part, Be Septic Smart!
It's SepticSmart Week,
September 21 -25, 2015



For local participation and information contact
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