



Headwaters Yellow River Watershed Planning Project

Summer 2016

Quick Facts

- 53-80% of the *E. coli* in the Yellow River during a May sampling event was from human sources.
- Septic systems generally require an inspection and/or pumping every 3-5 years.

Upcoming Events

Steering Committee Meeting

Date: June 29th, 2016

Time: 11:00am

Location: Marshall County Building (112 West Jefferson Street, Plymouth, IN) Room #207

The Draft Headwaters Yellow River Watershed Management Plan is currently available for review on the Marshall County SWCD webpage.

For more information on the Headwaters Yellow River Project feel free to contact:

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Septic System Basics

Septic systems are underground wastewater treatment structures that use a combination of nature and time-tested technology to treat wastewater from household plumbing produced by bathrooms, kitchen drains, and laundry. Approximately 66% of the homes in the Headwaters Yellow River watershed rely on septic systems for wastewater treatment. Water samples collected in May of 2016 demonstrate that anywhere from 50-80% of the *E. coli* in streams of the Yellow River Watershed are from human sources. Therefore, malfunctioning septic systems in the watershed are potential source of contamination to the watershed.

Septic system upkeep comes down to four primary elements:

1) Inspection and pumping

In general household septic systems should be inspected by a certified professional contractor every three years and pumped three to five years. The frequency of septic tank pumping is influenced by household size, total wastewater generated, volume of solids in wastewater, and septic tank size.

2) Water efficiency

All of the water a household uses is sent to the septic system. Therefore, efficiently using water can improve septic system operation and reduce the risk of septic system failure. A single leaky toilet can add an additional 200 gallons of water per day to a septic system.

3) Proper waste disposal

Remember that anything goes down drains in your home will enter the septic system. Therefore, some products can greatly impact the functionality of the system. Never flush feminine hygiene products, dental floss, diapers, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, cat litter, household chemicals, or pharmaceuticals.

4) Drainfield care

The drainfield is the component of the septic system that removes contaminants from the liquid that emerges from the septic tank. To keep the drainfield working properly never drive on the drainfield, plant trees an appropriate distance away to keep roots from growing into the system, and keep rainwater drainage systems away from the drainfield to prevent excess water from entering the system.

Septic System Failure Symptoms

- Wastewater backing up into household drains.
- Bright green, spongy, grass on the drainfield, even during dry weather.
- Pooling water or muddy soil around the septic system or in your basement.
- A strong odor around the septic tank and drainfield.

If you think your septic system is malfunctioning or if you simply desire to prevent future issues contact a professional inspector. The Indiana Onsite Waste Water Professionals Association, Inc. (IOWPA) website contains a list of certified professional inspectors throughout Indiana (http://www.iowpa.org/Certified_Professionals.html)

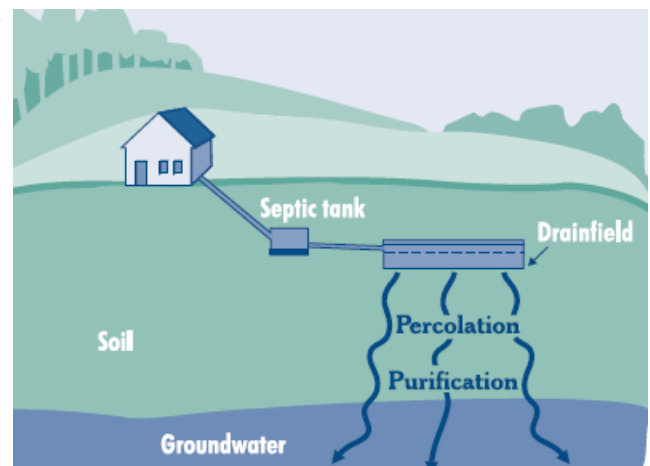


Figure 1. Typical Septic System Design for the Headwaters Yellow River Watershed.