



# Development and Implementation of the Regulation for the Inspection of OSDS at the Time of Property Transfer Washtenaw County, Michigan

THE ROUGE RIVER PROJECT  
A WORLD CLASS EFFORT

*A publication of the Wayne County Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project*

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BRINGING OUR RIVER BACK TO LIFE

## Objective

The objective of the grant was to develop and implement a county regulation for the inspection of onsite sewage disposal systems (OSDS) at the time of transfer of ownership of a property.



### Owner

Washtenaw County

### Location

Washtenaw County

### Dates

Completion Date                      January 29, 2001

### Total Project Cost

\$91,794

## Demonstration Aspects

This project demonstrated how OSDS could be evaluated to assure proper operation using third party inspectors. Information developed for qualifications of inspectors, training, forms, uniform reporting and public involvement would be of interest to others considering a program for inspection of existing OSDS.

## Project Highlights

A new Washtenaw County regulation for inspection of OSDS at the time of property transfer was adopted and became effective January 3, 2000. The regulation provides for third party evaluation of OSDS at the time of property transfer. A certification program was developed to certify people to do these evaluations. The certification includes a pre-screening exam to determine the person's knowledge of OSDS and attendance at a core training or core training and technical training session, depending on the person's knowledge and experience.

## Major Elements

- An 8-hour OSDS technical training course was developed.
- An 8-hour core training course was developed
- Four exams were developed – pre-screening exam, technical OSDS exam,

- core septic inspection exam, and core exam concerning ethics and the regulation.
- Training was provided by the Michigan State University Onsite Sewage Training Center.
- A significant effort was made to provide information to stakeholders and the general public.
- An advisory committee was formed to help with development of forms and with educational materials.
- A standard inspection form was developed.
- A “kick-off” meeting was held to bring stakeholders together before the implementation went into effect.
- A computerized database was developed to support the new program.

## Project Results

- The Washtenaw County Regulation for the Inspection of Residential Onsite Water and Sewage Disposal Systems at the Time of Property Transfer became effective January 3, 2000.
- 44 people applied to become certified as third party inspectors. 41 completed the required training and were certified.
- Through December 1, 2000, 823 inspection reports of OSDS had been received. The reports found 18% of the OSDS evaluated had failing or substantial non-conforming systems.
- A training/certification program for private inspectors and County staff was developed and implemented.
- A form for evaluation of OSDS and educational material for stakeholders and local units of government was developed.
- The regulation is making a real impact toward the improvement of water quality and the quality of life of Washtenaw County's rural areas.
- The process established a positive working relationship with realtors and the community.

To obtain further information on the Rouge Project, including documents, maps and general information, visit us at

<http://www.rougeriver.com>

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