



THE ROUGE RIVER PROJECT
A WORLD CLASS EFFORT



BRINGING OUR RIVER BACK TO LIFE

OSDS Evaluation And Maintenance Program in Wayne County Wayne County, Michigan

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

Information Date: March 2002

Objective

The Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems Evaluation and Maintenance Program in Wayne County provides for the evaluation of onsite sewage disposal systems (OSDS) at the time of sale of a property. Specific elements of the program include:

- Guidance and educational material for homeowners that have an OSDS
- Development of a database of OSDS in Wayne County
- A new Wayne County ordinance requiring inspections of OSDS at the time of sale
- Receipt and review of reports from septage haulers
- Administrative procedures and forms to carry out the program

Owner

Wayne County



Location

Initially in the Rouge Watershed communities of Wayne County. In 2003 it will include OSDS in the entire County.

Dates

Start	April 1, 1999
End	March 31, 2000

Total Project Cost

\$35,265

Demonstration Aspects

This project demonstrated a process to identify failing OSDS and bring them into compliance. The database has been helpful to communities to identify the OSDS locations.

Project Highlights

The need for the ordinance was supported by a study of 421 OSDS conducted in 1997 that found 21% of the OSDS in an area were failing. This raised concern among communities regarding OSDS. A partnership came together to address this problem that included communities, the Health Department, septage haulers, OSDS evaluators, the real estate industry, owners and other regulating agencies.

A new "Wayne County Evaluation and Maintenance of On-Site Sewage Disposal Ordinance" was adopted September 16, 1999 and became effective February 1, 2000. This ordinance provides for the Health Department authority to evaluate OSDS at the time of sale of property. Evaluations can be performed by a private certified evaluator or the Health Department staff. A certification program was developed to certify people to do these evaluations.



Failing Backyard Septic System

All OSDS permit information from 1957 to 1999 was entered into the computerized database.

Major Elements

- A computerized database of all OSDS permits from 1957 to 1999. The database is being updated on a regular basis.
- A new "Wayne County Evaluation and Maintenance of On-Site Sewage Disposal Ordinance" was adopted September 16, 1999 and became effective February 1, 2000. The ordinance applies to all property transfers for property that have an OSDS. This includes residential and non-residential properties.
- A manual was developed that includes standard operating procedures for evaluator registration in Wayne County, evaluation criteria for an OSDS, an evaluator exam,

forms and form letters, and administrative rules.

- When septic tanks are pumped, the septage hauler is required to submit a report to the Health Department. The requirement is currently in effect in the Rouge River Watershed. In 2003 the ordinance will become effective in all areas of Wayne County.

Project Results

- The "Wayne County Evaluation and Maintenance of On-Site Sewage Disposal Ordinance" was adopted and became effective February 1, 2000.
- 17 people completed the required evaluator training and were certified by October 2, 2000.
- Of the first 81 transfer evaluations submitted, 19 were determined to be failing.
- The process established a partnership with septage haulers, OSDS evaluators, real estate industry, owners and other regulating agencies.
- Reports from septage haulers have provided some useful information about specific septic tank conditions. Increased participation by septage haulers will be helpful.
- The public has more education about the maintenance of their OSDS.

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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