

Upper Altamaha Stakeholder Conference

October 19, 2006



Septic Management Model Ordinance Update

25% of U.S homes use on-site systems



- 40+% in Georgia
- U.S. EPA: “With effective management, onsite and other decentralizes wastewater systems can be a cost effective and long-term option for meeting public health and water quality goals, particularly for small, suburban and rural areas.”
 - EPA estimates that between 10-20% are malfunctioning

EPA's Voluntary National Guidelines for Management of Onsite and Clustered Wastewater Treatment Systems

- Homeowner awareness
- Maintenance contracts
- Operating permits
- Responsible Management Entity (RME)
Operation and Maintenance
- RME ownership

O.C.G.A. 31-2-7

- Enacted in 97
- Gave DHR the authority to adopt state-wide regulations for onsite sewage management systems
- Authorized delegation of certain powers to local health departments
 - Including authority to adopt standards and requirements

O.C.G.A. 31-3-5 (b) (6)

- Confers authority to the local health department for “on-going maintenance of such systems *except for nonmechanical residential sewage management systems*”

Local On-site Management Legislation in GA

- Berkeley Lake
 - City Clerk
 - Registration
 - 5 year check-up
- Douglas County/
Douglasville
 - Water authority
 - Registration
 - Phase-in for pre-existing

Annotated Model Ordinance

Sources:

-Berkeley Lake

-EPA materials

-Douglas County

-319 grant reports

-Maintenance and Inspection Ordinance drafted by Coastal Georgia RDC pursuant to a Coastal Incentive Grant

-Metro North Georgia Water Planning District Septic Systems Status and Issues Working Paper

Status

- Draft complete except for some supplementary material regarding onsite system work being performed pursuant to Clean Water Act section 319 grants.
- Will send out for review to septic roundtable (EPD, GEFA, DHR, some RDCs, DCA, ACCG, etc.) and post by end of year at www.rivercenter.uga.edu.

Related Projects

- Amanda Worthington's work
- Memo describing actions local governments may take to enforce illegal septage disposal
- Memo describing technology and funding options for determining whether on-site systems are failing
- Library of material we'll post on our website and pass off to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Now Recruiting Short Memos!

- Question that can be answered in 2-6 pages
- Topics to date:
 - What are the legal requirements for disclosure (at closing or pre-closing) of wastewater management systems when you buy a house?
 - Is there a minimum flow requirement for stream biology and if so, how is it best determined?
 - What are typical ranges of DO and ph in south Georgia blackwater systems and in slow moving south Georgia waters? Should standards be developed for both dry and wet weather and what would these look like? What is a method that could be used to determine natural DO in these streams?

Memo Topics (continued)

- xxx (and I'm sure other jurisdictions) have experienced significant resource destruction at the hands of surveyors, soil testers, geotechnical specialists, and the like prior to development plans being approved. Currently we are trying to get a handle on whether or not and how we can control these so-called pre-land disturbance activities. They certainly have the potential to cause soil erosion, the loss of valuable tree cover, and even illegal grading -- all in the name of site exploration. Can a student investigate the need for such standards and suggest a way in which they could be developed -- as well as provide advice to local jurisdictions on how to incorporate them into local codes and procedures?