



For more information contact:



The Groundwater Foundation  
P.O. Box 22558  
Lincoln, NE 68542-2558  
402-434-2740 or 1-800-858-4844  
[www.groundwater.org](http://www.groundwater.org)

# Septic System Management Plan Overview

## *community organizing tools*

Managing on-site wastewater treatment systems throughout a community can be done in a variety of ways. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has developed five management models to offer a range of management approaches that vary considerably according to a community's needs. These approaches are voluntary and are used only when a community decides there needs to be a plan devised to protect their local water supplies and health. These management models are:

### **1 - Homeowner Awareness**

To help ensure timely on-site wastewater treatment system maintenance is performed, maintenance reminders are mailed or otherwise provided to owners in appropriate intervals and formats. This program is adequate where treatment technologies are limited to conventional systems that require little owner attention. This approach is most appropriate where treatment systems are owned and operated by individual property owners in areas of low environmental sensitivity.

A homeowner awareness on-site wastewater plan template is included with this kit. Lake communities may use this template to develop a homeowner awareness plan specifically for them.

### **2 - Maintenance Agreements**

Owners enter into agreements with certified on-site wastewater treatment professionals who periodically pump and inspect the system to ensure timely maintenance is performed. Agreements should be customized to fit the needs of the owner.

A maintenance agreement on-site wastewater management plan template is included with this kit. Lake communities may use this template to facilitate the adoption of maintenance agreements in their community.

### **3 - Operating Permits**

Limited-term operating permits are issued to the on-site wastewater treatment system owner and are renewable for another term if the owner demonstrates the system is in compliance with the terms and conditions of the permit. This approach is most appropriate where sustained performance of treatment systems is critical to protect public health and water quality.

To implement the operating permit plan option, a lake community should secure the services of an engineer and legal counsel with experience in on-site wastewater planning and development.

# **GET PUMPED!** A SEPTIC SYSTEM EDUCATION KIT FOR LAKE HOMEOWNERS

## **4 - Responsible Management Entity (RME) Operation and Maintenance**

An operating permit is issued to an RME (e.g. developer, homeowner association) instead of the actual on-site wastewater treatment system owner to provide the needed assurance that the appropriate maintenance is performed. This approach is most important where frequent and highly reliable operation and maintenance of decentralized systems is required to ensure water resource protection in sensitive environments.

To implement the RME operation and maintenance plan option, a lake community should secure the services of an engineer and legal counsel with experience in on-site wastewater planning and development.

## **5 - RME Ownership**

On-site wastewater treatment systems are owned, operated and maintained by the RME, which removes the property owner from the responsibility for the system. This program is similar to central sewage and provides the greatest assurance of system performance in the most sensitive environments.

To implement the RME ownership plan option, a lake community should secure the services of an engineer and legal counsel with experience in on-site wastewater planning and development.

For more information about these management models, please visit the USEPA website at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/owm/septic/home.cfm> or contact The Groundwater Foundation at 1-800-858-4844.