



SEPTIC SYSTEM INSPECTION & MAINTENANCE IN THE LAKE MICHIGAN WATERSHED

Onsite Disposal System (Septic System) Management Measures are included in the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program (also known as 6217).

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) determine if states have met all the measures in the Coastal Nonpoint Program

Indiana has NOT yet met the measure for ensuring that Operating Septic Systems are inspected at a frequency adequate to ascertain whether the system is failing.

The Northwest Indiana Septic System Coordination Work Group

In order to meet the Coastal NPS management measure for Operating Septic Systems, the DNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program set up the Northwest Indiana Septic System Coordination Work Group for agencies, organizations, and individuals working toward improving septic system operation and maintenance and the protection of health and the environment.

The NW Indiana SSC Work Group is comprised of federal, state, and local governments/ agencies, not-for-profit groups, universities and interested individuals, and has been meeting since early 2013 to develop collaborative plans and implementation strategies to address the potential impacts of failing septic systems on local water quality and public health. Members include:

IDEM
USEPA
Indiana State Dept. of Health
County Health Depts.
Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program
NIRPC
Urban Waters Federal Partnership
Coastal MS4s

Coastal SWCD's
Save the Dunes
Illinois/Indiana Sea Grant
Purdue University Northwest
Coastal Communities
Septic System Owners
Waste Water Professionals

The Indiana DNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program provides staffing and coordination assistance for the Work Group as part of the Indiana Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program. This group meets on a bi-monthly basis.

The NW Indiana Septic System Coordination Work Group Action Agenda

The Lake Michigan Coastal Program and Work Group partners will be addressing Coastal NPS Program and local priorities through the NW Indiana Coastal Septic System Outreach and Education Plan and Strategy comprised of the following main elements:

- Coastal Program Enhancement funding to Save the Dunes to design and pilot Outreach and Education Tools for Septic System Inspection and Maintenance
- Continued targeted outreach to septic owners, decision-makers, realtors, onsite wastewater professionals
- Mapping and inventory of septic systems within the Lake Michigan Watershed Boundary
- Advocate for local adoption of Point of Sale or similar septic system inspection ordinances.
- Ongoing coordination with Work Group Partners to implement successful outreach and education strategies and promote participation in EPA SepticSmart Week.
- Coastal Program grant proposal to IDEM 319 program to continue implementation of peer to peer community education/outreach in septic served areas adjacent to Lake Michigan tributaries.