

ESSEX COUNTY

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

WILLIAM JOHNSTON, DIRECTOR

ELIZABETHTOWN, NY 12932
TELEPHONE (518) 873-6301

April 2, 1981

Robert C. Stevens
One Green Ridge Rd.
Pittsford, NY 14534

Dear Bob,

Progress concerning the Essex County Wastewater Management Study is on the horizon. On April 9, 1981 I will be meeting with the Ticonderoga Town Board to discuss possibilities of a Part-County study area to resolve wastewater disposal problems. If you and your organization of Eagle Lake property owners would like to be included in the study effort, you should make your thoughts known to Mel Porter, Supervisor of Ticonderoga.

A comparable situation exists between Eagle Lake and Augar in the Town of Chesterfield (i.e. small lot sizes, algae, and shallow depth to bedrock). At the public meeting held in Chesterfield, representatives from Cahn Engineers unveiled several schemes which included cluster systems and individual on-site solutions to sewage disposal problems. Be advised that in a cluster system seasonal residents can benefit from Federal (75-85%) and State (7½-12½%) aid. With regard to individual systems, seasonal residents do not qualify for aid; however, certain management and maintenance services could be a viable alternative.

In order for the Town of Ticonderoga to participate in the next step, a cost of \$4,000-\$5,000 would be incurred; this figure represents the local share of the planning effort and does not commit the community to form a Wastewater Management district or implement any of the alternatives. This effort would involve detailed planning, including archeological investigation, environmental assessment, whose system is failing and in need of repair or replacement, management alternatives, solutions (facility plans) and a comprehensive cost analysis.

The enclosed Newsletter will clarify some of the program elements involved; however, if you have any further questions or concerns, please call me at the Essex County Planning Office (518-873-6301 X369).

Sincerely,

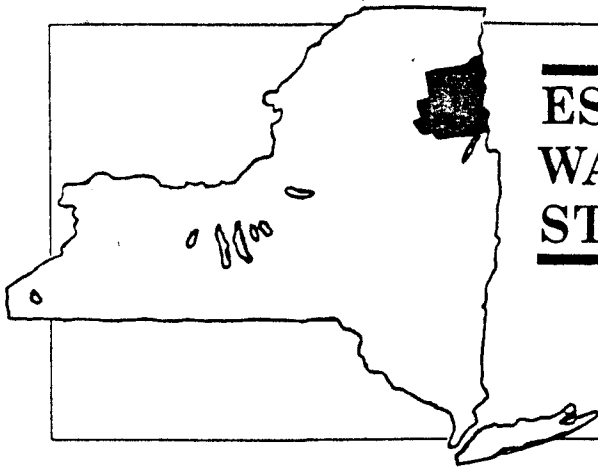


Victor Putman
Environmental Planner

VP:twl

encl.

COUNTY PLANNING OFFICE



ESSEX COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT STUDY NEWSLETTER II

ESSEX COUNTY PLANNING OFFICE
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Septic System Funding Possible for Essex County Homeowners

Essex County's state funded study of sewage problems and possible solutions is now getting to the interesting stage. It's not yet completed, but final results will help local residents decide whether their community should take advantage of a new federal program that provides 75 to 85 percent of the cost of repairing or replacing septic systems that no longer work properly.

Started in May 1980, the one-year study is being conducted by the Essex County Planning Office with help from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the consulting firm of Cahn Engineers Inc. This second newsletter reports our findings so far and points out some alternatives that residents will want to know about before decisions in Essex County are made. As part of the study, over 1400 homes were visited throughout the County last summer, and homeowners were asked questions on the condition and operation of their septic disposal systems. As expected, some of those surveyed had no problems with their septic system. However, roughly 70% did report an actual problem or were found to have a potential problem with their system, many of which would qualify for 75 to 85 percent federal aid. The number of problems or potential problems were different for each area reflecting a variety of

local conditions such as depth to bedrock, hardpan, clay soils and small lot sizes.

After the engineers tabulated the results of the survey, the Essex County Planning Office held public information meetings in ten towns with the most severe problems. At those meetings, the results of the survey were discussed as well as how residents felt about the problem and whether there was a willingness to improve the conditions. The efforts of this program are directed toward solving local water pollution and potential health problems in order to make our communities a pleasure to live in as well as attractive to visit. The federal government has finally realized that rural areas such as ours, require quite different approaches to water quality problems than those used in urban areas.

For the Essex County Wastewater Management Study to help your community, your ideas and suggestions are needed. The following pages summarize the results of the engineers' study on solutions which might be considered for your area. The future progress of this study must be tailored to your ideas. Therefore, we will be having another public meeting in your town to discuss possible solutions and future action. Please refer to the enclosed notice or watch your local newspaper for announcements of the upcoming meeting in your area.

Extent of Septic System Problems In Essex County Communities

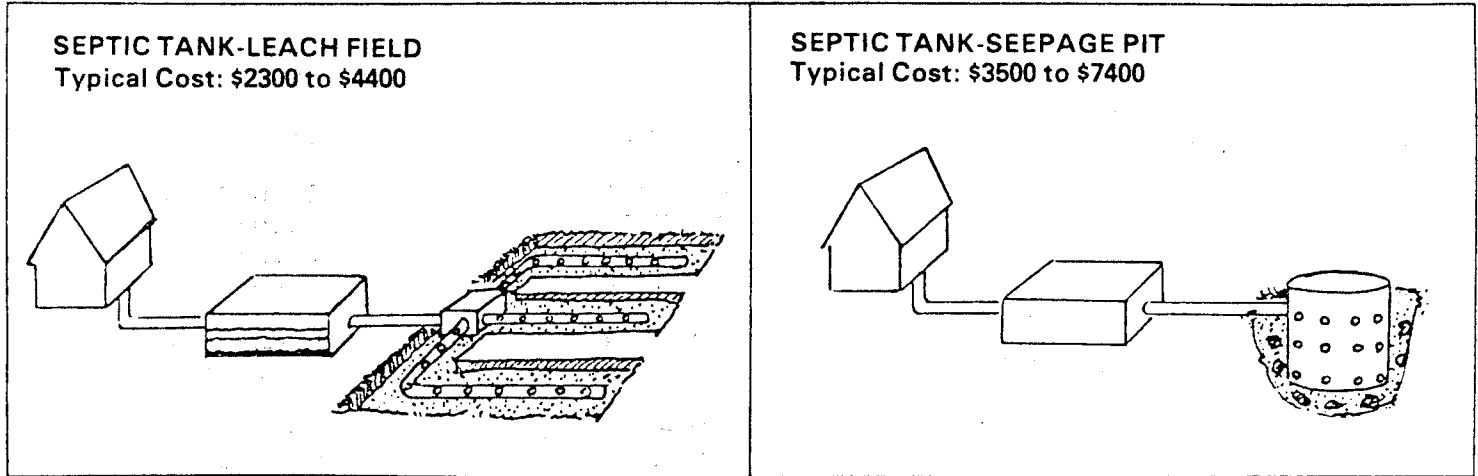
Town/Community	Degree of Failing Septic Systems	Cluster and/or Individual Solution
<u>Chesterfield</u>		
Port Kent	Limited	Individual Systems
Port Douglas	Limited	Individual Systems
Corlear Bay Club	Limited	Individual Systems
Augur Lake	Substantial	Cluster System
<u>Crown Point</u>		
Crown Point Hamlet	Substantial	Cluster and Individual Systems
Factoryville Road area	Limited	Cluster and Individual System
<u>Elizabethtown</u>		
Village of Elizabethtown	Substantial	Under 201 Study
<u>Essex</u>		
Essex Hamlet	Substantial	Cluster System
Whallonsburg	Substantial	Cluster System
Bouquet	Substantial	Cluster System
Town Wide	Substantial	Individual System
<u>Jay</u>		
Ausable Forks	Substantial	Under 201 Study
Jay	Substantial	Under 201 Study
<u>Keene</u>		
Keene Hamlet	Limited	Individual System
Keene Valley Hamlet	Limited	Individual System
<u>Lewis</u>		
Lewis Hamlet	Limited	Individual System
<u>Minerva</u>		
Minerva Hamlet	Substantial	Individual System
Olmstedville	Limited	Individual System
<u>Moriah</u>		
Moriah Corner	Substantial	Under 201 Study
<u>Newcomb</u>		
Newcomb Hamlet	Substantial	Cluster and Individual Systems
Route 28 N	Substantial	Cluster and Individual Systems
<u>North Elba</u>		
Raybrook Area	Limited	Individual Systems
<u>North Hudson</u>		
North Hudson Hamlet	Limited	Individual System
<u>St. Armand</u>		
Franklin Falls Rd	Limited	Individual System
<u>Schroon</u>		
Lake Shore (west)	Substantial	Individual Systems
Lake Shore (east)	Limited	Individual Systems
Paradox Lake area	Limited	Individual Systems
<u>Ticonderoga</u>		
Chilson Rd	Substantial	Under 201 Study
Baldwin Rd	Limited	Under 201 Study
Street Rd	Limited	Under 201 Study
Eagle Lake	Limited	Under 201 Study
Village of Ticonderoga (unsewered)	Limited	Under 201 Study
<u>Westport</u>		
Wadhams Hamlet (center)	Substantial	Cluster and Individual System
Wadhams Hamlet (outlying)	Substantial	Individual System
North Shore Area	Substantial	Cluster System
<u>Willsboro</u>		
Willsboro Point	Substantial	Under 201 Study
Willsboro Bay	Substantial	Under 201 Study
Long Pond	Limited	Under 201 Study
<u>Wilmington</u>		
Wilmington Hamlet	Substantial	Cluster and Individual Systems

Sewage Disposal Methods

-- For Single Homes

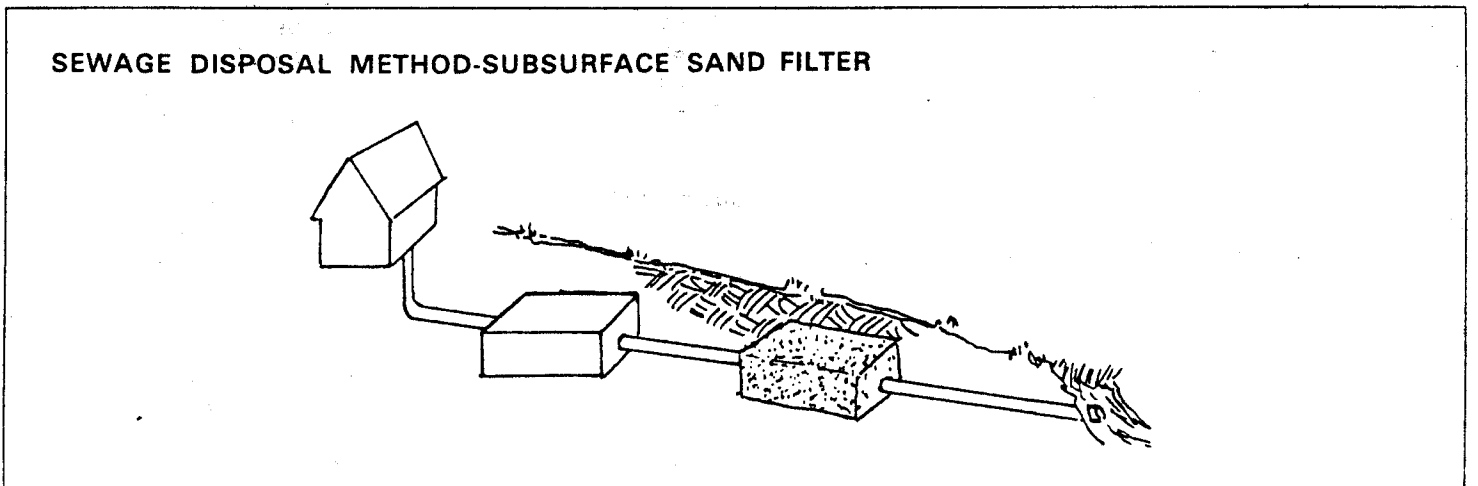
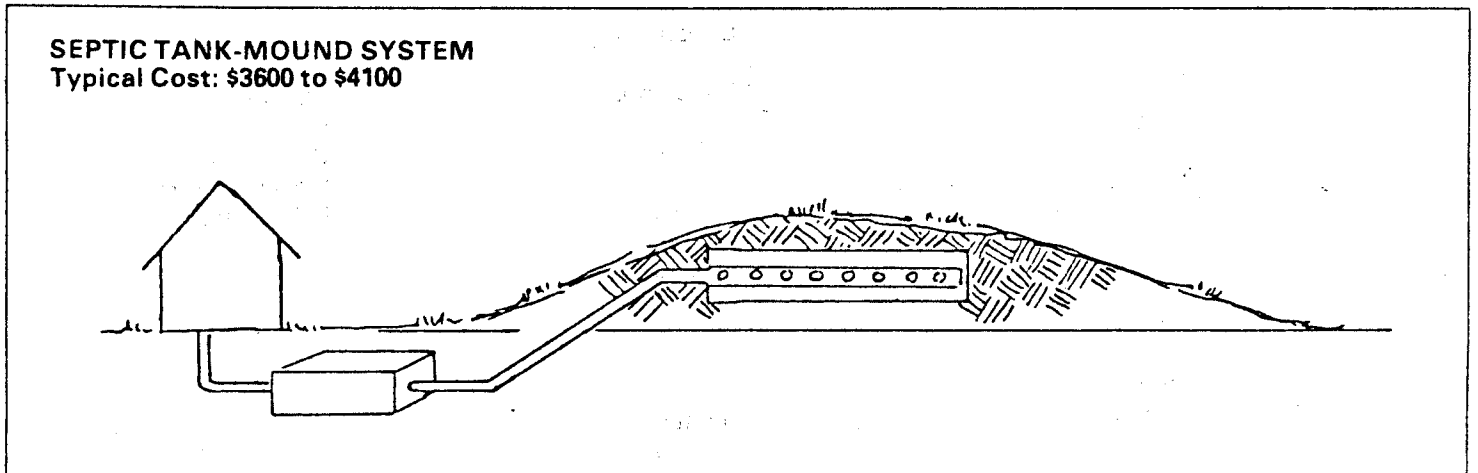
For most homes in rural areas, the septic tank and leach field system is the most practical and least expensive way to treat domestic sewage. If sized properly for the house, installed correctly and maintained regularly, the septic tank-

leach field or septic tank-seepage pit systems will work for the great majority of homes. However, all systems with septic tanks need regular maintenance--a pumpout every three to five years.

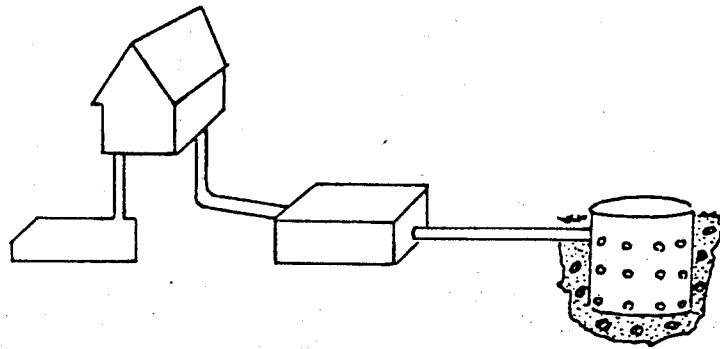


In some places where there is little soil above the ground-water or bedrock, more complex and expensive systems

are needed to properly treat the sewage. Some of these use a septic tank but have a different kind of leaching system.



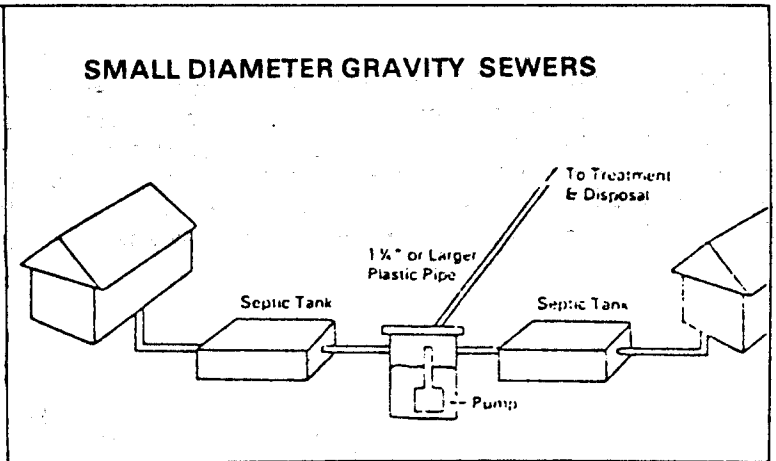
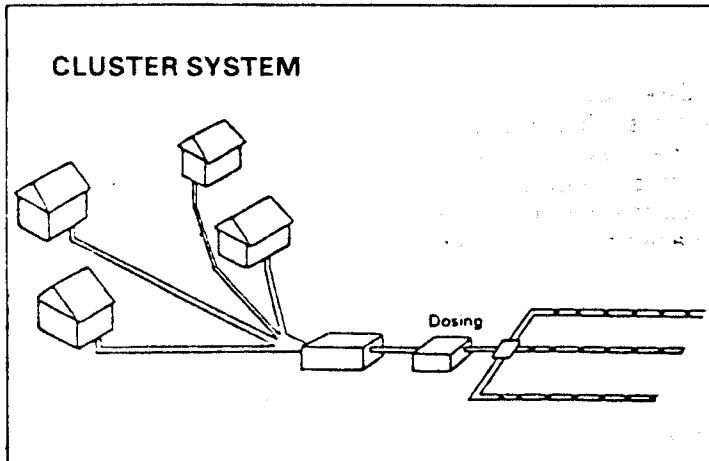
COMPOSTING TOILET/SEPTIC TANK SEWAGE DISPOSAL METHOD



-- For Small Communities or Grouped Homes

Many of the possible sewage disposal methods for small communities are similar to methods used for individual homes. A sewage disposal system shared by a small group of homes is called a cluster system. Cluster systems are

practical for areas where the homes are close together and the lots are small. Costs of these systems vary with the number of homes and site conditions.



Public Park in Essex Overlooking Lake Champlain

Management Alternatives

There are several management approaches which can be used to correct individual septic system problems in Essex County. Presently the Department of Environmental Conservation has jurisdiction over wastewater discharges greater than 1000 gallons per day and discharges to lakes or streams. The State Department of Health has jurisdiction over septic systems which receive less than 1000 gallons of wastewater per day and do not discharge to a lake or stream. But in Essex County, since there is no county health department, the State Department of Health exercises jurisdiction over septic systems in sub-divisions only. Therefore, there is no control over individual septic systems in Essex County except in subdivisions and in towns having local ordinances.

There are several alternative actions which could be taken to improve the condition of septic systems in Essex County, including the following:

1. Interested towns could obtain a federal grant to cover 75 to 85 percent of the cost of repairing or replacing existing septic systems which are not working properly. This would require that a district be formed, and the district would become responsible for maintenance of the repaired or rebuilt systems, as explained elsewhere in this newsletter.

2. The County could obtain a federal grant on behalf of all interested towns to cover 75 to 85 percent of the cost of repairing or replacing existing septic systems which are not working properly. This would require that a district be formed at the county level. The district would become responsible for maintenance of the rebuilt or replaced systems.

3. Interested towns could adopt a local ordinance requiring that new septic systems be properly designed and installed and that existing septic systems which are not working properly be repaired or replaced. Two towns in Essex County - Schroom and North Elba - already have this type of ordinance in effect.

4. Essex County could enact a local law requiring that septic systems in the County be properly designed, constructed and maintained and that existing systems which are not working properly be repaired or replaced. Hamilton County has enacted a law of this type which they call Local Law No. 1.

5. Essex County could hire a full time inspector of septic systems. The inspector could advise homeowners putting in new systems or repairing old ones. If the County enacted a septic system law, the inspector could also enforce the law. Under certain conditions, state aid could be obtained to cover 50 percent of the inspector's salary.



What is this Federal Aid Program All About?

The federal program which provides funding for wastewater disposal systems is called the Construction Grants Program. This program is made up of three (sometimes two) separate steps. The first step is for a village, town or county to apply to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for funds to hire an engineer to develop a wastewater disposal plan (this is called Step I). During Step I, the engineer will examine each individual septic system to determine how many systems are in need of replacement or repair; with this information, the costs for correcting problem systems can be determined. After the engineer develops the plan, the local residents have a chance to review it to see if it is to their liking and affordable. If the plan is not acceptable, there is no obliga-

tion to continue in the program. If the plan is acceptable, a district is formed, usually by public referendum and application is made for funds to design and construct the needed systems.

After state and federal approval of the design, application is made for a Step III grant which provides funds for the actual installation and/or repair of the needed systems. If the cost of repairing or replacing faulty septic systems is less than \$2 million dollars, Steps II and III can be combined. Then only two (instead of three) separate applications would be required, one for planning and one for design and construction. The three steps involved in the construction grants program are all eligible for federal aid.

Questions and Answers

The Federal Aid Program:

1. Is it true federal aid is available to rebuild or replace privately owned septic systems?

Yes, the Clean Water Act of 1977 enables the Federal Government to provide 85 percent of the cost of repairing or replacing privately owned septic systems which are not working properly. Occasionally, only 75 percent Federal funding is available. Both engineering and construction costs are grant eligible.

2. How can this Federal aid be obtained?

A public body (village, town or county) must apply to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for the aid (DEC manages the program in New York State). In small rural areas two federal grants are usually made - the first to prepare an engineering plan and the second to design and construct the septic systems.

3. This appears to be a lengthy process. How long would it take?

It would probably be at least three years from the time an application is initiated until replacement of the septic systems could begin.

4. Would the Federal aid go directly to the homeowner?

No. The first grant would go to the applicant (village, town or county). The applicant would then hire an engineer to develop an engineering plan. When the plan is nearly completed, a wastewater disposal district could be formed and a second grant would go to the district. The district would then hire a contractor to install the septic systems.

5. What area would be included in the wastewater disposal district?

The applicant (village, town or county) would decide what area or areas should be included in the district. The only restriction is that the wastewater disposal district could not include any areas already within a sewer district. The district could cover part of a village, town or county or an entire village, town or county.

6. Who would be eligible to have his septic system repaired or replaced with Federal Aid? Is this aid tied to income?

Anyone in the wastewater disposal district who's system is not in working order.
The aid is available to anyone regardless of income.

7. Is the Federal aid available for new construction?

No. The aid can be used only for homes or businesses which were built and in use on or before December 27, 1977, the date the Clean Water Act became law.

8. Are businesses and public buildings eligible for aid?

Commercial establishments and public buildings (including schools, churches, etc) are eligible for aid providing their sewage discharge is not over 50,000 gallons per day.

9. Would everyone in the district whose septic system is not working be required to participate?

No. Participation is voluntary. However, a public referendum is usually required to form a district. A majority of the property owners in the proposed district would have to vote in favor of district formation, otherwise the district could not be formed and the Federal construction grant could not be obtained.

10. What strings are attached to obtaining the Federal Aid?

The major requirements which must be met as a condition for receiving the Federal Aid are these:
--the applicant must assure that the repaired or replaced systems will be properly maintained.
--the applicant must obtain from the property owners assurance of access to septic systems which will be repaired or replaced. This could be in the form of an easement.
--a system of user charges must be established.

11. How much would it cost to replace a non-working septic system?

The cost would depend upon a number of factors including size of dwelling and site conditions. If conditions were such that a common septic tank followed by a leach field or seepage pit could be used, the cost may be \$3000 per system. If it were necessary to install a mound system, the cost could be \$4000 or more per system.

12. What costs would the district be responsible for?

The district would pay the initial 15% non-federal share. The district would also pay for maintenance of septic systems repaired or replaced with federal funds.

13. How would the district obtain funds?

Property owners in the district who benefit from the program would be required to pay the district an annual user charge. In addition, it may be possible for the district to obtain a loan and/or grant from the Federal Farmers Home Administration to cover the non-federal share of the construction cost.

14. Would everyone in the district be assessed a user charge whether or not he participated in the program?

No. Only those who benefit would be required to pay and the amount they would have to pay would be in proportion to benefit received. Generally only those whose systems are repaired or replaced with Federal Aid would be assessed a user charge. Those whose systems are not repaired or replaced could be assessed a nominal amount. The district would decide.

15. Would building codes or zoning ordinances be required as a condition for obtaining the Federal Aid?

No. But a local ordinance would be required detailing the requirements listed under question 10, above.

PUBLIC MEETING! WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The purpose of the upcoming public meeting in your town is to tell you the results of the engineering study. Representatives from Cahn Engineers, Inc., will be at the meeting to discuss the solutions they think will correct septic disposal problems in your area. Your ideas and suggestions are needed to help make decisions concerning your community. The following table shows the date and time when we will meet in your town.

SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS			
TOWN	DATE	TIME	PLACE
Chesterfield	3/30	7:00 PM	Town Hall
Crown Point	3/23	8:00 PM	Town Hall
Essex	3/18	7:30 PM	Town Hall
Keene	3/24	7:30 PM	Town Hall
Lewis	3/20	7:00 PM	Town Hall
Minerva	3/26	7:00 PM	Town Hall
Newcomb	3/27	7:00 PM	Fire Hall
Schroon	3/19	7:30 PM	Town Hall
Westport	3/31	7:30 PM	Town Hall (WADA)
Wilmington	3/25	7:30 PM	Town Hall

Questions? Comments!

If you have any questions about the Essex County Wastewater Management Study or if you would like to comment on the progress of the study, feel free to call or write Vic Putman at the Essex County Planning Office, Church Street, Elizabethtown, NY 12932 (518) 873-6301 Ext. 369.