



# Seguin Township Report to Council

**Prepared for:** Township Council    **Department:** Development and Protective Services  
**Agenda Date:** February 5, 2018    **Report No:** DPS-PL-2018-015

---

**Planning Report:** 2017 Septic Re-Inspection Program Report

---

## **1.0 Recommendation:**

That this report be received for information purposes.

## **2.0 Background & Purpose of Report:**

Two students were assigned septic re-inspection duties on a full time basis over the summer months in 2017. They carried out the re-inspection program looking for visual signs that septic systems require maintenance and repair. These students also worked with property owners to provide information and increase awareness about the operation and maintenance of their sewage disposal systems for longevity purposes.

## **3.0 Financial Analysis:**

The budget impact in 2017 was approximated to be \$36,000.

## **4.0 Policies Affecting Proposal:**

### **Seguin Official Plan**

With Policy B.3.4 - Lake Plans and Strategies, Council supports the preparation of Lake Plans and Strategies as stewardship documents that assess issues such as sources of phosphorus and the remedial actions required to reduce impacts, recreational carrying capacity, lake level management, fisheries, vegetation retention and health, shoreline erosion, cottage conversion and septic system maintenance and re-inspection, and other issues important to lake communities. Such Plans are also encouraged to establish monitoring programs and/or remediation programs to be primarily implemented by local residents and stakeholders such as the Municipality and the Province. Council does not support the inclusion of performance standards in Lake Plans.

In regards to the above policy, the Township has been operating the Septic Re-Inspection Program since 2001. The students historically have been able

to inspect on average eight properties a day over a two month period. This has resulted in a total of 925 systems inspected to date since 2001. This year a total of 877 properties on two lakes (Otter and Clear) were inspected (see attached findings).

In light of the successes of this year's results, Township staff met recently to evaluate and improve upon the mechanics of the re-inspection program. The following improvements were identified:

- a) Continue to improve upon the mobile network connection in the field.

### **5.0 Conclusion:**

This year the performance of the Septic Re-Inspection Program greatly exceeded the Township staff expectations. The two summer students were able to visit 70 more properties this year during their four month inspection period than in 2016.

This report should be received for information.

---

### **Respectfully submitted**



---

J. Stephen Stone, MSc, BES, MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning and Development



---

Mark Vandermeer, CBCO  
Chief Building Official

### **Reviewed by:**



---

Chris Madej, MA, MCIP, RPP  
CAO

### **Attachments:**

Schedule A: 2017 Septic Re-Inspection Report by Erin Walker and Tyler Conn  
SS/hw

# 2017 Septic Re-Inspection Report

By: Erin Walker & Tyler Conn



## **Introduction**

Seguin Township has been operating a Septic Re-Inspection program under the direction of the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority since the year 2000, with the first inspections taking place in summer 2001. The primary objectives of the program are to prevent pollution from all classes of sewage disposal systems into water sources and all parts of the environment while educating residents of Seguin Township on how to care for their sewage disposal systems. The program is carried out by students each summer, under the supervision of the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority, and has been successful since its establishment.

In 2017, one new and one returning students ran the Septic Re-Inspection program. Both the iPad program and supervision under Mark Vandermeer are in their second years and displaying extensive benefits to date. The Building Department is the governing body for all Part 7 violations (plumbing), while the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority is responsible for part 8 (Sewage Disposal Systems). Both governing bodies were available to provide guidance when enforcement was required for a complete and comprehensive program.

In addition to the great deal of inspections the students completed this year, the students also scanned all complete permits in past reinspection folders. Making these files digital allows for easier preparation and permit attachment of the Septic Reinspection Program in the upcoming years. This should prove to be very beneficial for both the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority and Seguin Township.

## **Season Findings**

The students had inspected a total of 887 properties focused in two main areas; Otter Lake and Clear Lake. The goal was to identify health and safety issues in addition to identifying and informing homeowners of maintenance concerns. At the beginning of the season the students were instructed that maintenance concerns such as overgrowth, objects on the bed or slight erosion did not require a follow up inspection. Homeowners with these issues were left a note explaining the issue, how to resolve it and why it is important in preventing damage to their septic system.

Within the inspection area, a total of 112 properties had overgrowth, 2 had slight erosion and 4 had heavy objects on their septic bed. A visual representation of this can be found in Appendix A.

Follow-up inspections were only completed on properties with health and safety issues such as; outdoor showers, unsafe outhouses, direct grey water discharge, washing machines draining onto the ground, signs of failure and various other concerns. The following chart show issues found and their location.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Otter Lake</b>	<b>Salmon Lake</b>	<b>Murdoch Lake</b>	<b>Third Lake</b>	<b>Clear Lake</b>	<b>Little Whitefish Lake</b>
Unsafe Outhouse	18	1	-	1	2	1
Outdoor Shower	8	1	1	1	3	5
Washing Machine Discharge	2	-	-	-	-	-
Broken/Disconnected Septic Pipes	2	-	-	-	-	1
Direct Greywater Discharge	3	-	-	-	-	2
Pipes Sticking Up From Bed	2	-	-	-	-	-
Trailer Hooked up to Septic (unapproved)	1	-	-	-	-	-

\*See Appendix A for visual representation

Occasionally, the students had to conduct follow up visits after making contact with property owners to confirm the location of their septic system. This occurred when an old permit was unclear (i.e. hard to read, inaccurate, etc). In total, the students completed 102 follow-up visits with homeowners as a result of 2016 and 2017 inspections. A visual Representation is included in Appendix A. In addition to this year's inspections, the students also performed follow up inspections on any remaining open files from last summer. There were a total of 13 open files from last year's inspection season. The students this year managed to close 11 of these files with help from Mark Vandermeer.

When a health and safety concern was found, the students would try to achieve compliance by working with the homeowner. Property owners were informed of their choices; removing the hazard or altering it to meet the building code. The chart below shows compliance rates for the 2017 season, with an overall 82.8% compliance from homeowners in the area.

<b>File Status</b>	<b>Number of Properties</b>
Compliance Achieved	48
Open with Agreed Upon Deadline	6
Open to be Handled by Governing Body	4

\* See Appendix A for visual representation

Again this year, the students also had educational information available for property owners, upon request. The information would also be given to property owners with compliance issues. The information came in DVD format as well as hardcopy booklets and a maintenance checklist.

Over the course of the season, a total of 3 issues were passed on to the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority and 3 were passed to Seguin Township for enforcement. The students could not achieve compliance and the issues in each specific case were health and safety concerns. There were an unprecedented number of properties selected this year as a result of last year's success with the program. As anticipated, the students did not have enough time to complete all of the selected properties and some will be carried over to a subsequent inspection season. A total of 118 properties were not inspected; 4 homeowners did not allow students on the property to complete the inspection and 17 property owners with gates did not contact students to set up an appointment for their inspection.

## **Challenges**

A considerable challenge students faced was the occasional discrepancy between the alignment of mapping features and property data (Property data is formulated with MPAC information and is not always current). When this happened they would bring the area to the attention of Seguin Township's Fire Department and the issue would be resolved from there.

Another challenge the students faced was the iPad software not operating at its fullest potential and needing to be manually backed up and saved by Chris Mahon (GIS specialist), resulting in data being saved weekly instead of daily.

## **Improvements**

With the iPad software not operating at its fullest potential, the students noted a significant change that would help the program operate seamlessly in the

upcoming years. Including a cell phone with a data plan that also has the capability of being a hotspot, the iPad would sync more frequently and consistently throughout each day. This would eliminate the risk of losing inspection information if something were to happen to the iPad. In regards to customer service, data would allow the students to check their email more frequently and automatic emails could be sent to supervisors from the iPad when an issue requiring follow-up is found. Access to a cell phone would allow the students to answer phone calls from residents in the field as well as giving them the option to begin their day out of either the Conservation Authority or Seguin Township offices, depending on their need.

With this one critical addition to the program, the students believe the Septic Reinspection Program could achieve even greater success and efficiency in the upcoming years.

## **Conclusion**

Seguin Township and North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority's Septic Re-Inspection Program has had another very successful year with an extraordinary number of inspections taking place during the season. The continued positive feedback the inspectors received from the public can be attributed to the growing concern for the quality of the lakes. With the students educating homeowners about how to better maintain their septic systems, a large number of Seguin Township's residents noted their appreciation of the program's continuation, as it is an integral part of maintaining the area's beauty.

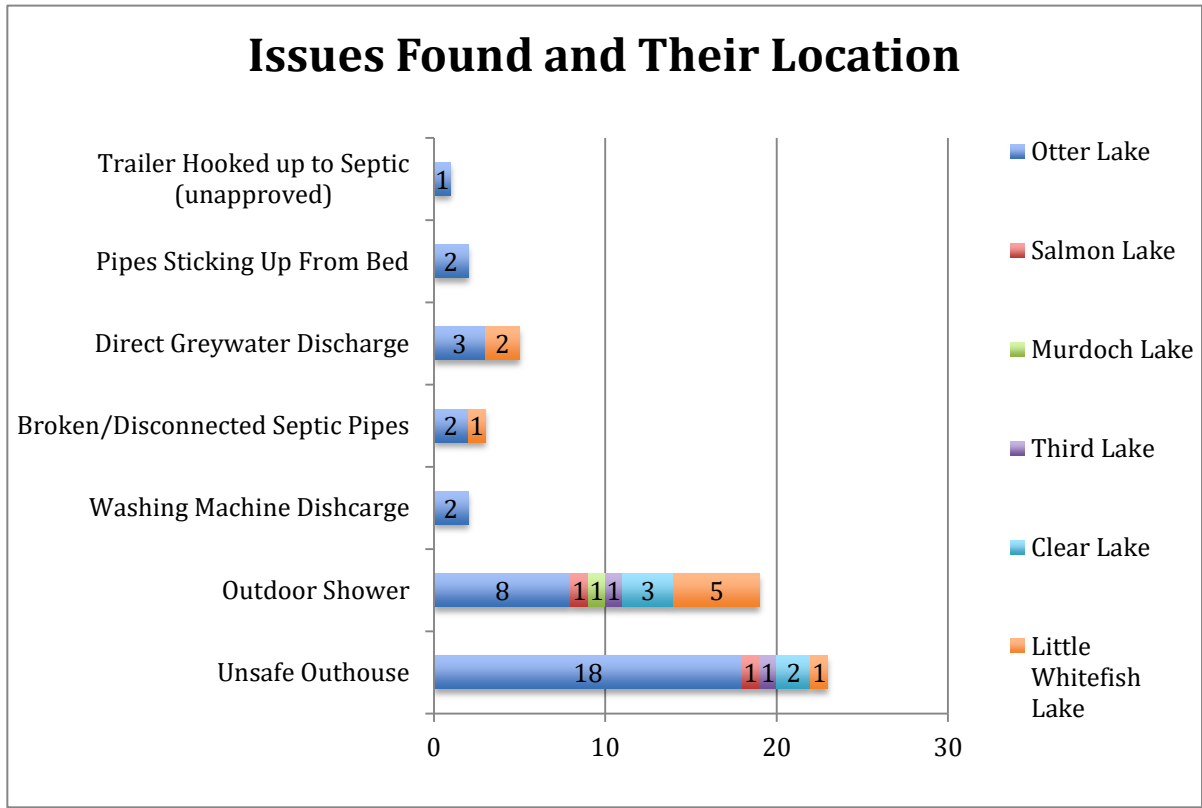
With another great season come and gone, considerable thanks goes to Mark Vandermeer of Seguin Township and Robin Allen and staff of the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority for their commitment to the program as well as their continued direction and assistance. A special thank you to Chris Mahon of Seguin Township for consistently finding time to meet with the students to back up their data, as well as being readily available to sort out any bugs that were noticed throughout the course of the summer.

# Appendix A

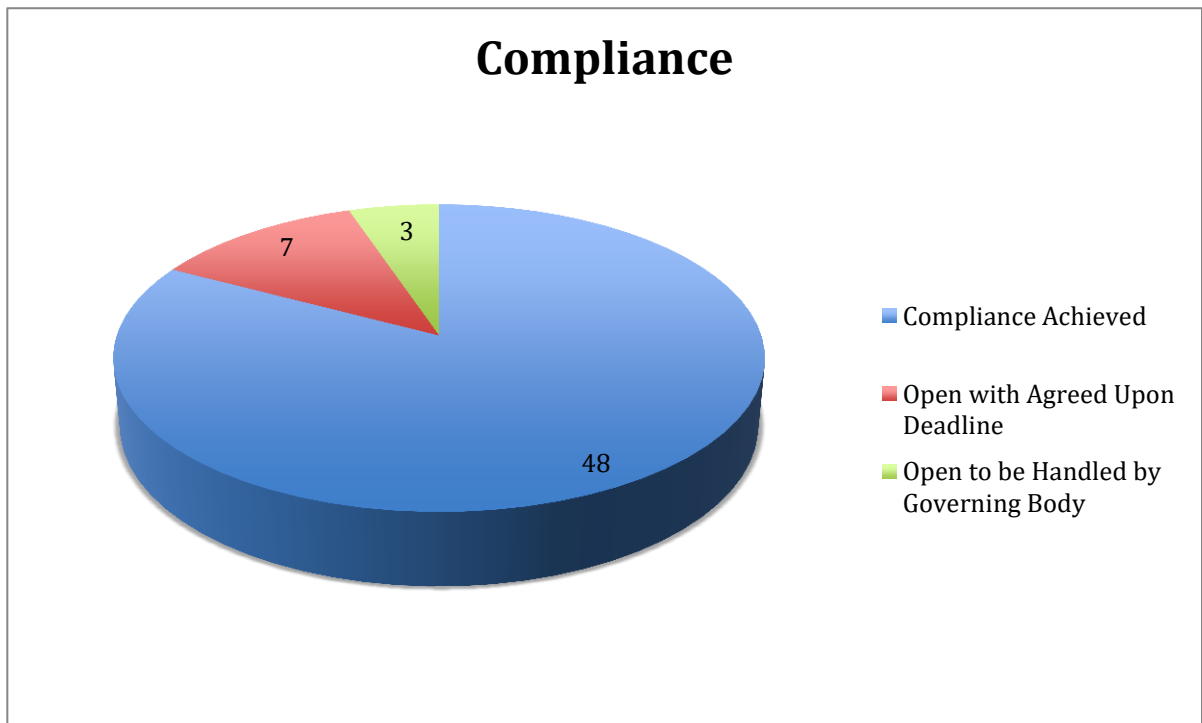




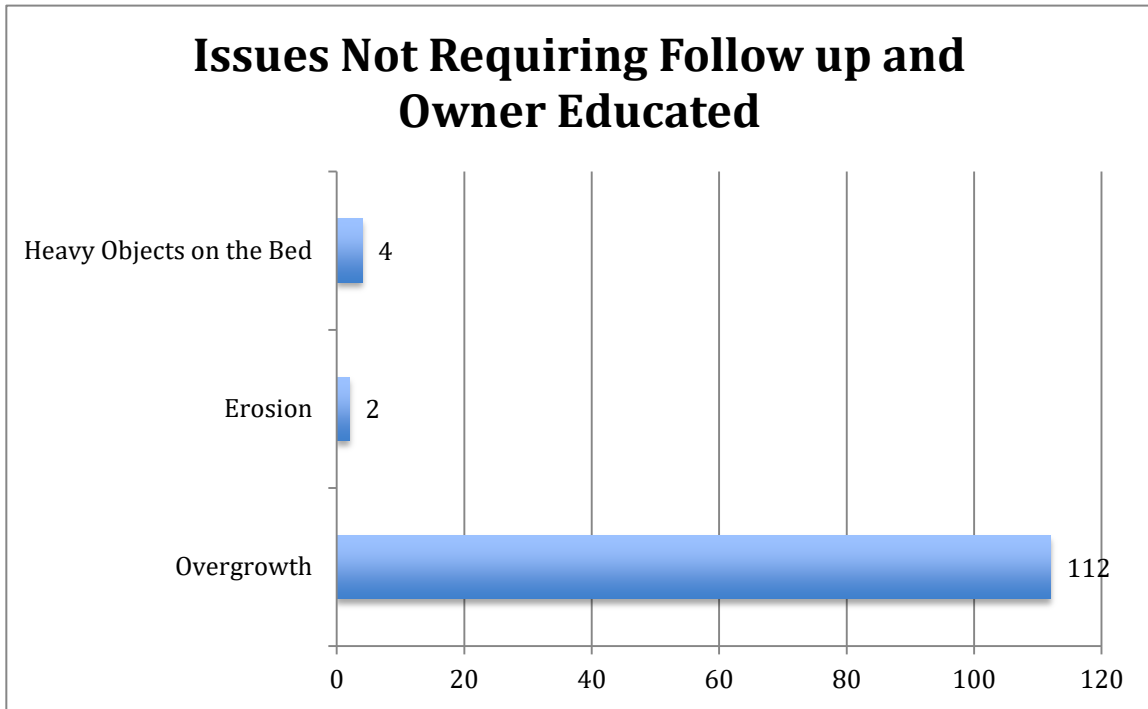
**Deficiencies and their Locations (# of properties)**



**Overall Compliance for the 2017 Reinspection Season (# of properties)**



### On-Site Issues Not Requiring Follow Up



### Total Inspections, Single Visit vs. Follow-up Required

