

# Lake Auburn Watershed Septic System Inspection Program

Presented by Lake Auburn  
Watershed Protection Commission  
and Auburn Permitting & Planning



Please be sure to sign in!  
The sheet is on the table.



# Introductions

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**Phoebe Hopkins**

Watershed Outreach Coordinator

Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission

*phopkins@awsd.org*

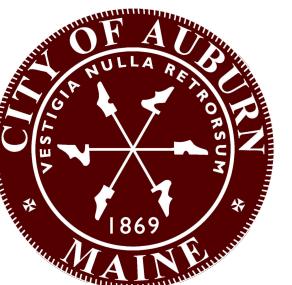


**David Hediger**

Director of Planning

City of Auburn

*dhediger@auburnmaine.gov*



Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission



# Overview

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1

Lake  
Auburn

2

Septic  
Systems &  
Ordinance

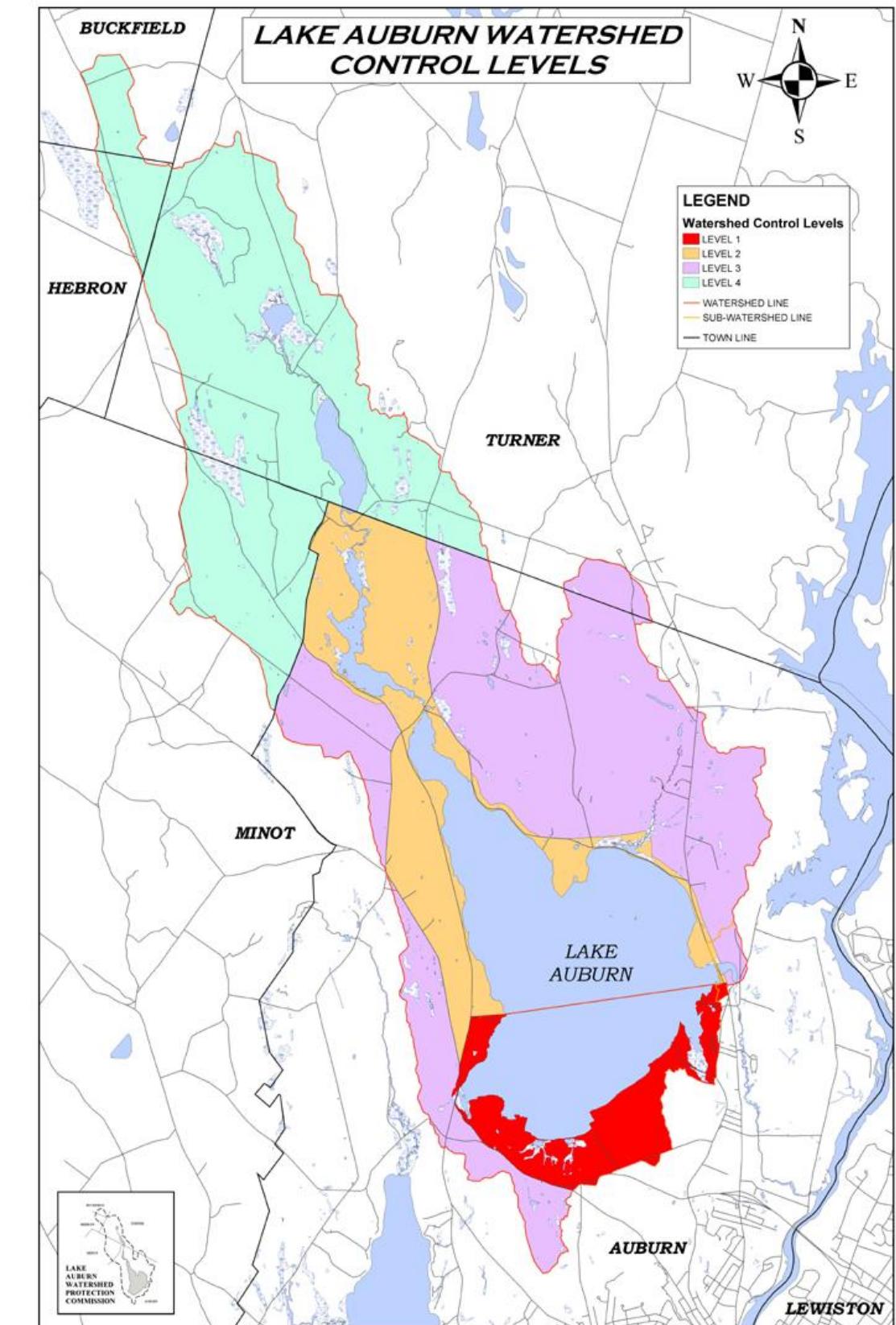
3

Assistance  
Program



# Watershed

- Encompasses land in five different towns
  - Auburn, Turner, Minot, Hebron, Buckfield
- Lake Auburn recharge is fairly evenly split from three different sources:
  - $\frac{1}{3}$  surface precipitation
  - $\frac{1}{3}$  surface flow
  - $\frac{1}{3}$  springs & groundwater



# Drinking Water Source

- Primary drinking water source for Auburn and Lewiston since 1875
- Over 2.3 billion gallons delivered to over 41,000 customers in 2024
- Safe yield is sixteen million gallons per day



# Water Quality

- Filtration waiver granted to AWSD and LWD in 1991 by Environmental Protection Agency
- Only 9 water utilities in Maine have earned this waiver
- 24/7 water quality monitoring at intake; frequent testing of lake and tributary waters



# Commission

- Created in 1993 to maintain the quality of Lake Auburn's water through education, outreach & watershed management efforts
- Since inception, has protected 2,469 acres of watershed land

City of Auburn  
Representative

City of Auburn  
Representative

City of Lewiston  
Director of Public Works

Auburn Water District  
Representative

City of Lewiston  
Representative

Lewiston City Councilor

Minot, Hebron, Buckfield  
Representative

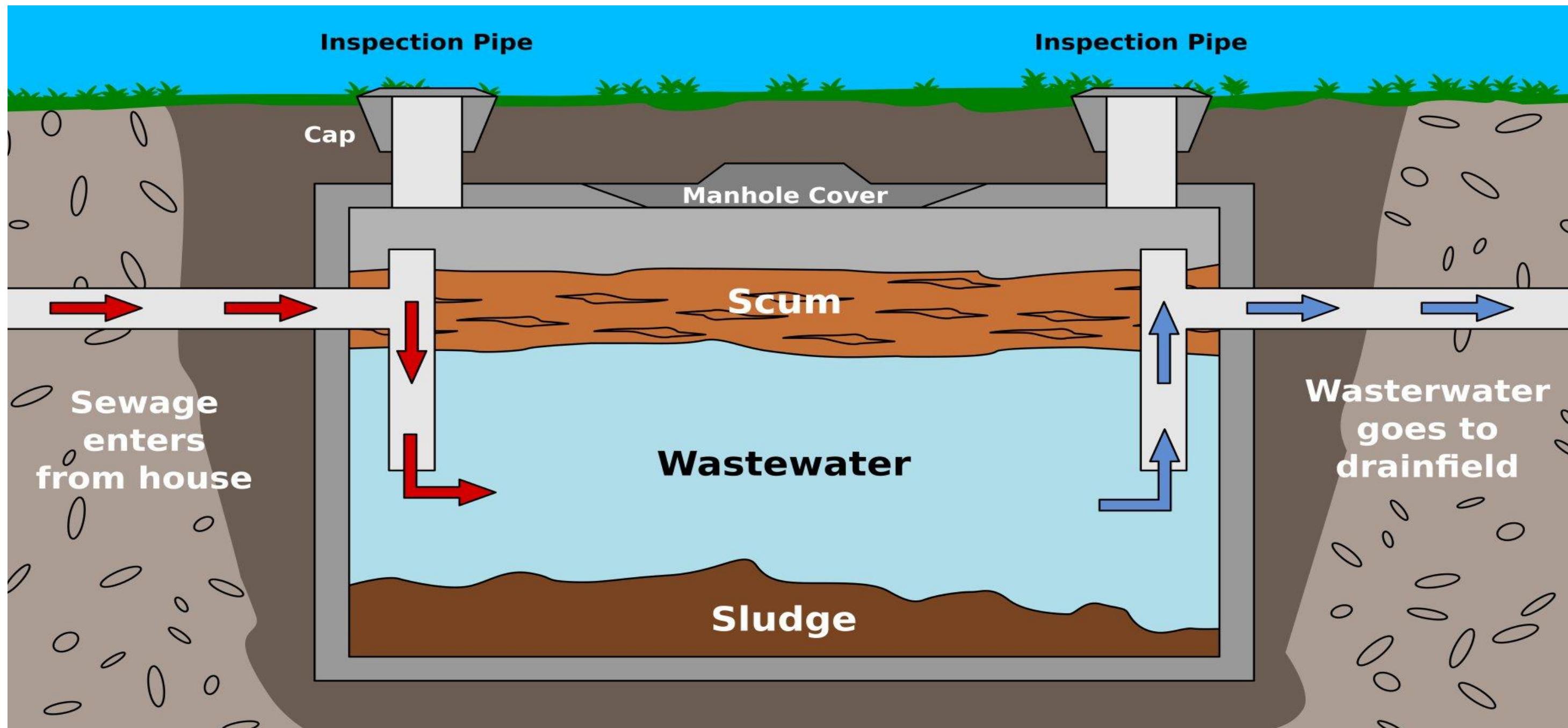
Town of Turner  
Representative

AVCOG Executive  
Director

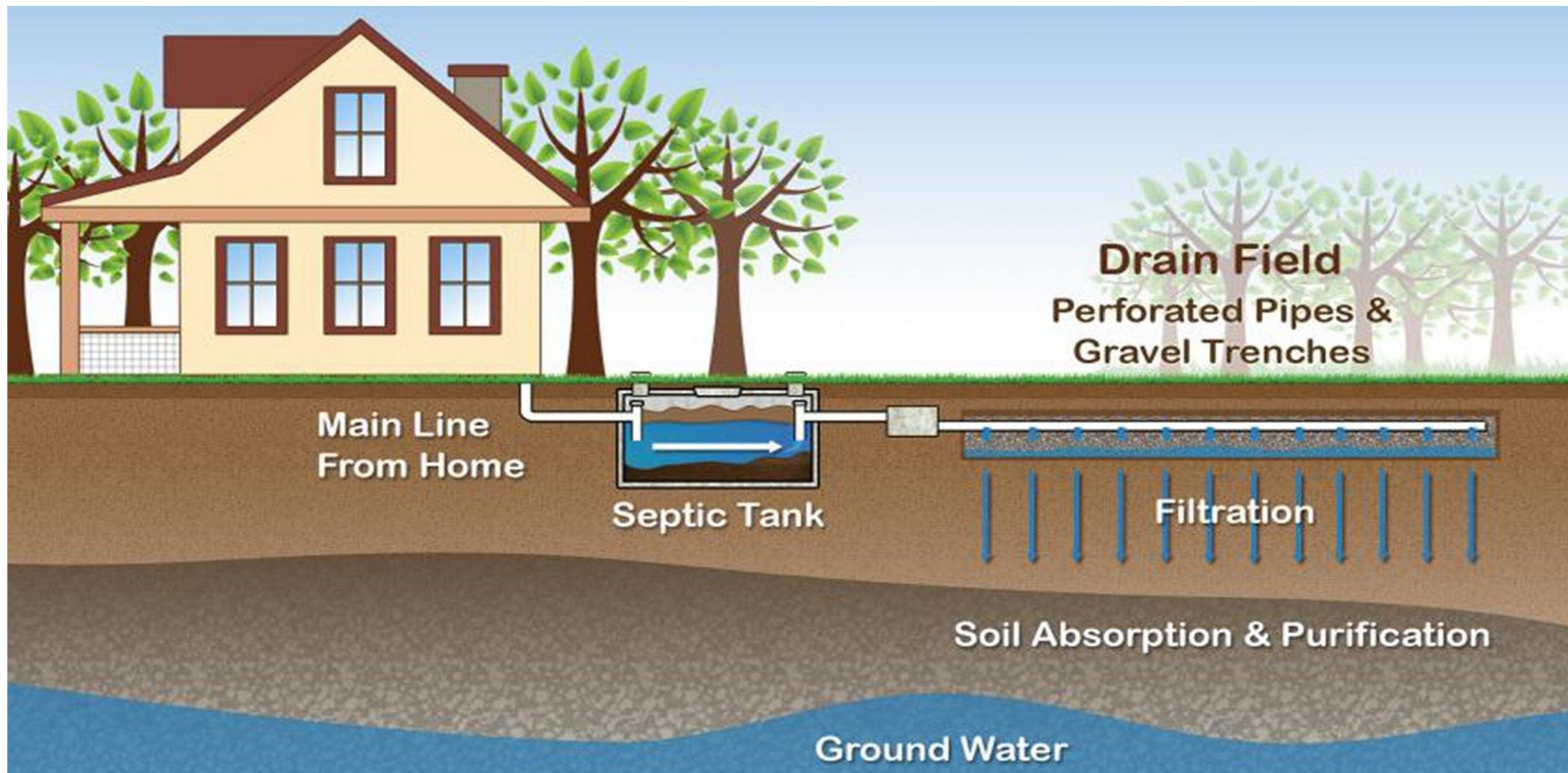
Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission



# Typical Septic System

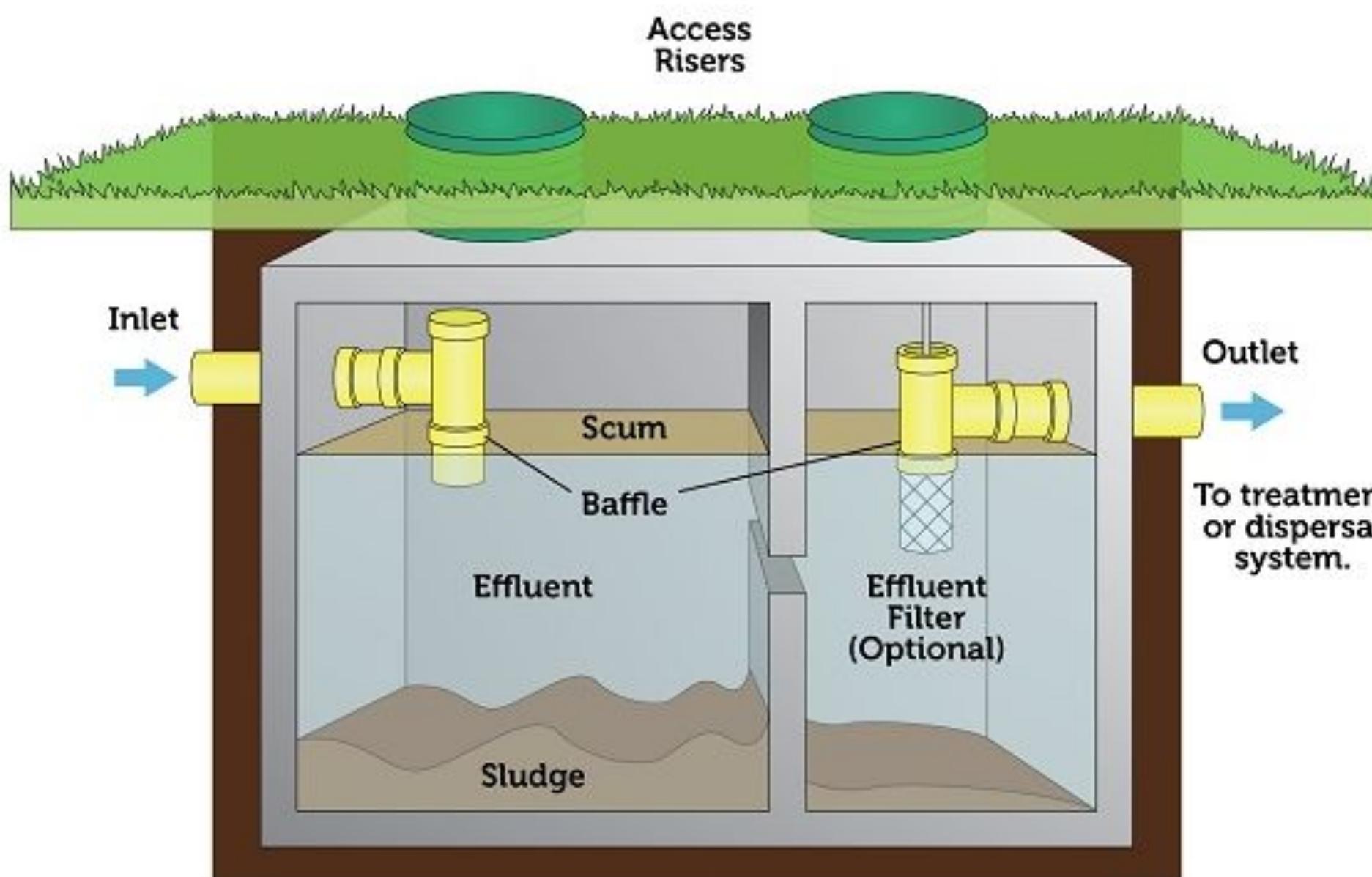


# Typical Septic System



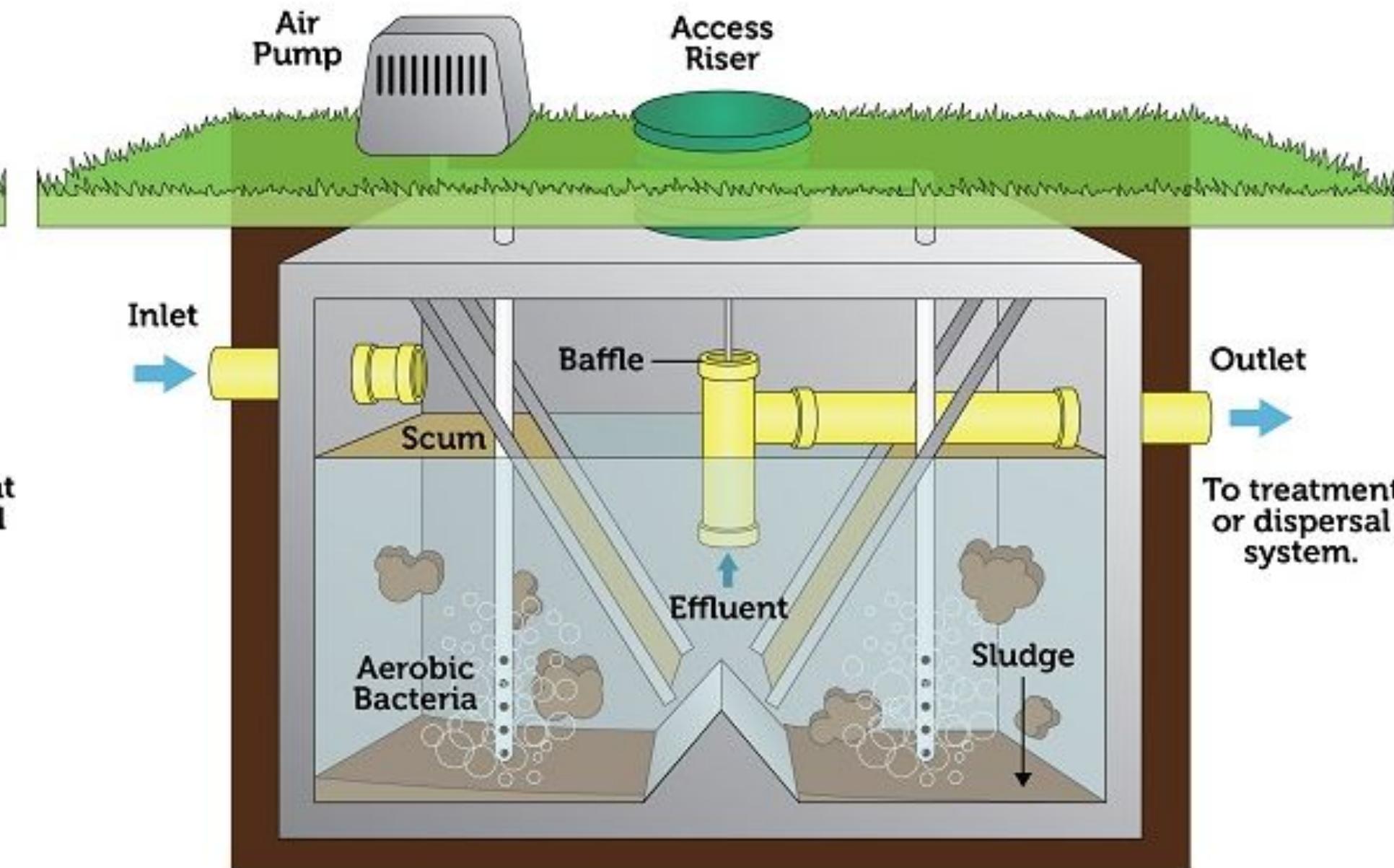
## Section 2: SEPTIC SYSTEMS

### Septic Tank



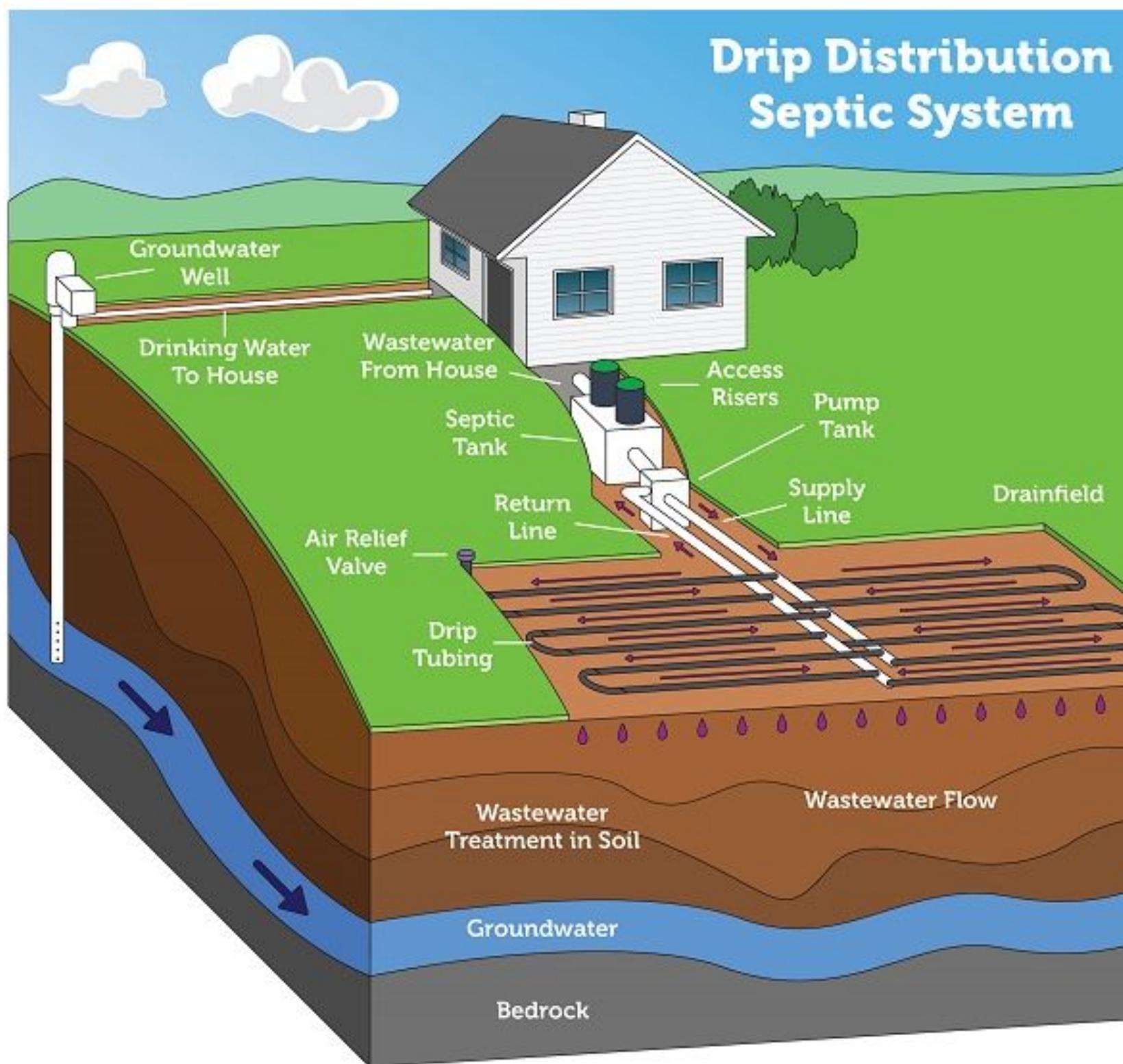
Please note: The number of compartments in a septic tank vary by state and region.

### Aerobic Treatment Unit

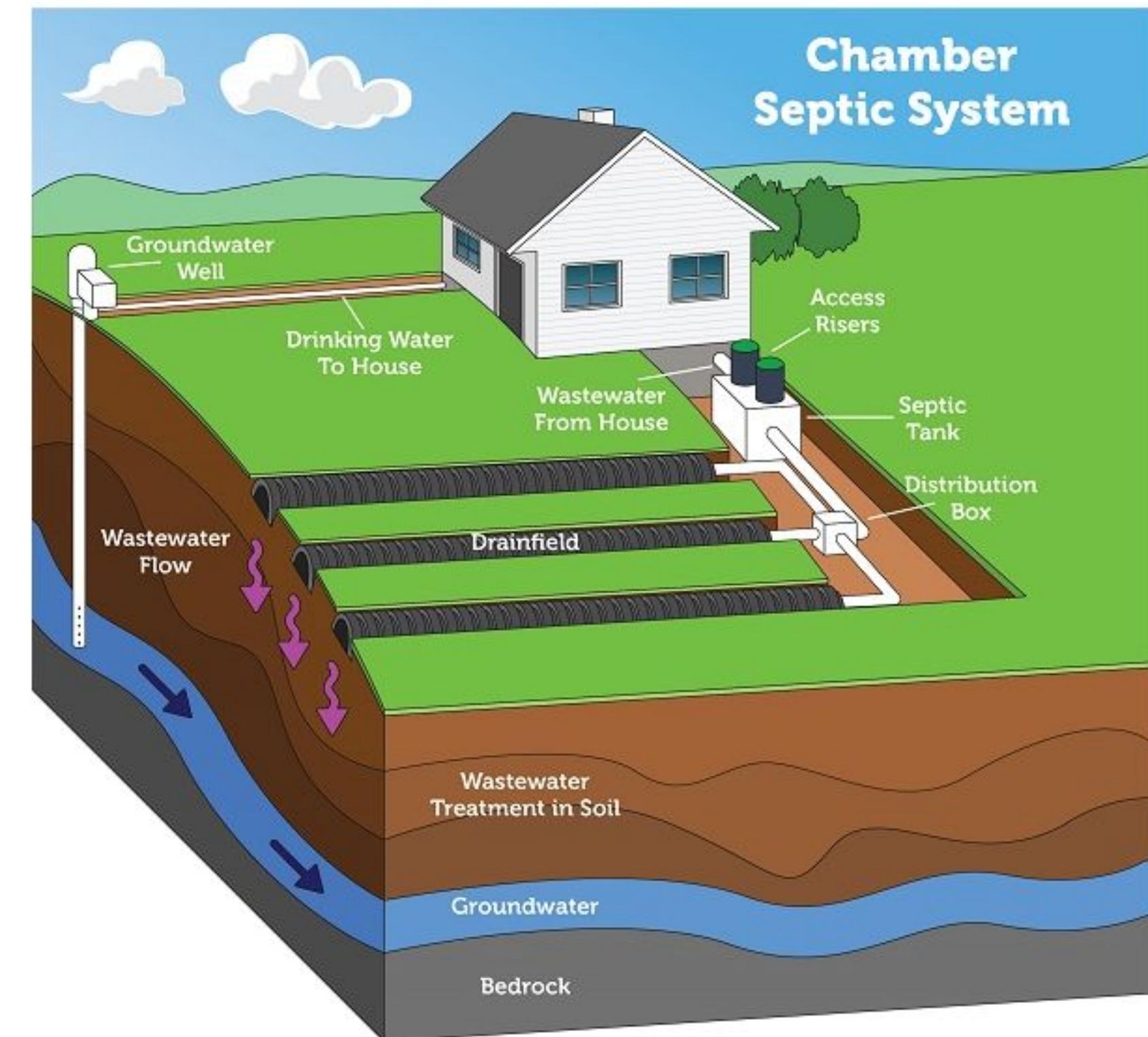


Please note: The Aerobic Treatment Unit can vary in components and design.

## Section 2: SEPTIC SYSTEMS



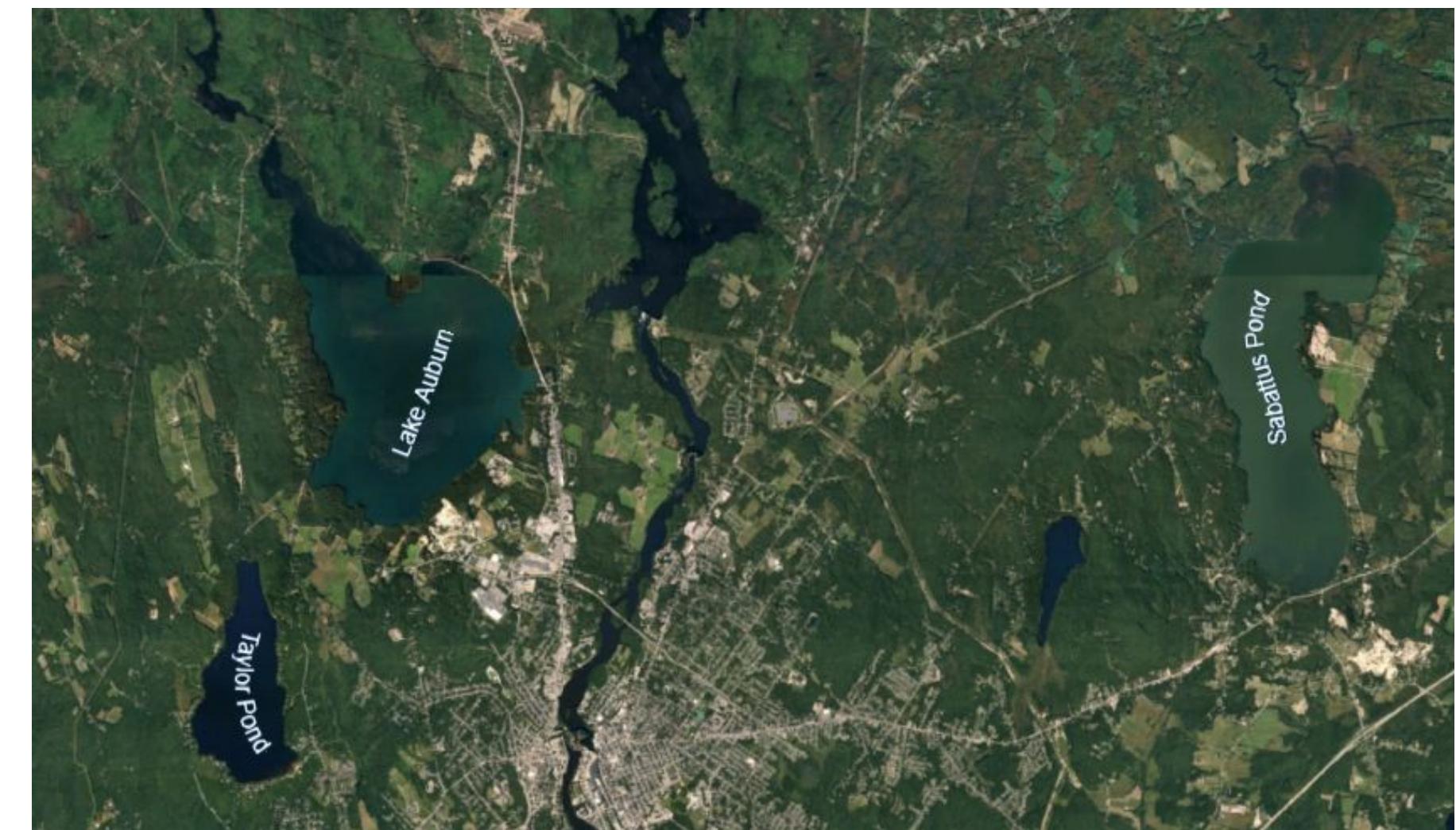
Please note: Septic systems vary. Diagram is not to scale.



Please note: The ends of the chamber system lines are open for illustrative purposes only. In reality, and when properly installed, these lines are closed at the end. Septic systems vary. Diagram is not to scale.

# Why Does it Matter?

- If working improperly, untreated sewage begins to enter the environment
- Could result in contamination of the drinking water source
  - Pathogens
    - *Giardia lamblia*, *Cryptosporidium*
  - Excess nitrogen & phosphorus
    - Algal blooms, fish kills



# Septic System Maintenance

## Pumping

- *Purpose:* cleans accumulated sludge & scum out of tank

## Inspection

- *Purpose:* checks entire system - tank, pipes, drain field, mechanical components
- Finds leaks, clogs, build-ups before they become problems

# Septic System Maintenance

## Pumping

- *Frequency:* depends on usage, but 3-5 years is advisable
- If larger household, may need more frequent pumping

## Inspection

- *Frequency:* 3-5 years
- Alternative systems with electrical float switches, pumps, or mechanical components may need more frequent inspections

# Septic System Maintenance

- Signs of malfunction might take time to become noticeable
  - Spongy grass
  - Odor in house
  - Septic backup into home
- Waiting until noticeable = waiting until it becomes expensive to fix



# Septic System Ordinance

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- In 2024, City of Auburn made changes to the subsurface wastewater inspection requirements
  - Updated ordinance: Chapter 60, Article XII, Division 4, Sec. 60-952 (a)(2)(e)
- Ordinance established a new subsurface wastewater inspection program to safeguard the drinking water source from potential contamination due to aging or malfunctioning septic systems



# Septic System Ordinance

- All septic systems in Auburn must be inspected every five years by a licensed septic inspector
- When you schedule the appointment, ask that the inspector use the state form (HHE-240)

## Section 2: SEPTIC SYSTEMS



Paul R. LePage, Governor      Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner  
Tel. (207) 287-5689

Subsurface Wastewater Unit

Department of Health and Human Services  
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
286 Water Street  
11 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011  
Tel. (207) 287-8016  
Fax (207) 287-9058; TTY (800) 606-0215  
Fax (207) 287-4172

### Septic System Inspection Report

#### Client Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address, Town, State, ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Property Owner Information

Same as Client   Yes   No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address, Town, State, ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Inspector's Information

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Inspector's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Certification #: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address, Town, ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Property Information

Location (road, town) \_\_\_\_\_

Tax Map # \_\_\_\_\_ Lot # \_\_\_\_\_ Lot Size: \_\_\_\_\_ acres   square feet

Zoning:   Shoreland Zone   Other: \_\_\_\_\_

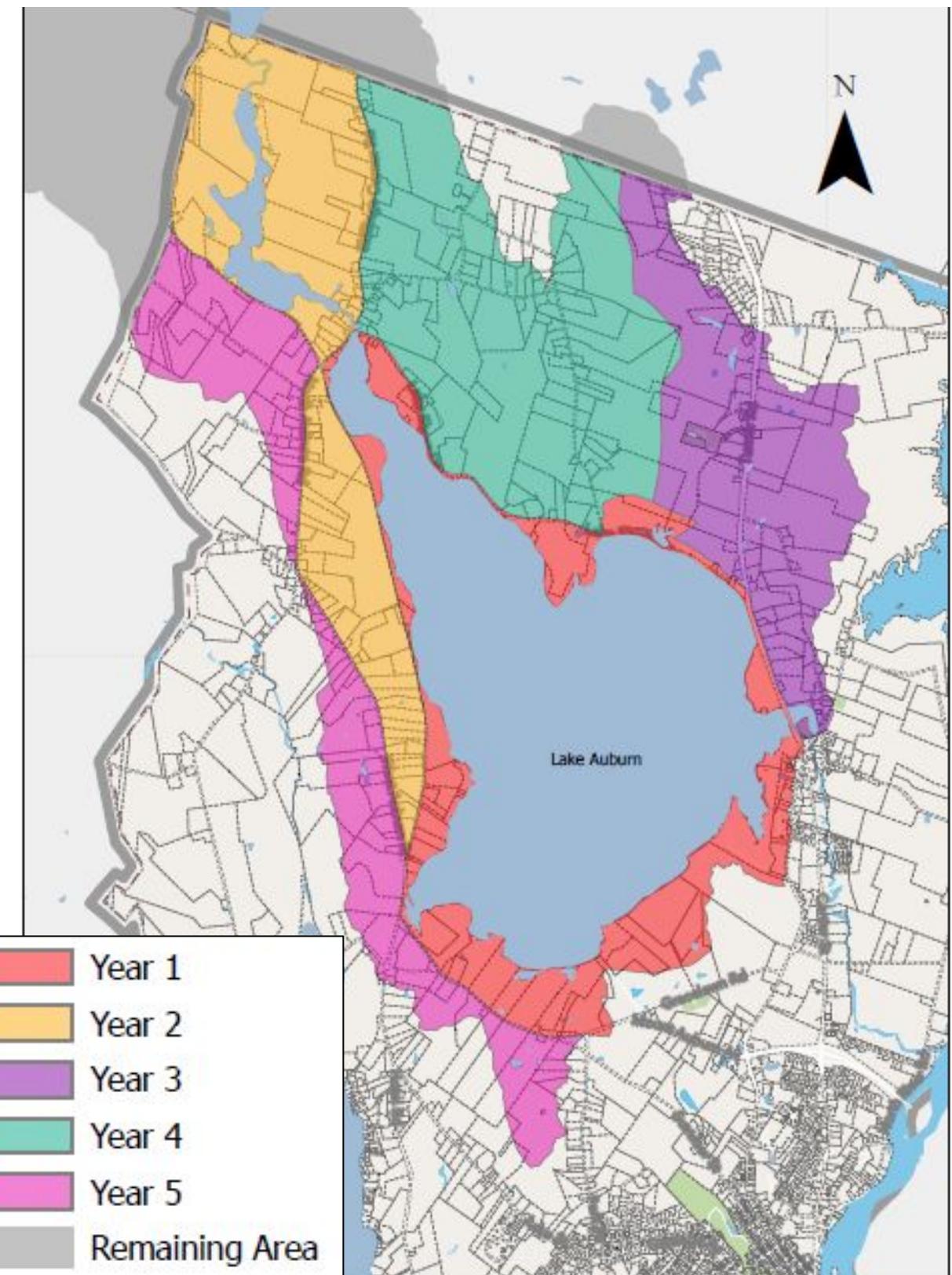
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HHE-240  
Rev. 02/2013



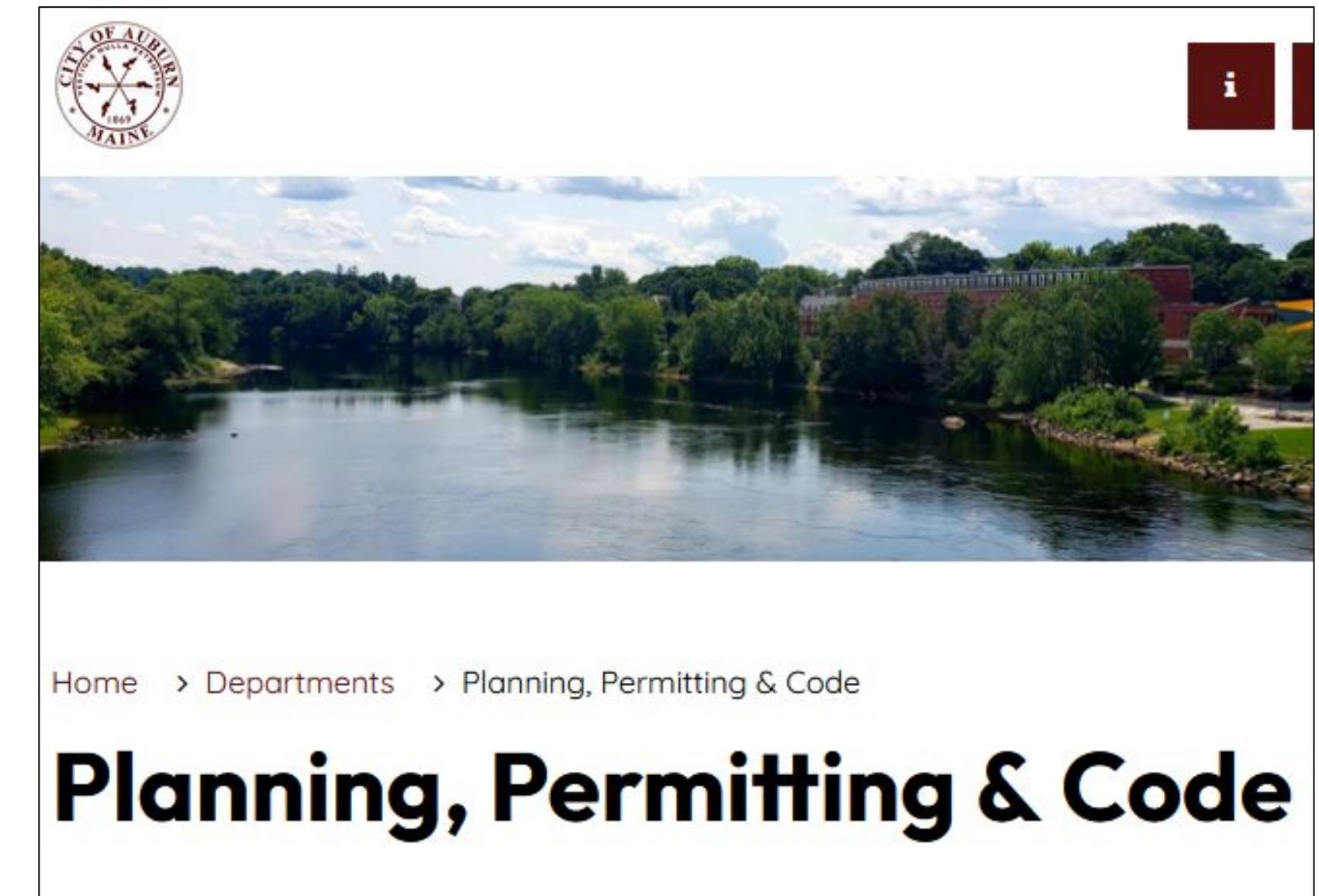
# Septic System Ordinance

- Inspection schedule based on location within watershed overlay zone
- Year 1 and 2 inspections need to be submitted by July 1, 2026
- Inspection reports taking place within 2025 are acceptable
- If property is sold, a new inspection is required at time of sale



# Septic System Ordinance

- Must provide documentation of inspection to City of Auburn
  - Bring to Planning, Permitting & Code Department, or
  - Email [permits@auburnmaine.gov](mailto:permits@auburnmaine.gov), or
  - Use SmartGov permitting system



The screenshot shows a website layout. At the top right is a dark red navigation bar with a white 'i' icon. Below it is a circular city seal for 'CITY OF AUBURN MAINE'. The main content area features a large, scenic photograph of a river flowing through a lush green landscape with buildings in the background. Below the photo is a breadcrumb navigation: 'Home > Departments > Planning, Permitting & Code'. The title 'Planning, Permitting & Code' is prominently displayed in large, bold, black letters.



# Technical Assistance

- LAWPC can help you identify certified septic inspectors
  - Pre-qualified inspectors available
  - If you have another inspector in mind and are unsure if they are certified, we can help
- LAWPC staff are also available to be on site with you during the inspection, if desired

### Participating Septic Inspectors:

#### **Ryan Nickerson**

#### **Attentive Septic & Drain, LLC**

PO Box 215, Turner, ME 04282

(207) 730-2550

[attentiveseptic@gmail.com](mailto:attentiveseptic@gmail.com)

#### **Gail Guile**

#### **Septic Inspector**

22 Pearl Street, Biddeford, ME 04005

(207) 730-1548

[scheduling@septicinspector.net](mailto:scheduling@septicinspector.net)

#### **James MacNaughton**

#### **AnnRuel Home Inspections**

11 Church Street, Oakland, ME 04963

(207) 861-1227

[jamesruelmac@gmail.com](mailto:jamesruelmac@gmail.com)

#### **Larry Winslow**

#### **Winslow Co. Septic Solutions**

14 Crystal Lane, Windham, ME 04062

(207) 329-8999

[lrw62@icloud.com](mailto:lrw62@icloud.com)

#### **Richard Browning**

#### **Upfront Home Inspection**

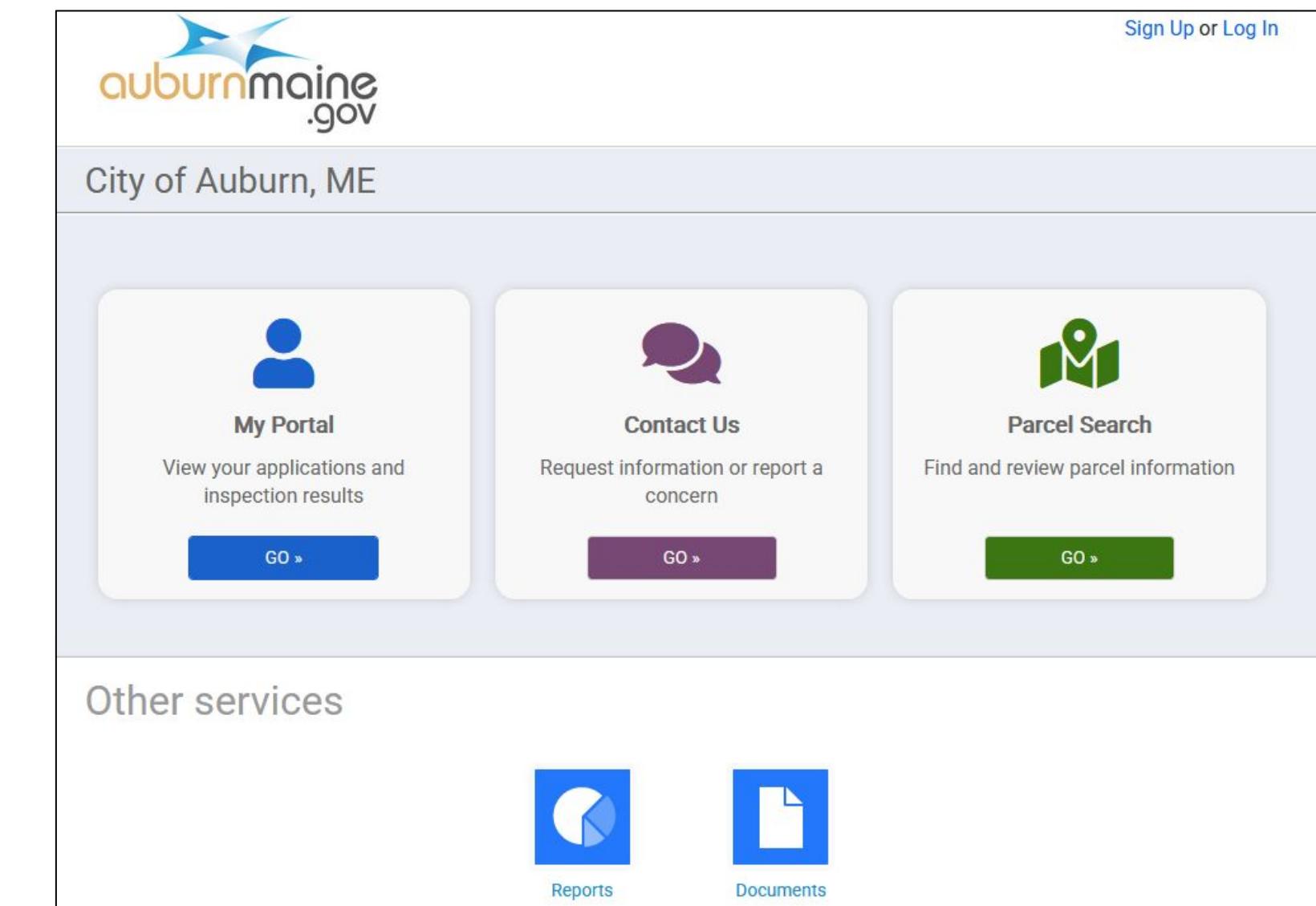
PO Box 584, New Gloucester, ME 04260

(207) 536-9691

[rick@upfronthi.com](mailto:rick@upfronthi.com)

# Technical Assistance

- LAWPC can help you ensure that you have provided the City of Auburn with all necessary documentation
  - Connect you with City officials who can answer specific questions you have
  - Help navigate SmartGov system



# Financial Assistance

- LAWPC is reimbursing septic system owners up to \$400 for the cost of the inspection
- Submit to LAWPC:
  - Completed reimbursement form
  - Completed inspection report
  - Itemized receipt of payment for inspection

 *Lake Auburn Watershed Septic System Inspection Program  
Reimbursement Form  
2025*

Please submit this form and all verification items via email to [lakeauburnwater@lakeauburnwater.org](mailto:lakeauburnwater@lakeauburnwater.org) or via mail to Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission, RE: Septic Inspection Program, PO Box 414, Auburn, ME 04212.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parcel ID Number, if known: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address, if different: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Reimbursement verification:*

I have included a copy of my completed inspection report.  
 I confirm that I, or the septic inspector on behalf of me, has submitted the inspection report to the City of Auburn's Planning, Permitting, and Code Department.  
 I have included an itemized receipt of payment for the septic inspection on my property.  
 I understand that if my inspection costs exceeded \$400, I will only be reimbursed up to \$400.

*Other information:*

I am interested in hearing more from Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission regarding assistance programs, events, and other watershed news.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**For Office-Use Only:**

*Watershed Staff Review*  
Signature, LAWPC Staff \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Reimbursement Processed*  
Signature, Finance Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission  
PO Box 414, Auburn, ME 04212 | (207) 333-6665  
[lakeauburnwater@lakeauburnwater.org](mailto:lakeauburnwater@lakeauburnwater.org)  
[www.lakeauburnwater.org](http://www.lakeauburnwater.org)



# Additional Support

- Further septic repairs or replacement
  - State and national grants and low-interest loans are available to help fund septic repair or replacement
  - LAWPC can provide support in locating and applying to these programs



# Additional Support

- Free stormwater site assessment
  - Evaluation of your property for stormwater runoff pathways and areas of erosion
  - Personalized solutions to slow down and filter runoff
  - Recommendations and resources to add native plants to your property



# Resources

- [https://www.auburnmaine.gov/departments/planning\\_permitting\\_code/floodplain\\_and\\_watershed.php](https://www.auburnmaine.gov/departments/planning_permitting_code/floodplain_and_watershed.php)
  - Ordinance information, inspection schedule map, septic inspection submission
- <https://lakeauburnwater.org/>
  - Program documents, reimbursement forms, contact info for participating septic inspectors
- <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/services/business-services/hydrology-and-wastewater/a-b-c-d-resources>
  - Maine-specific FAQs about site evaluations, septic system permit search tool, financial resources, maintenance tips
- <https://www.epa.gov/septic/frequent-questions-septic-systems>
  - General (but in-depth) FAQs about maintenance, inspections, regulations, compliance, failing systems, financial resources



# Resources



## Frequently Asked Questions

- ▼ **Q: How do I find a copy of my septic system's design?**
- ▼ **Q: I bought my undeveloped lot many years ago, and it recently failed a site evaluation. Is my lot "grandfathered" for a septic system because of the length of time I have owned it?**
- ▼ **Q: If my undeveloped lot fails a site evaluation, is there some form of advanced treatment unit that I can install instead of a conventional system?**
- ▼ **Q: If my undeveloped waterfront lot fails a site evaluation, can I install fill soils to create a suitable site?**
- ▼ **Q: My existing septic system has failed. What should I do?**
- ▼ **Q: My existing septic system has failed. What happens if my lot does not pass a site evaluation?**
- ▼ **Q: I cannot afford the cost of installing a replacement system. Is there help available?**

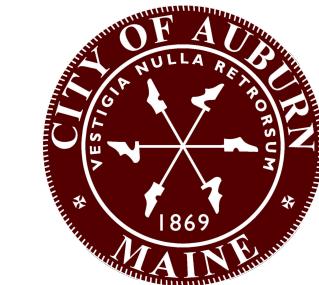


# Questions?



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Protection Commission  
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