

Septic Pumping Program in Targeted Watersheds

Using West Virginia's State Implementation Grant from the Chesapeake Bay Program, Sleepy Creek, Mill Creek (tributary of the South Branch Potomac River), and Mill Creek (tributary of Opequon Creek), conducted one-time reimbursement programs this winter to encourage homeowners to have their septic tanks pumped. Many people signed up because they knew their tanks were full, but others signed up after calling to learn more: "How does my septic tank work? Why does it need to be pumped regularly?" Therefore, this project resulted in increased public knowledge about proper septic system maintenance, and set the stage for septic system replacement projects in all three watersheds using Clean Water Act Section 319 funding. Septic system installers in Sleepy Creek learned about this upcoming opportunity from Health Department officials, WVCA staff and the Sleepy Creek Watershed Association in January 2009. They agreed to talk to local residents in need of septic system upgrades and steer them toward the 319 project.