

Middle Chester River Watershed Local Implementation Grant *Septic System Repair and Upgrade Program*

Background

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources Local Implementation Grant program, created from revenue generated through the state budget and automobile-related tax revenue, has funded a multi-partner effort in the Kent County portion of the Middle Chester River watershed that focuses on reducing nitrogen pollution between and around Kennedyville and Chestertown. Three projects will be implemented with the funds from the grant to work on reducing nitrogen in the Middle Chester river watershed including agriculture best management practices, habitat restoration, and septic de-nitrification.



Septic Systems and the Chester River

Septic system effluent contributes about 10% of the nitrogen pollution found in the Chester River as over half of the homes within the Chester River watershed depend on septic systems to treat their sewage. Too much nitrogen in our river upsets the natural balance and ultimately can cause fish kills and a loss of blue crab habitat. Conventional septic systems, no matter how new, discharge nitrogen to groundwater exceeding the allowable limits set by the State of Maryland.

De-nitrification technology, or Best Available Technology Biological Nitrogen Removal (BAT BNR) systems, when installed on a conventional septic system, reduces its nitrogen output. Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has established the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) to help homeowners cover the purchase, installation, and five years maintenance of BAT BNR systems as a way to encourage nitrogen pollution reduction.

Though the BRF program has provided a tremendous opportunity for homeowners to improve their septic system's situation, the BRF funds cannot be used to make the necessary septic repairs required to be qualified for the upgrade. This is often an obstacle for homeowners who can very much benefit from a septic system upgrade but cannot afford to do the required repairs.

Septic system repair assistance

The Middle Chester Watershed Implementation Grant program is making limited funding available to homeowners in the Middle Chester watershed to repair their septic system so that they can receive BRF monies for an upgrade to a BAT BNR system. This is an exciting opportunity for homeowners in the Middle Chester watershed, however, to be considered for the funding their septic system must:

- Be within 1000 feet from a tidal waterway, also known as the Critical Area
- Be determined as failing by the Kent County Office of Environmental Health

For more information or to be considered for septic system repair assistance from the Middle Chester Watershed Implementation Grant program, contact:

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