

# Blue Lake Preservation Association

8/1/15

## What Makes a Healthy, Happy Septic System!

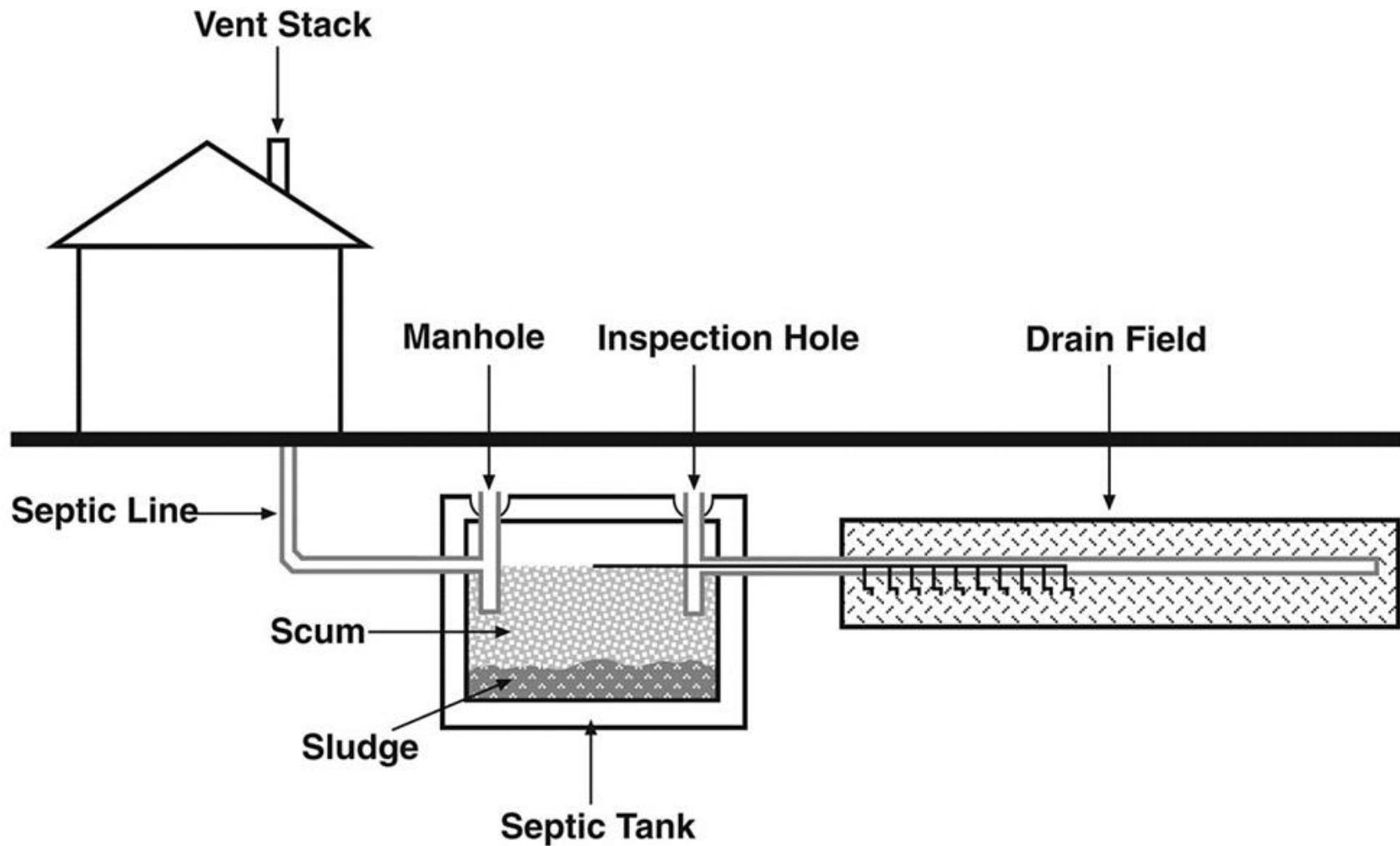
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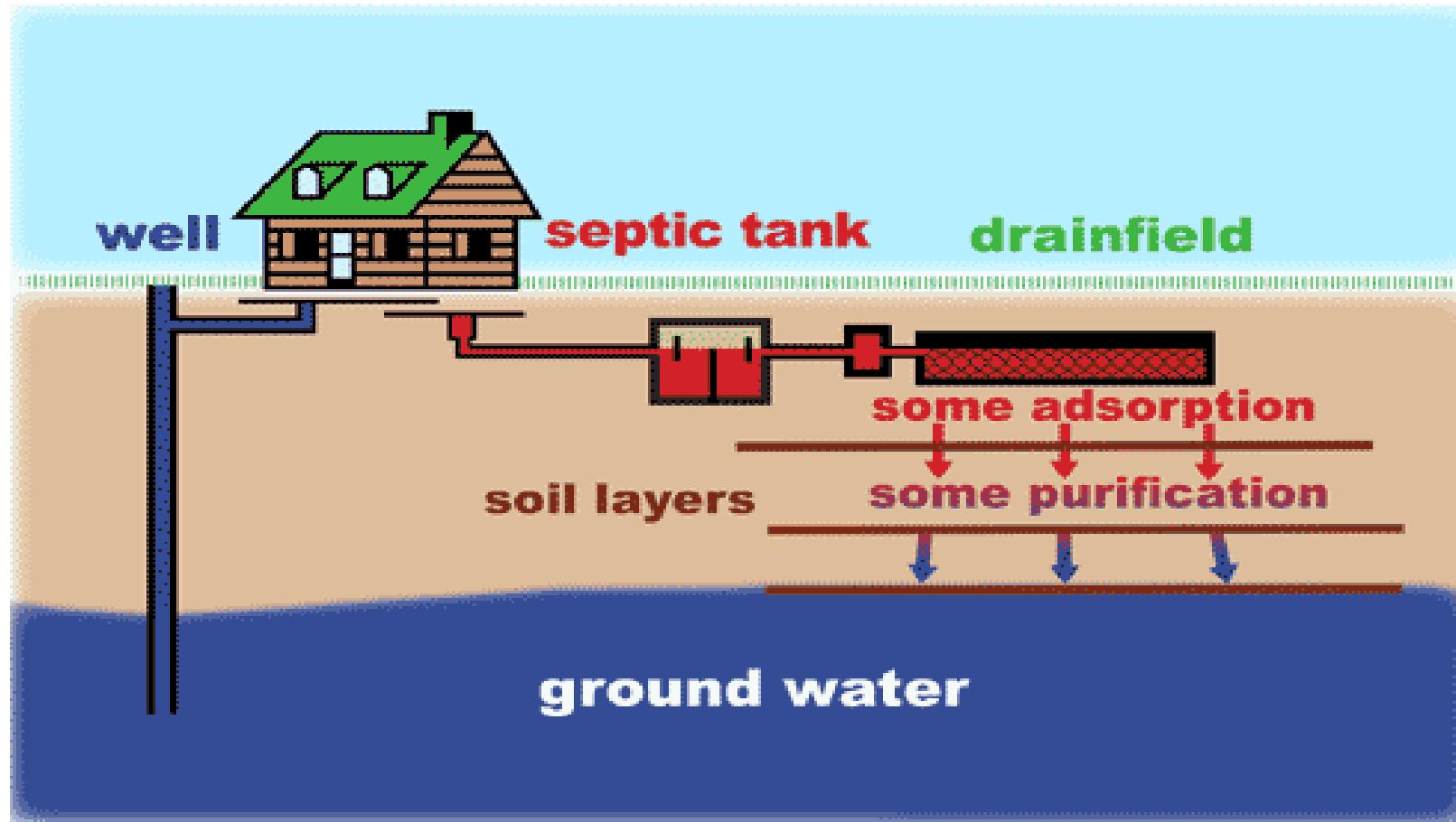
# What is a Septic System

- ▶ Straight to the point, your septic system is a small-scale sewage treatment system
- ▶ 25% of North America rely on septic system
- ▶ Septic refers to anaerobic bacterial environment that develops in the holding tank which decomposes the waste
- ▶ A properly maintained system should not need to be replaced in a home owners lifetime.

# Septic System



# Waste Water flow to Water Table



# How does a Septic System Work?

- ▶ Wastewater enters the tank, allowing solids to settle and scum to float
- ▶ Anaerobic bacteria digests solids to reduce the volumes
- ▶ Liquid flows into second chamber, where further settling takes place
- ▶ Excess liquid (by now in clear condition) drains into the drain field
- ▶ Remaining impurities are trapped and eliminated in soil

# Septic System Maintenance

- ▶ Wisconsin Administrative code Comm 83.55 requires the system is pumped within 3 years of installation and at least once every 3 years unless during the inspection process, the tank is less than 1/3 of the volume occupied is sludge and scum
- ▶ Wisconsin requires that a certified septage servicing operator to legally pump the septic tank

# Septic System Maintenance (continue)

- ▶ During pumping / inspection process, the operator will:
  - Inspect the tank first to determine service required
  - Pump wastewater through the manhole. Inspection pipe is too small to see if tank is sufficient empty
  - Loosen and strip up material materials by pumping, back flushing and repumping
  - Check that the baffles and “T” /filters are in place and working. These are vital to prevent drainfield from clogging
  - Dig test holes to check for signs of standing water or biomat. They will also check the color of the rocks and sand.

# Do's and Don'ts

## ▶ Don'ts

- Drain excessive amounts of grease or cooking oils
- Use the toilet for disposal of food
- Flush non-biodegradable waste items such as cigarette butts, cotton swabs, baby wipes, feminine hygiene products, paper towels or kleenex
- Use septic chemical additives – Chemical may ultimately damage the bacteria and system. They may cause more harm than good
- Flush salt water – Sodium can bind in the drainfield causing clay and salt to bind particles. Effectively waterproofing the drain field and render it useless
- Place playground equipment or storage equipment in this area

# Do's and Don'ts (continue)

- Dump medicine down the drain
  - Over use cleaning products that include bleach and drain cleaners
  - Use automatic toilet cleaning dispensers that release bleach with every flush
  - Install a garbage disposal
  - Drive or park ATVs, snowmobiles, tractors or cars over the system
  - Put harsh chemicals like paint thinner down drain
  - Pave or cement over the drain field
  - Never place a fire pit near the septic system
- ▶ Do's
- Have the system inspected regularly
  - Limit kitchen waste, grease and food going down drain
  - Repair leaky faucets and toilets
  - Install water saving devices such as low flow shower heads and toilets

# Do's and Don'ts (continue)

## ► Do's

- Septic safe toilet tissue – fast breaking down tissue
- Make sure that the washing machine and dishwasher have full loads
- Use liquid detergents. Powder detergents have fillers that add to the scum layer
- Install water saving devices such as low flow shower heads and toilets
- 1 or 2 loads of laundry per day rather than 3 or more on one day
- Turn the water off while brushing your teeth
- Install lint trap on washing machine and change regularly
- Allow grass to grow longer before winter to help insulate system
- Keep detailed records of repairs, pumping and maintenance activities

# Warning Signs

- ▶ Slow Draining toilets, tubs or sinks
- ▶ Gurgling sound when draining
- ▶ Wet areas near the drainfield
- ▶ Excessive vegetative growth in area of drain field
- ▶ Algal blooms or excessive weed growth near shoreline
- ▶ Foul odor around the house

# Septic Service Providers

A-1 Septic Systems  
1-715-358-2191

Arbor Vitae Septic Systems  
1-715-356-4338

Brian Grundy Septic Systems  
1-715-356-2258

Burnett Plumbing and  
Heating  
1-715-356-3112

LaFrenier Sons, Inc  
1-715-356-3020

JW Dallman Septic  
1-715-358-6624

Richardson Septic Services  
1-715-358-2496

Trapp Septic and Excavating  
1-715-356-2040