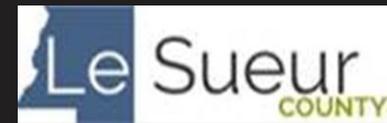


# Volney, Gorman, and Cordova Septic System Inventory Project

Informational Meetings

August 24 and 28, 2021



# Agenda

- Sign-in
- Introductions
  - Le Sueur County Commissioner(s)
  - Le Sueur County Environmental Services Staff
  - Matthew Summers, Stantec
- County Information – Holly Kalbus/Sheila Reem  
Project Presentation – Matthew Summers
- Q & A

# Project Team

- Le Sueur County
  - SSTS Authority: Sheila Reem
  - Grant Manager: Holly Kalbus
- Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
  - Matthew Summers, Project Manager/Inspector
  - Peter Miller, Advanced Inspector

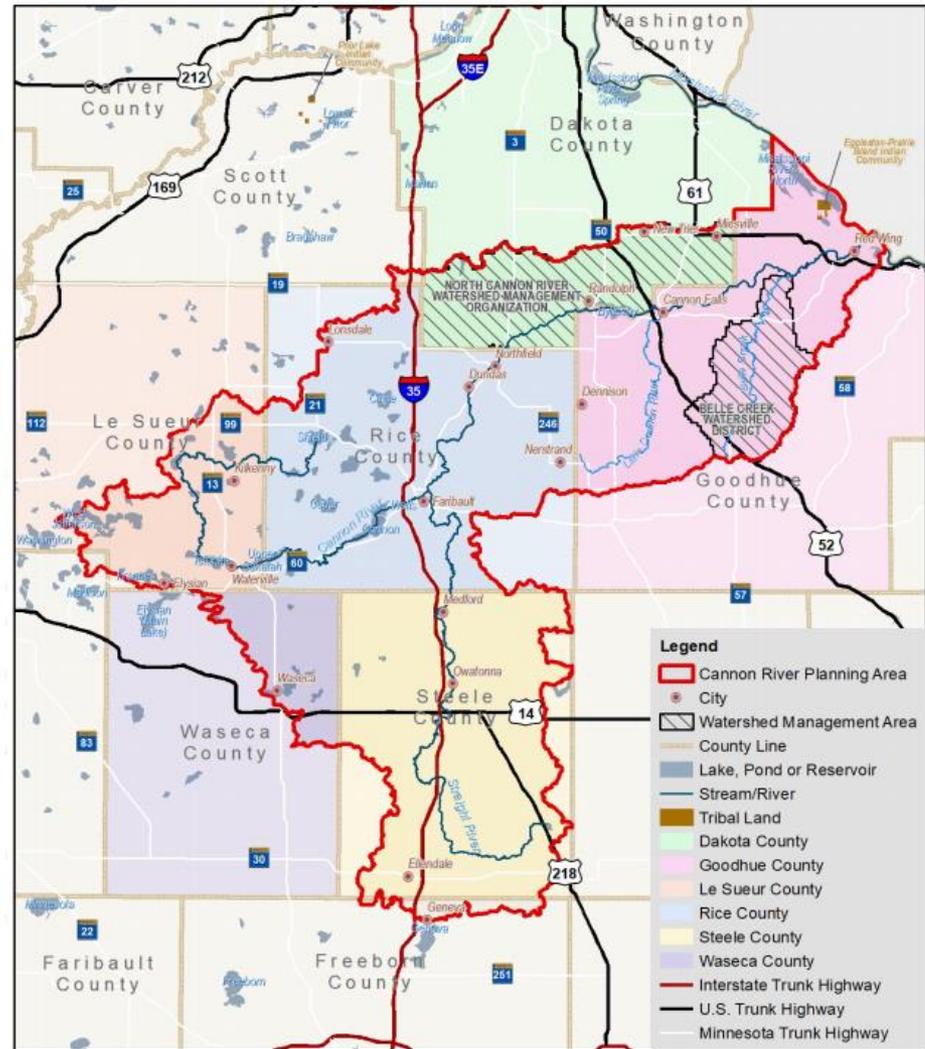
# Why do a Septic System Compliance Inventory?

- Septic inventories are conducted around the state, especially in lake communities.
- Identify non-compliant systems adjacent to sensitive water bodies.
- County Water Plan
- Cannon River One Watershed One Plan
- Identify any problem areas around the lakes:
  - Higher concentration of failing systems
  - Small lots and other constraints



# Cannon River One Watershed One Plan

- 10 year plan that is for the Cannon River Watershed
  - The goal is to combine local water planning efforts across a major watershed scale
  - Prioritize and target areas throughout the watershed to improve and protect resources
  - Septic Inventories are listed
    - 4 total lake systems



# Watershed Based Implementation Funding

- Different funding stream
  - Traditionally competitive process that was very project focused for one area
- Allows for collaboration among LGUs to implement projects and practices for the highest priorities within a watershed
  - A comprehensive plan-One Watershed One Plan is required in order to utilize funding



# Watershed Based Implementation Funding

- Eligible Expenses:
  - County Staff Time
  - Mailings
  - Letters
  - Handouts
  - Compliance inspections completed by Stantec
  - Stantec Staff Time
  - Community Meetings
  - Public Notices
  - Website Updates
  - Interim & Final Reports
  - Feasibility Studies
  - Maps/GIS work
- Non-Eligible Expenses:
  - Septic Upgrades
  - New Septic installations
  - Compliance inspections not completed by Stantec

# Scope of Septic System Inspections

- **“First-Tier” properties and the Village of Cordova are subject to the Ordinance and a potential inspection:**
  - System or structure within 350 feet of the Volney or Gorman lakes’ Ordinary High Water Level (OHWL) plus all of the Unincorporated Village of Cordova.
  - A residential property whose structure, septic components, and reserve septic area are NOT within 350 feet of the lakes’ OHWL is NOT subject to the Ordinance.
  - Currently vacant lots, or lots without septic or structures within 350 feet of the lakes’ OHWL, would become subject to the Ordinance if anything is built within that 350 feet.

# Scope of the Volney, Gorman, & Cordova Septic System Inspections

- **This is draft ordinance language. There will be a public hearing, this fall, held by the County Board of Commissioners in which all affected property owners will be notified.**
- **All properties subject to the Ordinance will require a continuous state of compliance.**
  - Effective Date starting on December 31, 2027 forward.
- **Not all properties subject to the Ordinance will require an onsite inspection:**
- **The following are exempt:**
  - Systems installed after January 1, 2017.
  - Systems inspected and certified as compliant after January 1, 2017.
  - Systems inspected and certified as non-compliant after January 1, 2021.
  - Systems regulated by the State (over 10,000 gallons per day).

# What is a Septic System Compliance Inspection?

- Determine if the system meets state rules and is protective of groundwater, surface water, and human health.
  - Sewage not discharging too close to groundwater: 36" between system bottom and seasonal high groundwater.
  - Sewage not discharging to surface water or into the structure.
  - System components in safe condition (sound tank lids, all wiring buried, etc.)



# What is a Septic System Compliance Inspection?

- Possible Inspection Results:
  - 1. **Compliant.**
  - 2. **Non-compliant:**
    - Imminent Threat to Public Health and Safety (ITPHS):
      - Discharging sewage to surface water or ground; unsafe conditions
    - Failure to Protect Groundwater (FTPG):
      - Drainfield doesn't have required 36" of separation from seasonal groundwater or bedrock, or tanks leak below the operating depth
  - Not meeting operating permit or monitoring requirements

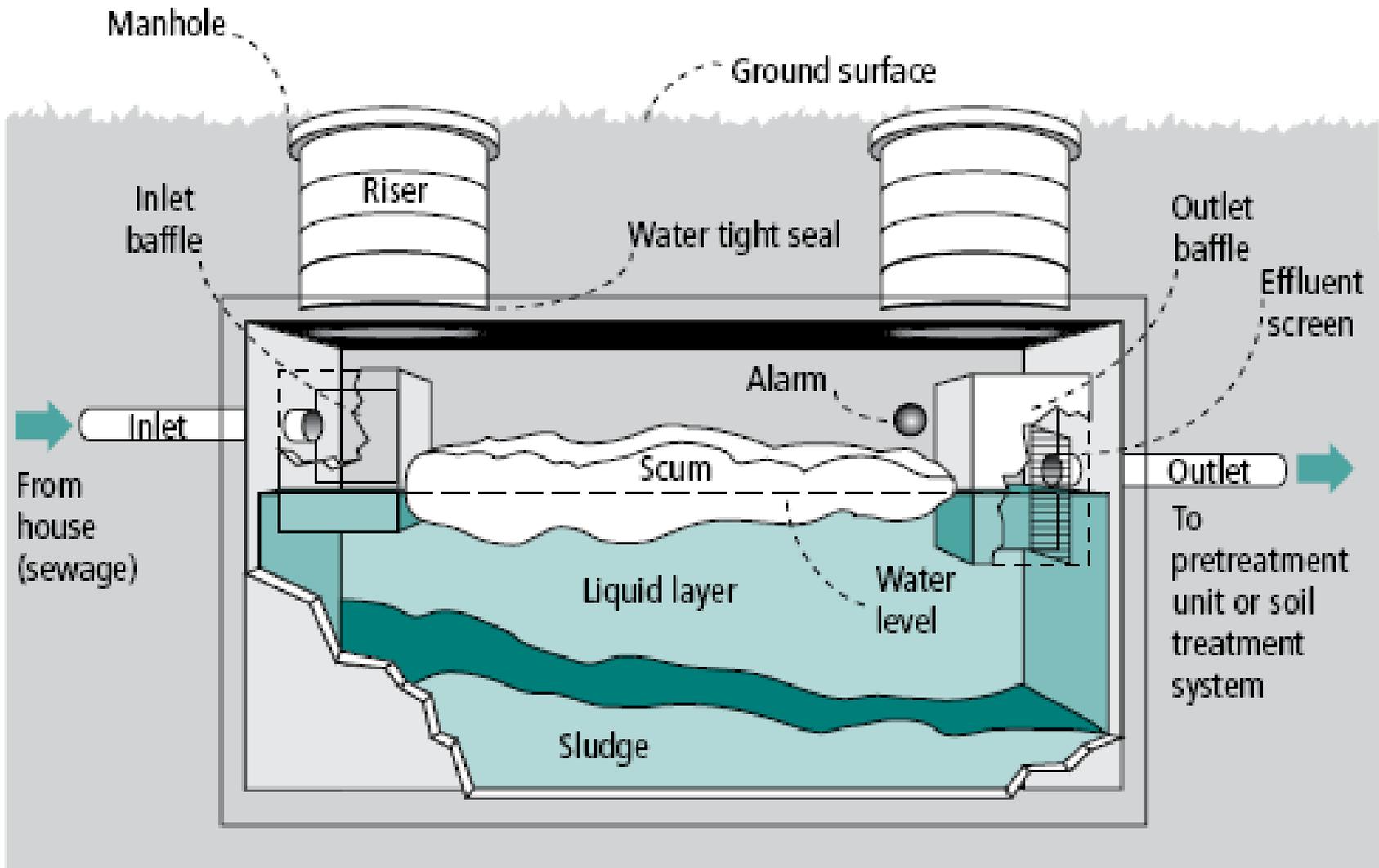


# What is a Septic System Compliance Inspection?

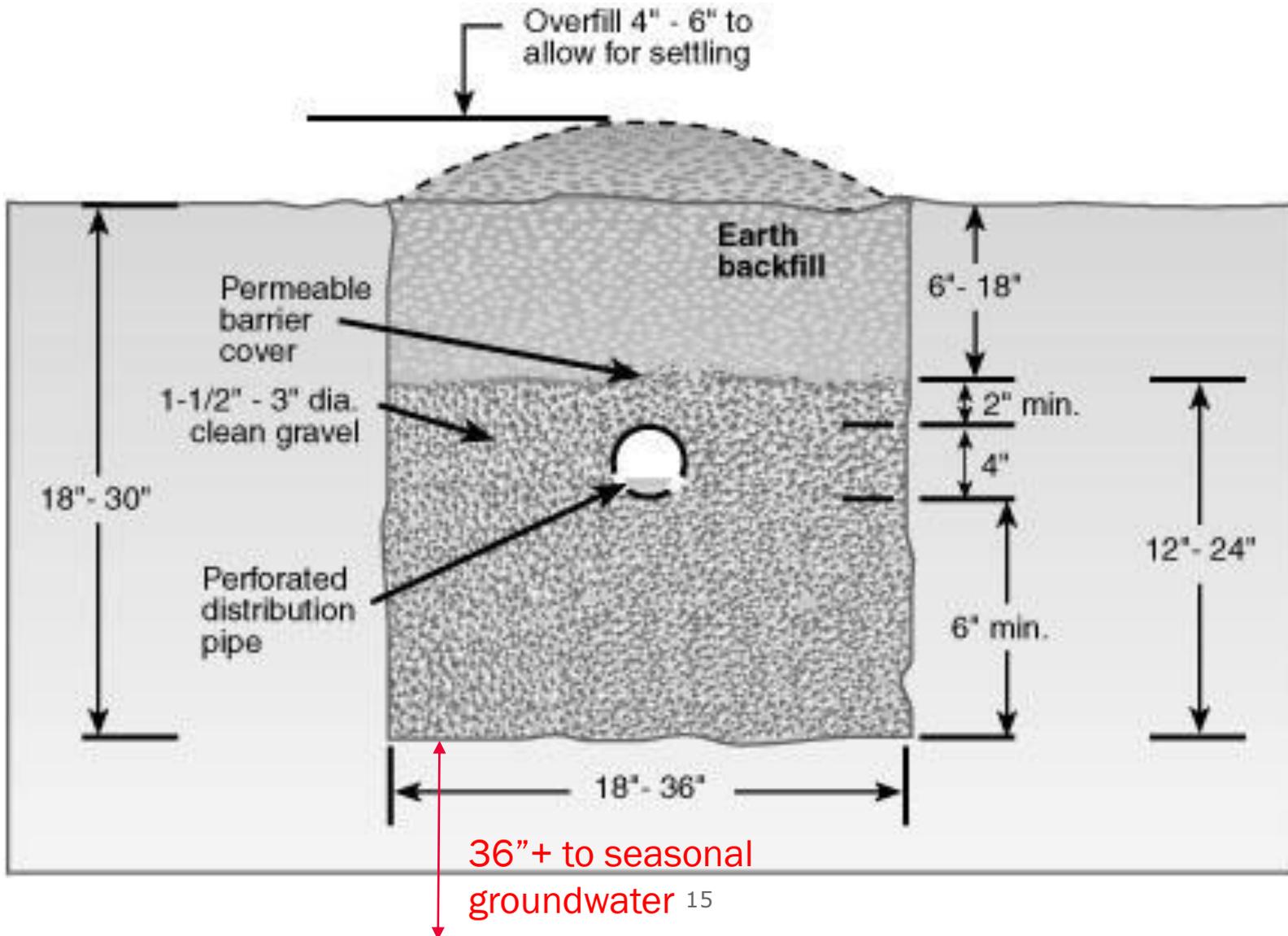
- **A Compliant System Has:**
  - Watertight septic tank or holding tank below the operating depth
  - No signs of surfacing in the yard, backing up into home, or discharging to surface waters
  - No dangerous conditions (exposed electric lines, unsafe tanks, etc.)
  - Drain field or mound meets vertical separation requirement

# How is the Compliance Inspection Performed?

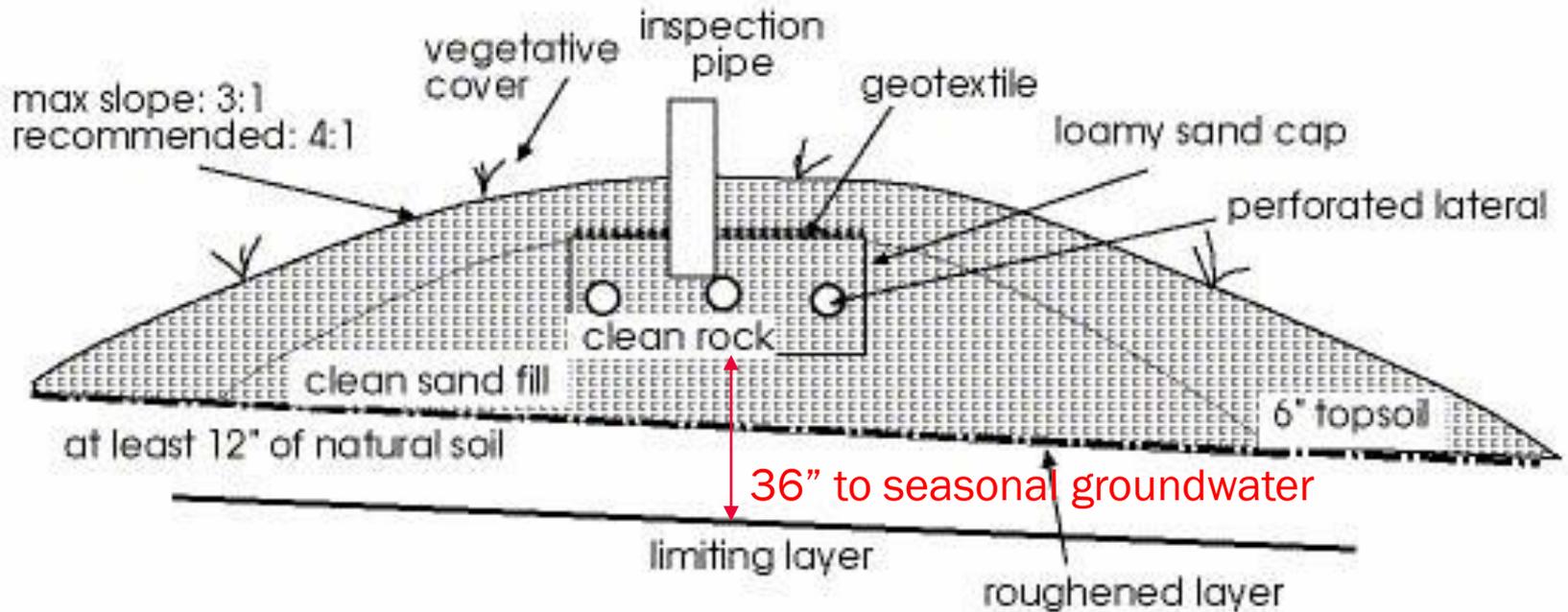
- Review off-site information
  - Soil survey
  - Local knowledge
  - County records
- On-site Inspection
  - Tank pumping and assessment (by pumping contractor).
  - Visual inspection of property and drainfield area (by Stantec).
  - One or more hand-augered soil borings to determine depth to seasonal groundwater or bedrock or limiting layer.



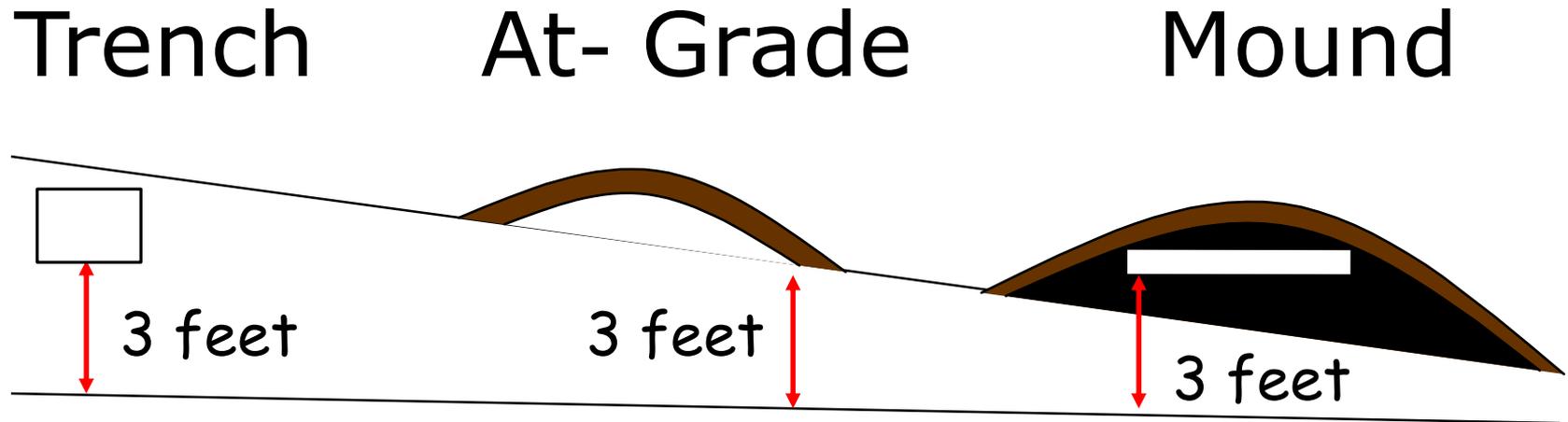
# Typical Septic Trench Profile



# Typical Septic Mound Profile



# Vertical Separation-how measured



# How is the Compliance Inspection Performed?

- Inspection Report will contain:
  - Compliance status and reasons why
  - Assessment information on tanks, soils, and more
  - Comments regarding maintenance issues or other observed concerns.
  - Map showing GPS-ed location of system components and soil boring locations.
- Report will be sent to:
  - Le Sueur County
  - Landowner

# Compliance Inspection Process

- ▲ The goal is to begin on the NW side of Volney and work clockwise around the lake. Gorman & Cordova would begin after our first pass around Volney, starting in the Village. The proposed process:
  - 1) Receive letter notifying that your property is subject to inspection, and an approximate date of when inspections in your area will begin.
  - 2) Pumping contractor will arrive to pump your tank(s). They will generally not be scheduling these visits with the landowner. Tank will be pumped only if accessible. Pumper will leave a note when completed.
  - 3) Utility locate crew will arrive and mark buried utilities.
  - 4) Stantec will conduct final inspection and soil borings ideally within a week of the utility locate. Please leave the locate markings in place.
  - 5) Stantec will leave a postcard in your door providing the status of the inspection, the compliance finding, and other information.
  - 6) If something prevents us from doing the inspection (loose dog, locked fence, etc..) we will make a note and will reach out to the owner.
  - 7) There will be a project website that will include a current map of project progress (updated daily).

# Compliance Inspection Process

- Project website will contain:
  - Ordinance
  - General Project Information
  - Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
  - Progress Map
    - Completed Inspections
    - Upcoming Inspections
    - WILL NOT SHOW COMPLIANCE STATUS
  - Other information as needed
  - Interim and Final Reports

# Final Reporting

- Evaluate Overall Results:
  - System Types/Ages
  - Compliance Status
  - Areas of Concern, if any
  - Final Report to County and Lake Associations by end of 2022



# What if My System is Found to be Non-Compliant?

- **System must be upgraded:**
  - Failure to Protect Groundwater (FTPG) non-compliance must be upgraded by December 31, 2027
    - The state and county standard is 1 year grace period for an upgrade. The Ordinance grants a grace period of 5 years instead.
  - Imminent Threat to Public Health and Safety (ITPHS) non-compliance must be upgraded within 10 months of the date of the inspection
    - This is the same as current county standard. No grace period for ITPHS systems.

# What if My System is Found to be Non-Compliant?

- **System must be upgraded:**
  - After December 31, 2027 forward, all systems must be maintained in a “constant state of compliance”.
    - Every three years for existing systems
    - Within 5 years for newly installed systems, then every three years after that.
    - For example, if you are found to be **compliant** here in 2022, you will need to have another inspection done by December 31, 2027.
    - Then 2030, 2033, 2036, etc...
    - Systems installed after 2008 may not require soils to be looked at again.
      - Started soil verifications for new and replacement systems in 2008.

# Financial Assistance for Septic Upgrade

- Septic Upgrade Loan Program (SULP)
  - Le Sueur County Environmental Services
- Agriculture Best Management Program (AgBMP) Loans
  - Le Sueur County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Home Improvement Loan
  - Minnesota Action Valley Council
- Septic Upgrade Grants
  - TBD

# QUESTIONS?

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