

Planning and Ordinance Development Assistance for Residential On-site Sewage Systems in Northwest Indiana

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Purdue Extension - Equal Opportunity

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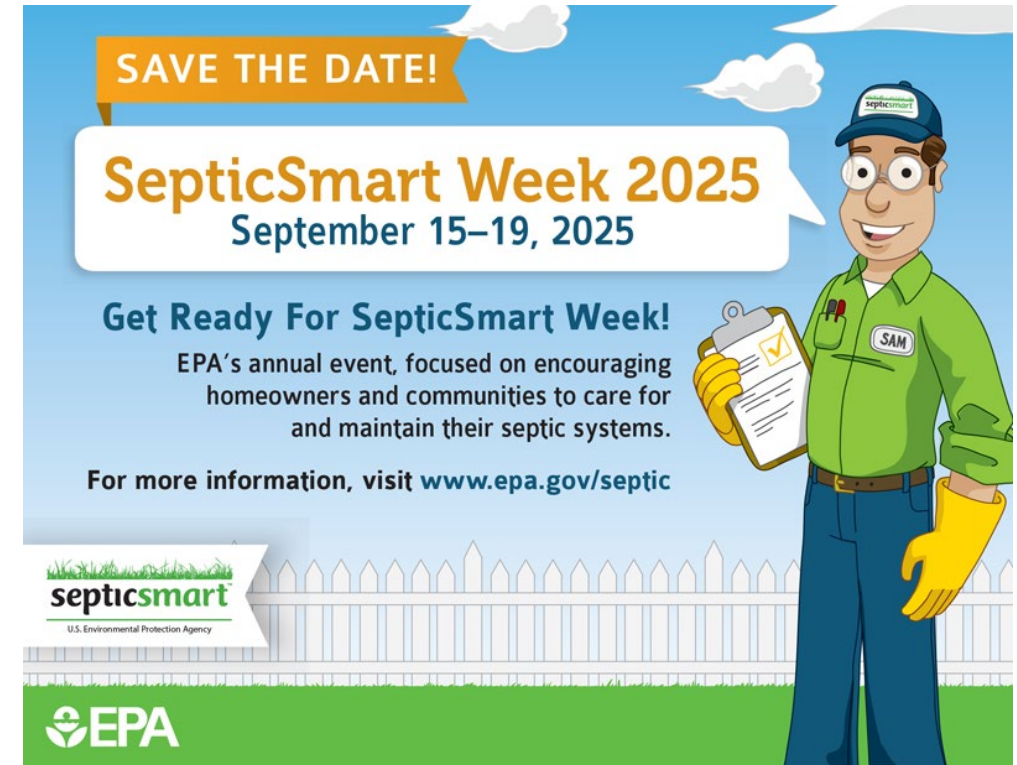
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Out line

- Project Introduction
- Community Engagement Element
- Database Visualization Element
- Website Toolkit Resource
- Takeaways

Background

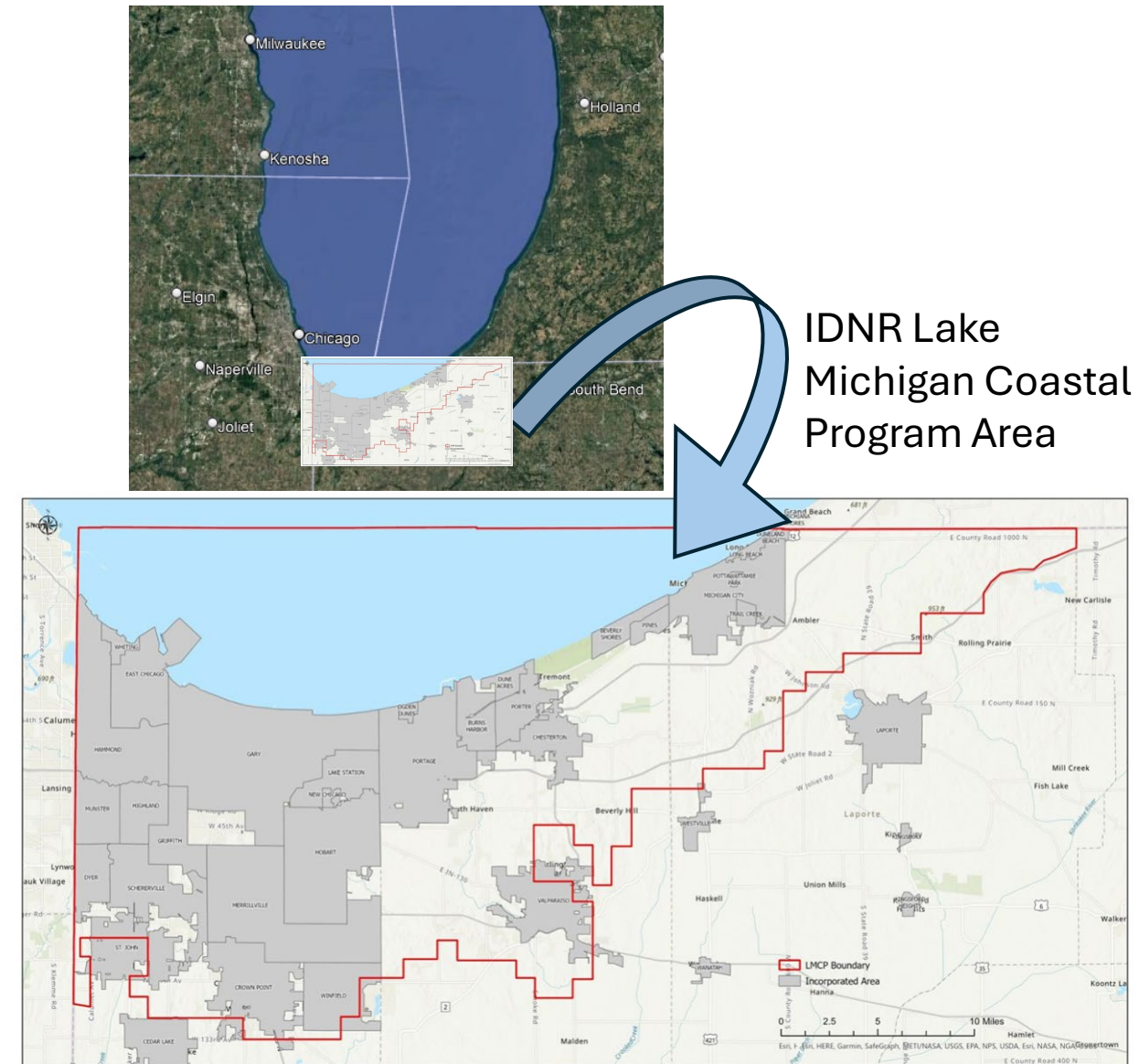
- More than 800,000 onsite sewage disposal systems are currently used in Indiana
- An estimated 33,033 households across the Indiana Lake Michigan watershed depend on septic systems to treat wastewater
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) – Lake Michigan Coastal Program (LMCP) coordinates a long-standing Septic System Coordination Work Group (SSCWG)



Project Introduction

Program team engaged with Northwest Indiana Counties (Lake, LaPorte, Porter) to:

- facilitate septic ordinance review using updated state guidelines
- develop and update a web-based dashboard platform for septic inventories and tracking
- collaboratively develop and launch an online education resource for residential on-site sewage systems



Partners and Collaborators

Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant & Purdue Extension

IDNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program

Indiana Geographic Information Office

Indiana Department of Health

Ag Data Services

Northwest Indiana Realtors Association

Grant

IDNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program via a Clean Water Act Section 319(h)
Grant (Indiana Department of Environmental Management)

Community Engagement – Design

- County-based steering committees provide feedback and guidance on developing education materials and residential on-site sewage system ordinance and action plan
 - County Health Departments key collaborator
- Purdue Extension / IL IN Sea Grant role to facilitate meetings and provide a final report to guide the update of county septic ordinances
- State guidance changed mid-project to be less restrictive; Pivoted process and outputs

Community Engagement – Target Participants

Builders/developers
Community planners (regional, county, local)
County/municipal staff engaged in the regulation/approval/review of septic systems and development plans
Economic development
Engineers
Floodplain managers
Local political leadership
Natural resource management groups (SWCD, TNC, etc.)
Private septic maintenance/installation companies
Public health staff
Stormwater managers
Real estate brokers



Community Engagement – Implementation

Focus groups

- Realtors
- Septic System Coordination Work Group

County Engagement

- One engagement meeting per county
- Reviewed current ordinances, state guidelines, and peer community efforts
- Identify septic issues (gaps) and opportunities (potential strategies)
- Feedback for education efforts

Realtor Education Day

- State policy updates and resources
- Septic systems and the home
- Local regulations and processes



Ordinance Review for Residential On-site Sewer Systems

Private Sewage Disposal Systems Ordinance	Evaluate Lake Co.'s existing ordinance provisions				Suggest changes to ordinance	IAC Rule Refs	Barrier(s)
	Provision	Does not meet	Meets	Exceeds			
General Provisions	Compliance (50.15)						
	Connecting to private sewage disposal systems (50.16)						
	Privies, private residential sewage disposal systems; Construction, maintenance (50.17)						
	Defects, corrections by owner (50.18)						
	Connecting private sewage disposal system to public sewer upon availability (50.18)						
	New buildings, subdivision to connect to public sewer if within reasonable cost (50.20)						

Database Visualization

Issue

- Community leaders need to analyze septic locations to address health issues and plan infrastructure

Resources/Options

- Ground up approach with communities
- ITOSS system

Process

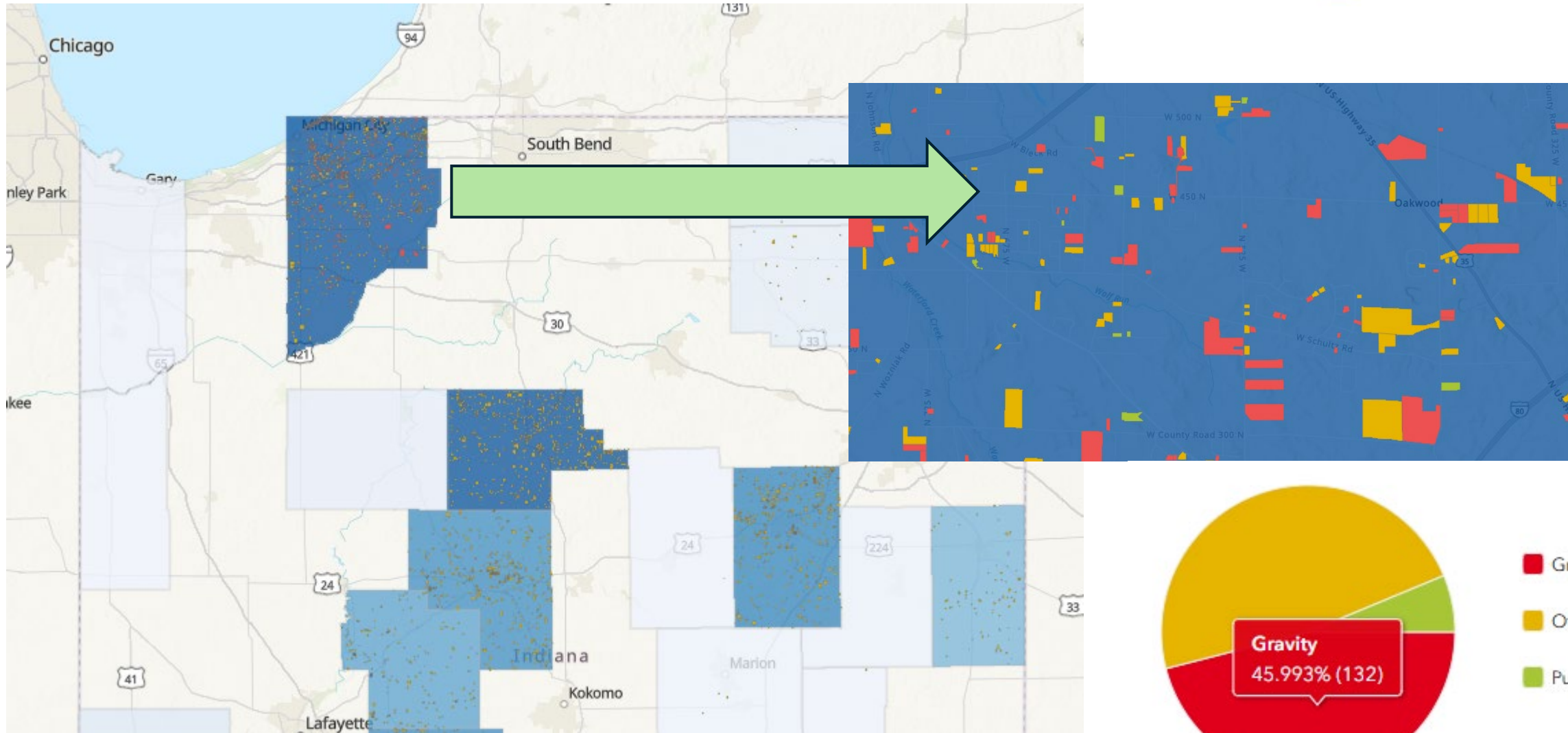
- Several rounds of feedback on the dashboard from project partners and the Septic System Coordination Work Group

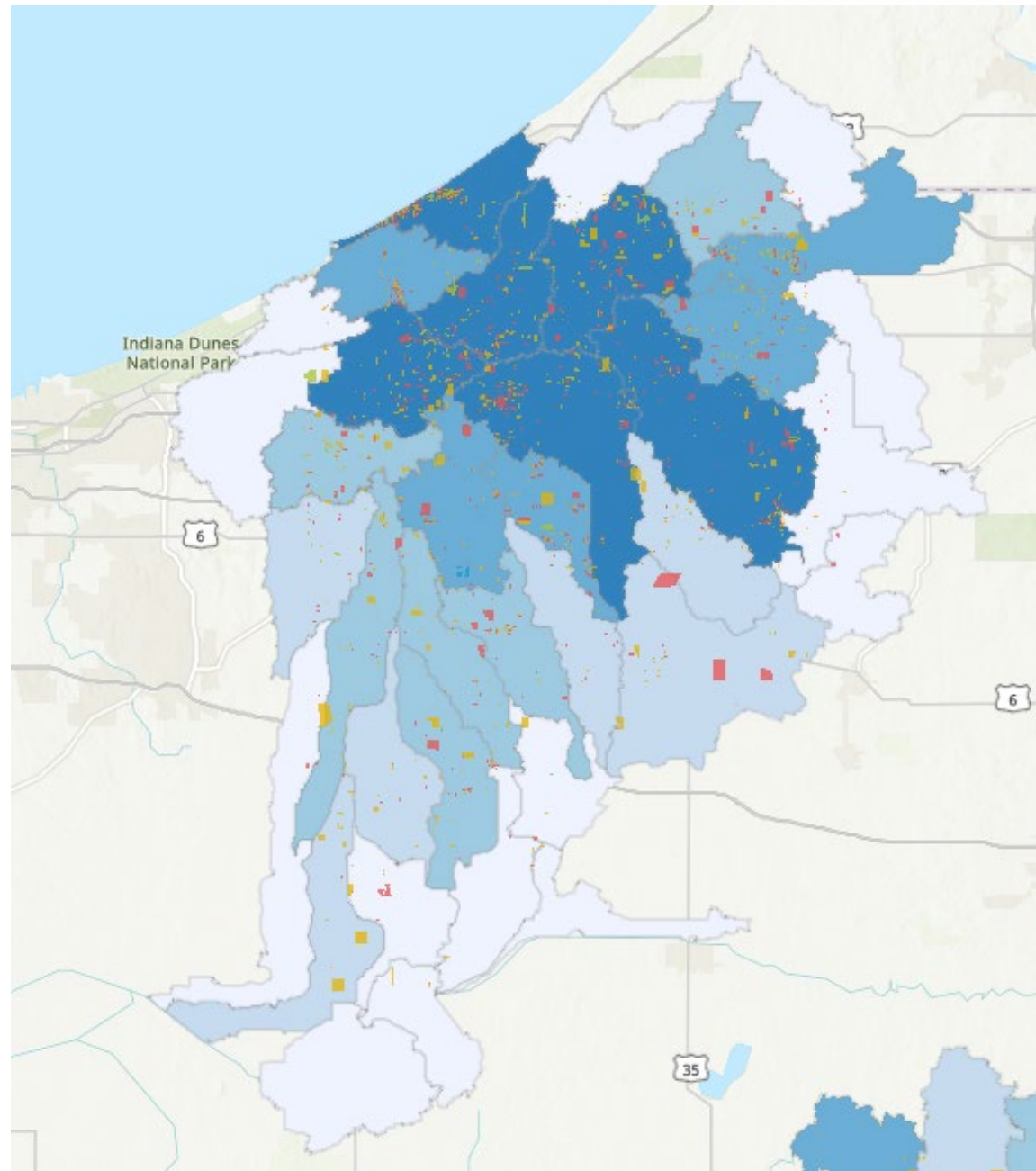
Product

- ESRI Dashboard combining septic data from ITOSS with municipal, county, and watershed boundaries with summaries for system type
- Data layer available publicly for use in local projects

Challenges

- Data – More system attributes would be useful, but the quality was too low
- Voluntary adoption
- Digitizing historical records
- Updating without funding





Website Resource Toolkit - Residents/Property Owners



Este video hablará sobre una de las características más importantes de su hogar...su sistema séptico. Para obtener más información sobre los sistemas sépticos en su área, comuníquese con el departamento de salud local.

[¡Haz clic aquí para obtener más información!](#)

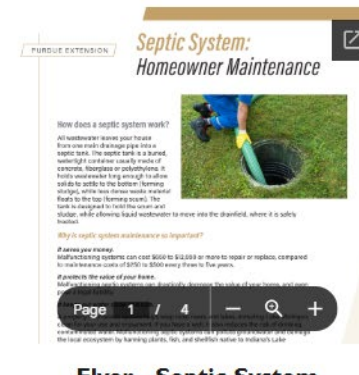


Uno de los aspectos más críticos de ser propietario de una vivienda que tiene sistemas sépticos es el cuidado del sistema. Este video cubrirá lo que se debe y no se debe hacer y consejos para diagnosticar problemas potenciales.

[¡Haz clic aquí para obtener más información!](#)



**Flyer - Septic System
Maintenance Overview**



**Flyer - Septic System
Homeowner Maintenance
Check List**



**Post Card - Septic System
Maintenance Overview**

Website Resource Toolkit - Realtors

Legal Regulations

- [Indiana House Bill 1261 - Property Transfer Regulations](#)

Inspection Checklists

- [Septic Tank Inspection Checklist](#)
- [Soil and Landscape Evaluation Report for On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems](#)
- [Residential Septic Tank Inspection Checklist](#)

Additional Resources

- [Buying or Selling a House - Septic Systems in Illinois](#)

Website Resource Toolkit - OSS Professionals

Technology New to Indiana



Certifications



Careers



Soil Types



Grant Options



Additional Resources



Website Resource Toolkit - Local Government Officials

Indiana System Standards



Technology New to Indiana



Planning Resources



Public Engagement



EPA Voluntary Management Guidelines



EPA Decentralized Wastewater Management MOU Partnership



Grant Options



Additional Resources



Project Takeaways

Impact

Engagement:

- 3 Public engagement sessions
- 1 Realtor “education day”
- 1 Interest group presentation
- 126 total direct participants

Products:

- 1 Website Developed
- 1 Statewide spatial dataset made available
- 4 Videos for homeowners (bilingual)
- 3 Summary reports provided to counties

Results:

- 2/3 Counties are moving forward with ordinance updates

Lessons Learned

Engagement:

- Review template successful – replicated several times
- State and local politics can be challenging

ITOSS Element:

- Feasibility assessment
 - Expert data quality assessment is key
 - Data sharing agreements

Questions

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