

*Seguin Township and the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority's
Septic Re-Inspection Program
2006 Year End Report*



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Introduction to Program

The Septic Re-Inspection Program is a proactive strategy to reassure that the ecological and environmental magnificence in Seguin Township is protected and preserved. Our program is a physical endeavor to assure that ours and subsequent generations enjoy the same unspoiled natural environment in the future that we have the profit of experiencing in the present. Since the implementation of the program in 2002, our main objective has been to inspect existing sewage disposal systems for malfunction, deterioration, erosion and overall compliance with the Ontario Building Code (OBC).

The focus of the Program has thus far been augmented on the chief watersheds in Seguin; which are central and inescapable when considering the maintenance of our unblemished environment. During the previous years of the program (2002-2005) a significant number of waterside sewage disposal systems in the township have been examined, including 20 bodies of water and approximately 2500 properties. Though it has evolved since its emergence, the virtue and imperative of the program has stayed the same: protection of our local natural environment and ecology.

The 2006 leg of the program has focused on a collection of water bodies situated across the geographical landscape of Seguin. Manitouwaba, Lower & Upper Fry's, Oastler, Horseshoe, Sugar and Virtue Lakes were started and completed during the allotted time frame between May 1st to August 25th, resulting in a total of 593 new property visits and 714 sewage disposal system inspections.

We would like to thank all of the participants of the 2006 Septic Re-Inspection Program for their humble reception and cooperation. In our comings and goings this summer we experienced congenial welcomes, words of motivation and advice, as well as much unanticipated praise. The climate of mutual participation that developed in light of the program is a tribute to what can be accomplished when we aspire to a common objective – the protection of our local environment and the development of means to encourage and sustain its protection for the days ahead.

Our Responsibility and Program of Action

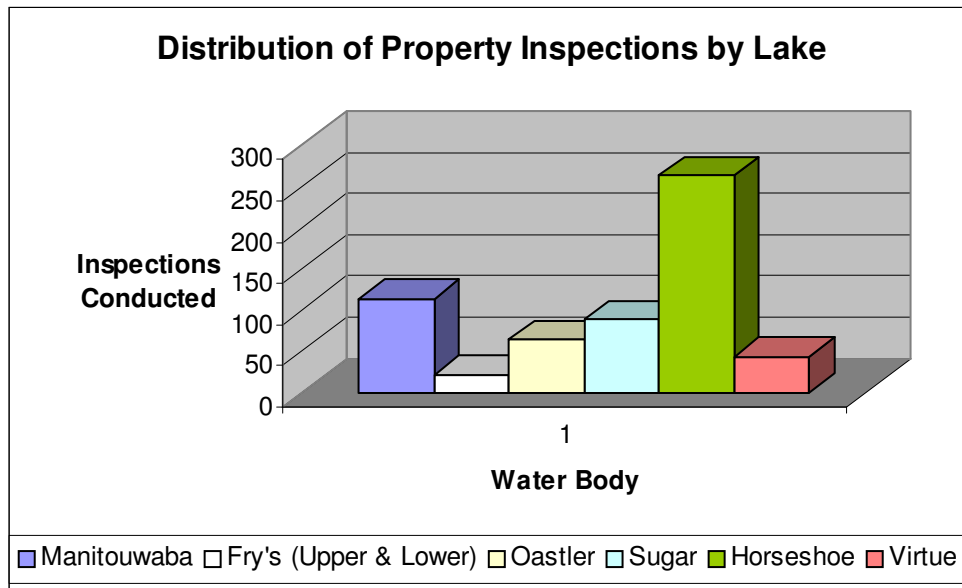
When we began our job as septic inspectors in May 2006 we were required to ensure that we would do the best we could to preserve the beautiful lakes we are honored to reside along. The imperative of the program is not to inspect a great number of properties, but rather to inspect as many as we can with the intention of remedying all the problems we encounter. Another campaign of our program is education and elucidation so that any mismanagement of septic systems or components on the part of the owner can be solved proactively without our involvement.

Before we visit our assigned properties on the designated lakes we conduct an extensive search for the appropriate documents. Such documents include sewage system permits for class 2-5 systems for the current owner or a previous owner, and file reviews that allow a property owner to direct the flow of a new fixture into their existing septic system. There are drawings on these documents that help us to locate where exactly the sewage system is on the property.

Water Body & Septic System Statistics:

During the summer months of 2006 we kept a register of general statistics that describe the distribution of our inspection efforts and time, as well as the distribution of the different types of sewage disposal systems. The total number of septic systems inspected accumulated to 715 that were situated on a total of 593 properties. The table and chart below illustrate the distribution of our inspections by water body.

Distribution of Property Inspections by Lake	
Manitouwaba Lake	113
Fry's (Upper & Lower) Lake	21
Oastler Lake	64
Sugar Lake	88
Horseshoe Lake	263
Virtue Lake	44
Total Property Inspections	593

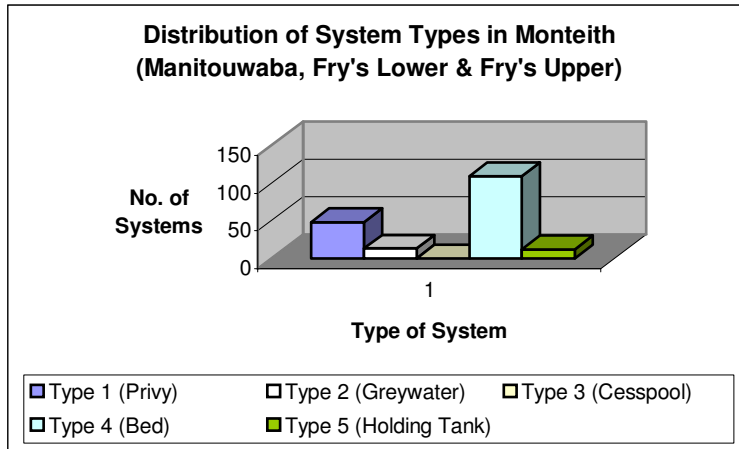


Each body of water that we inspected was different from the last, and it is impossible to assume the character of a lake and the septic systems on it simply by its proximity and size. Below are some general statistics illustrating the different make-up of each of the lakes and the prominence of certain types of sewage systems.

Monteith: (Manitouwaba, Fry's Lower & Upper Lakes)

134 Properties; 182 Sewage Disposal Systems

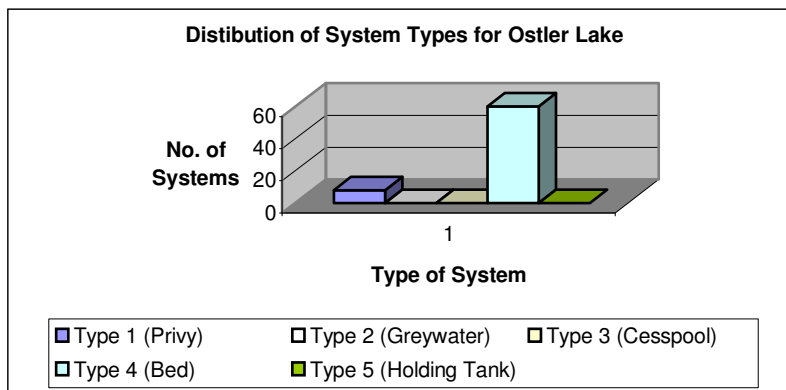
Distribution of System Types in Monteith	
Class 1 (Privy)	48
Class 2 (Greywater)	13
Class 3 (Cesspool)	0
Class 4 (Bed)	109
Class 5 (Holding Tank)	12



Oastler Lake:

64 Properties Inspected; 68 Sewage Disposal Systems

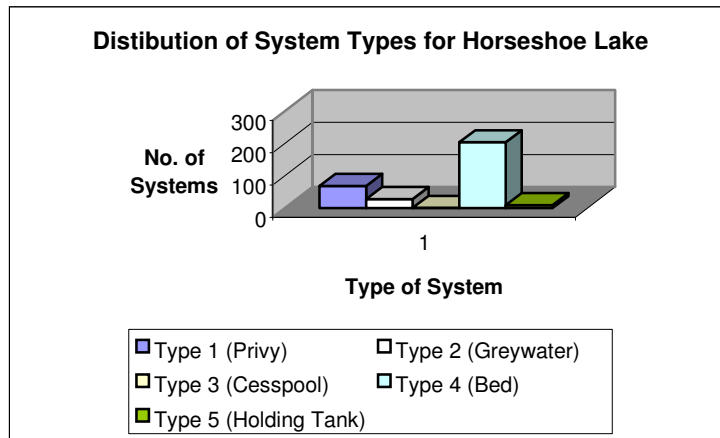
Distribution of System Types on Oastler	
Class 1 (Privy)	8
Class 2 (Greywater)	0
Class 3 (Cesspool)	0
Class 4 (Bed)	60
Class 5 (Holding Tank)	0
Total	68



Horseshoe Lake:

263 Properties Inspected; 311 Sewage Disposal Systems

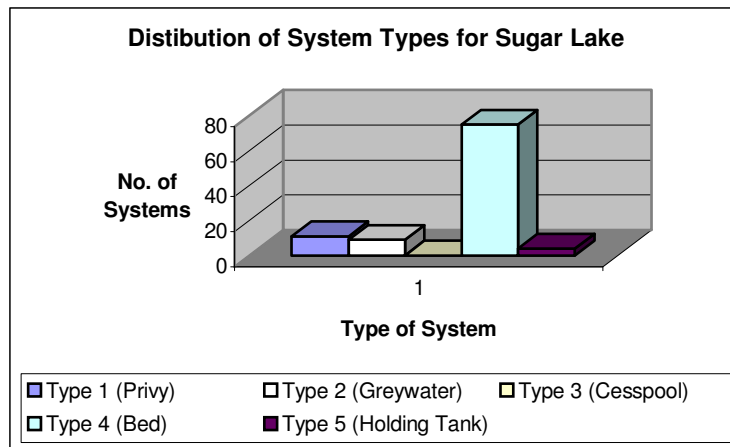
Distribution of System Types on Horseshoe Lake	
Class 1 (Privy)	69
Class 2 (Greywater)	28
Class 3 (Cesspool)	1
Class 4 (Bed)	204
Class 5 (Holding Tank)	9
Total	311



Sugar Lake:

88 Properties Inspected; 99 Sewage Disposal Systems

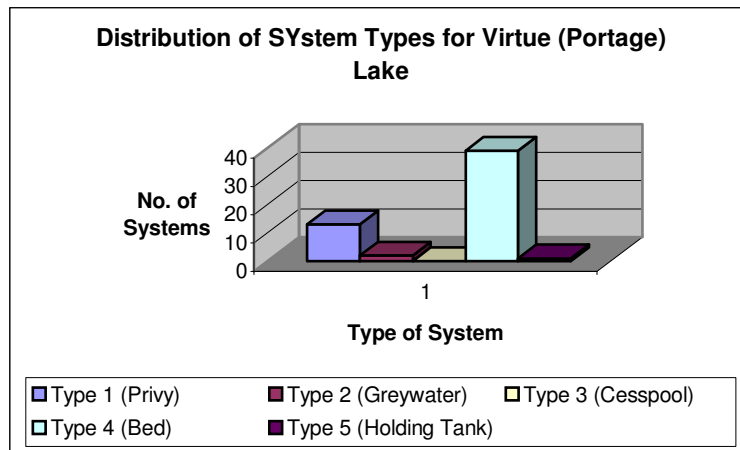
Distribution of System Types on Sugar Lake	
Class 1 (Privy)	11
Class 2 (Greywater)	9
Class 3 (Cesspool)	0
Class 4 (Bed)	75
Class 5 (Holding Tank)	4
Total	99



Virtue Lake:

44 Properties Inspected; 55 Sewage Disposal Systems

Distribution of System Types on Virtue (Portage)	
Class 1 (Privy)	13
Class 2 (Greywater)	2
Class 3 (Cesspool)	0
Class 4 (Bed)	39
Class 5 (Holding Tank)	1
Total	55



Sewage System Deficiencies & Inquiries: **Part 1: Description**

While inspecting we came across a plethora of different situations and 'problems'. The most common reasons for action subsequent to inspection have been organized into general classifications. Following are the classifications and a short description of what it means.

Substandard Privy: A privy that hasn't met the stipulated regulations of the Ontario Building Code, such as: privies without an adequate pit, superstructure deterioration, and pit exposure to exterior weathering and environment.

Bed Overgrowth: Substantial and pervasive root structure that results from raspberry canes, saplings and trees can damage or obstruct drainage tiles. The shading effect of overgrowth can also impede the evaporation of effluent. It is the owner's responsibility to maintain their leaching or filter bed in a way that won't burden their system.

Greywater Discharge: Any discharge of untreated sanitary sewage to the surface of the ground is austere prohibited in the Ontario Building Code and greywater (soapy water)

is no exception. Like all other sanitary sewage greywater must be treated by an appropriate sewage treatment system.

Outdoor showers are classified under this heading because they are considered to be comparable to indoor showers. An outdoor shower without a suitable greywater treatment system is considered to be 'discharging'.

Heavy Objects on Bed: Compaction can eventually lead to leaching or filter bed malfunction either by uneven soil settlement that would disrupt drainage or by collapsing drainage 'tiles'.

Substandard Clearances: Setbacks and clearances from waterways, wells and structures are clearly defined in the OBC and taken very seriously by our program. The very serious sanitary implications of locating a septic system too closely to a lake, pond, or well can often be overlooked and it is important that we take notice and make it clear why these regulations are assumed.

Questions / Locations: Sometimes location or function of system elements aren't readily apparent and it was necessary for the homeowner to contact us to clarify any confusion that we may have had. These inquiries didn't mean that the sewage disposal system was insufficient; albeit some did turn into 'deficiency' files.

Inadequate Greywater Systems: Some greywater pits were constructed without a permit or were constructed improperly. If a greywater pit malfunctions and doesn't properly treat the sanitary sewage, it requires replacement.

Old Steel Treatment Units: Standard procedure was to dye old treatment units and holding tanks to test for fault or corrosion. Steel septic elements are rare now and special attention is required to guarantee that those still in existence function as they should.

Blackwater Discharge: or "human waste" discharge is taken very seriously in this program. Immediate and imposed action is necessary.

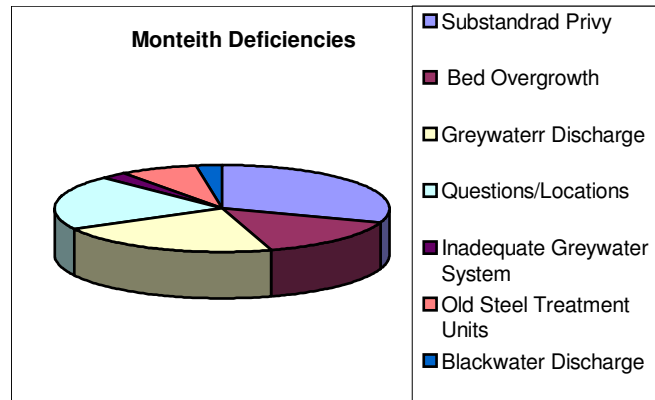
Sewage System Deficiencies & Inquiries:
Part 2: Statistics

Monteith (Manitouwaba, Lower and Upper Fry's Lakes)

During the months of May and early June 2006 we inspected three lakes in the former Township of Monteith. Of the 134 properties inspected, we found 40 deficiencies ranging from substandard privies to blackwater discharge. Throughout the rest of the summer we have been following up on these deficient properties ensuring the owner knows of the problem and what he or she must do to fix it. The following are statistics of what we found for Monteith:

Number of Properties Inspected in Monteith	134
Number of Deficiencies/Inquiries for Monteith	40

Deficiency/Inquiry	Percentage
Substandrad Privy	30%
Bed Overgrowth	15%
Greywater Discharge	22%
Questions/Locations	20%
Inadequate Greywater System	2.5%
Old Steel Treatment Units	8%
Blackwater Discharge	2.5%



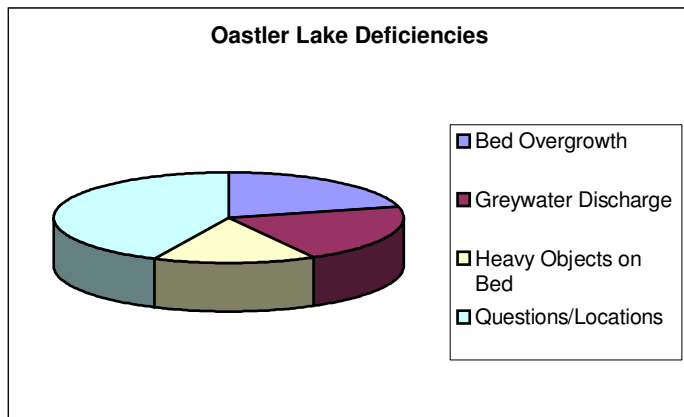
At the end of the summer we remained with only 13 files left open for Monteith, most of which are in the process of solving the problem.

Oastler Lake:

Of the 64 properties that were inspected on Oastler Lake a file was left open for inquiry or deficiency for 14. Below is the information that we have gathered for Oastler Lake.

Number of Properties Inspected on Oastler	64
Number of Deficiencies for Oastler	14

Deficiency/Inquiry	Percentage
Bed Overgrowth	21%
Greywater Discharge	21%
Heavy Objects on Bed	15%
Questions/Locations	43%

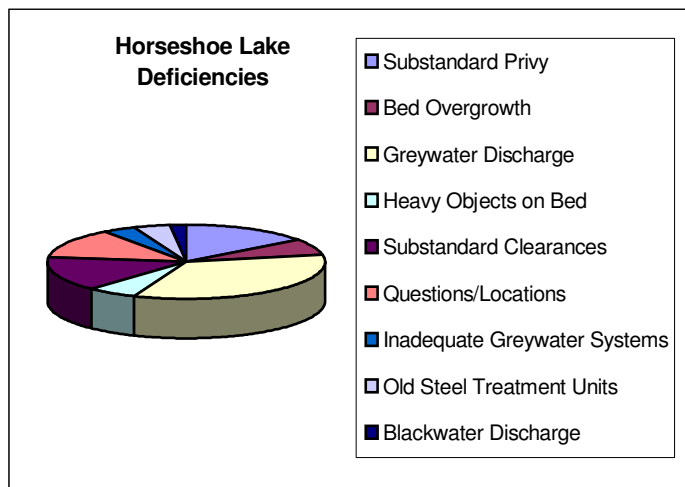


Horseshoe Lake:

Horseshoe Lake was the largest body of water and contains not only the largest constituency of properties inspected in 2006 but, with approximately 60, it also had the largest number of water-access lots. Below are the statistics that we collected for Horseshoe Lake.

Number of Properties Inspected on Horseshoe	263
Number of Deficiencies/Inquiries for Horseshoe	68

Deficiency/Inquiry	Percentae
Substandard Privy	15%
Bed Overgrowth	7%
Greywater Discharge	34%
Heavy Objects on Bed	6%
Substandard Clearances	15%
Questions/Locations	13%
Inadequate Greywater Systems	4%
Old Steel Treatment Unit	4%
Blackwater Discharge	2%

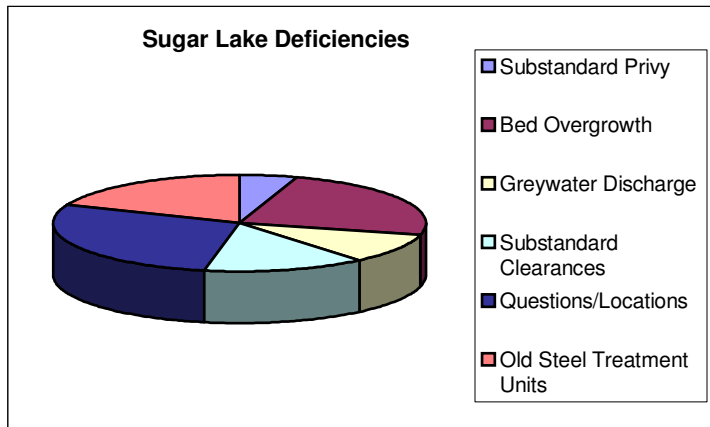


Sugar Lake:

Sugar Lake was one of two lakes that weren't scheduled for 2006. The residents on sugar lake were very cooperative with us regardless of whether we were expected or not. In other words: we were well accepted by the sweet people on Sugar Lake. Below is what we found.

Number of Properties Inspected on Sugar	88
Number of Deficiencies/Inquiries for Sugar	21

Deficiency/Inquiry	Percentage
Substandard Privy	5%
Bed Overgrowth	24%
Greywater Discharge	10%
Substandard Clearances	14%
Questions/Locations	28%
Old Steel Treatment Units	19%

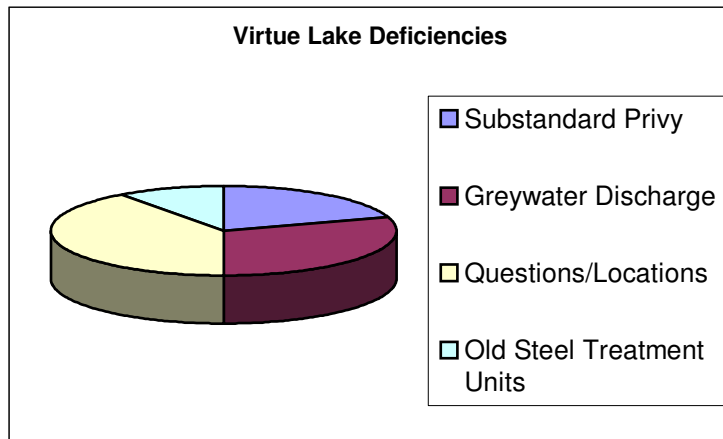


Virtue Lake:

Virtue Lake was the second of two unscheduled lakes to be inspected this summer. Below is some data that was collected.

Number of Properties Inspected on Virtue	44
Number of Deficiencies/Inquiries for Virtue	11

Deficiency/Inquiry	Percentage
Substandard Privy	18%
Greywater Discharge	27%
Questions/Locations	36%
Old Steel Treatment Units	9%

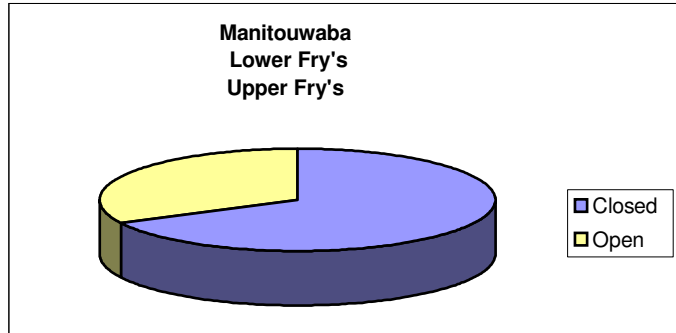


End of Year Results

Manitouwaba and Fry's (Lower and Upper) Lakes

The residents in Monteith have been very quick and precise in cleaning up the lake and fixing the problems we found. There were 40 deficiencies in total and 27 have been closed and are now in compliance with the OBC.

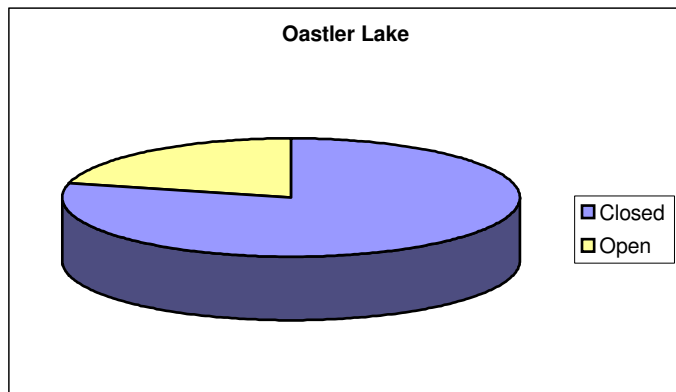
Closed:	67.5%
Open:	32.5%



Oastler Lake

This lake was found to be the cleanest with only 14 deficiencies in total. By the end of the summer we were able to close 11 of these files, leaving only 3 open for next year.

Closed:	43%
Open:	57%



Horseshoe Lake

This was the largest lake inspected this year with over 300 sewage disposal systems inspected. There were a total of 68 deficiencies found. Since it was such a large lake we only closed 29.

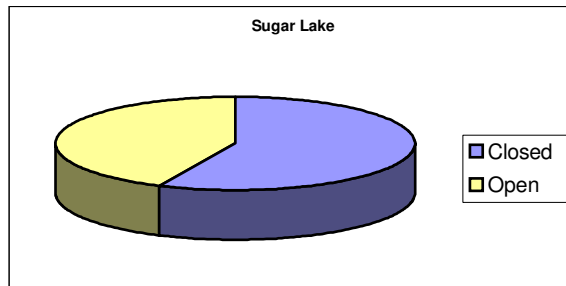
Closed:	43%
Open:	57%



Sugar Lake

A total of 21 deficiencies were found of Sugar Lake. Even though this lake was scheduled for next year, the residents were very cooperative and we managed to close 12 of these files this summer.

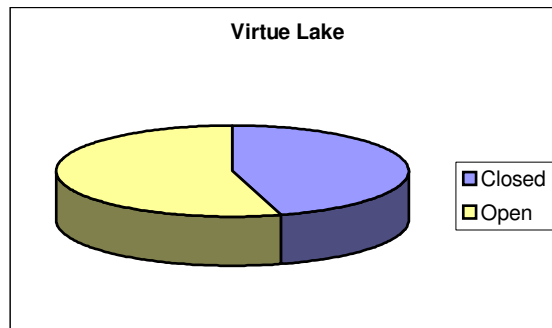
Closed:	57%
Open:	43%



Virtue Lake

This lake was completed during the month of August not giving the residents much time to comply. There were a total of 11 deficiencies and thanks to the quick responses we received 5 files have been closed.

Closed:	45.50%
Open:	54.50%



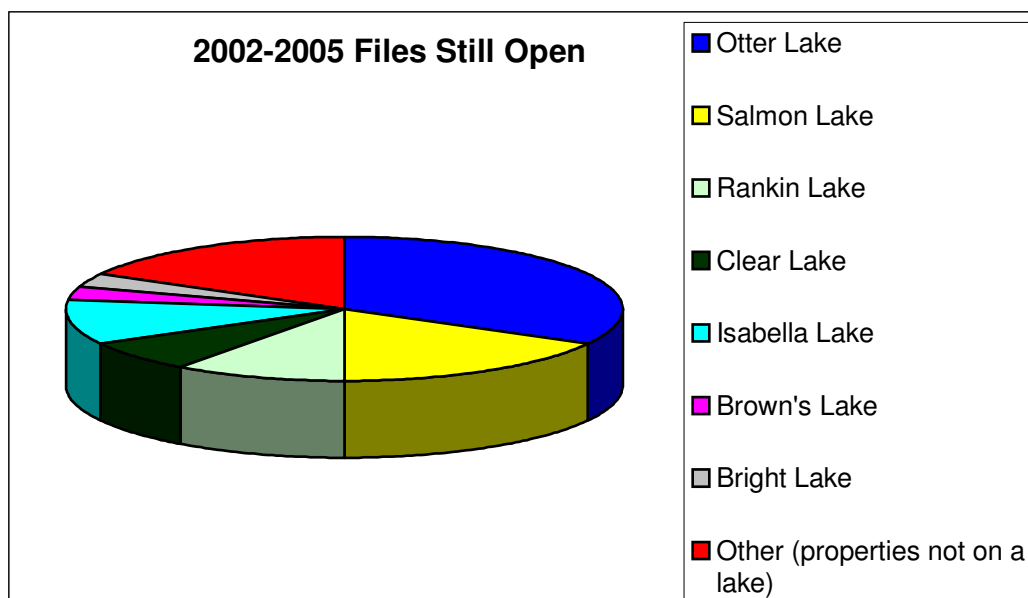
2002-2005 Deficiencies

When we began our season there were a number of files that remained open from previous years. Each of these property owners have been notified of the deficiencies on their property and most have responded by letting us know of how they are planning on rectifying the problem.

This year there were a total of 81 files left open from 2002-2005. Most owners have been willing to comply with our recommendations and are resolving the problems as soon as they can. Thanks to the cooperation of many we were able to close 51 of these files, with 30 remaining open for next spring.

The following are statistics of how many files remain open from previous years on each body of water.

Body of Water	Files Remained Open (2002-2005)
Otter Lake	10
Salmon Lake	5
Rankin Lake	3
Clear Lake	2
Isabella Lake	3
Brown's Lake	1
Bright Lake	1
Other (properties not on a lake)	5



Summary:

From May –August 2006 we inspected 593 properties on 7 bodies of water. We opened 164 files for subsequent investigation and succeeded in closing 89. Of the 81 files open from previous years we were able to cure 51.

The commonly encountered infractions were minor but consistent. Similar to preceding years, greywater discharge – including outdoor showers – substandard privies, and construction that encroaches the obligatory setback were the most oft-discovered violations of 2006. The minor character of these infractions made them easy to remedy effortlessly and promptly; which was done by moving the system to an appropriate location, by installing an appropriate system, or by simply removing or permanently ‘blocking’ discharging elements. Most residents, once understanding the environmental implications of their actions, were complacent to help us clean up their lakes.

Recommendations:

The procedure and paradigm of the program ran smoothly with only a few troubles. Usually the program is moderately self-sustaining and training isn’t necessary; however, in this case it may have been beneficial. With no previous septic inspection experience, self-education and experience were essential to our success.

While the resources in the Parry Sound satellite office are very helpful, less dependence on others’ technology and software could be advantageous. Equipment such as a simple personal printer to print labels and letters may be a valuable consideration for future program participants. As the program progressed it became apparent that a lot of correspondence with the main Conservation Authority office in North Bay was becoming necessary. We could have saved time if we had the same software used by their employees for searching past property records for permits. Although we are very grateful for the combined effort of those in North Bay who helped us locate property records, the benefits of owing less dependence to their office are understandable.

Many Thanks:

Although we worked well together this summer, through good times and bad, we came across many different situations that we could not resolve by ourselves. Searching for files in North Bay was not only time consuming, but also bothersome to the employees in the North Bay office. Thanks to Madeline Poitras, who took the time to assemble the information that we used to retrieve our records in North Bay. She was a big help and we could not have finished as many inspections as we did without her.

The water access properties would have been difficult to get to this summer, seeing how we did not have a boat, if it wasn’t for the help of Greg Smyth. Greg owns property on Horseshoe Lake and volunteered to tour us around the lake while inspecting properties for a week. It would not have been impossible to complete all of Horseshoe Lake this summer without the help of our co-worker -- and more importantly, our friend – Greg.

Also, we owe a huge thank you to the employees of North Bay-Conservation Authority in Parry Sound for putting up with us this summer and offering us an office to work in. It was great to have the company of: Joanne, Kevin and Ricky.

Finally, thanks to Wib Bethune, Peter Shoebottom, Debbie Swim, and Ernie Vankoughnett for sharing many stories of past experiences that helped us in dealing with certain situations we came across. Your guidance and amiability were much appreciated.

Meghan Hachigian & Stephen Hunter