

2018 Septic Re-inspection Final Report

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North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority
Seguin Township

Abstract:

The following report is an update on the success of the Septic Re-inspection Program for the season of 2018. It describes the importance of the re-inspection program as well as the programs findings following the conclusion of the programs 2018 duration.



2018 Septic Re-inspection Program Final Report

Introduction:

Seguin Township has been operating a Septic Re-Inspection program under the direction of the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority since the year 2000, with the first inspections taking place in summer 2001. The primary objectives of the program are to prevent pollution from all classes of sewage disposal systems into water sources and all parts of the environment while educating residents of Seguin Township on how to care for their sewage disposal systems. The program is typically carried out by students each summer, under the supervision of the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority, and has been a successful program since its establishment.

This past year, two students: Max Stoneman and Morgan Johns have been the front-line personnel of the Septic Re-Inspection program. Both the supervision under the Seguin Building Department and the iPad program have been in place for three years and displaying extensive benefits to date, such as easier navigation to remote properties and more efficient inspections resulting in less time per inspection, thus more inspections being completed each season. The Building Department is the governing body for all Part 7 violations (plumbing), while the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority is responsible for Part 8 (on-site sewage). Both governing bodies have been available to provide guidance in their area of work when it is required for the students to expand their knowledge and have any questions from their field work answered.

In addition to following up and completing left over inspections from 2017, this year's students were able to complete all of their inspections taking place in the Christie area, as well as starting an entirely new area on the west side of Foley. In addition to inspections, the students also assisted in helping disperse packages containing information about the Algae Bloom to

residents on Rankin Lake. At mid-season, the students were given the opportunity to develop, present and showcase a “storybook map presentation” to Council which gave the councilors a different perspective on the amount of time and effort that go into this program. Overall, the students helped put the program on track for completing septic re-inspection on a 5 year loop, consisting of completing approximately 1000 inspections a season.

Season Findings

The students had a total of 1295 properties focused in two main areas; Christie (986 in the Christie area, including follow-ups from the previous season) and Foley with the remainder of the properties (309). The goal was to identify health and safety issues in addition to identifying and informing homeowners of maintenance concerns. At the beginning of the season the students were instructed that maintenance concerns such as overgrowth, objects on the bed or slight erosion did not require follow up. Homeowners with these issues were left a note explaining the issue, how to resolve it and why it is important in preventing damage to their septic system. When a health and safety concern was found, the students would try to achieve compliance by working with the homeowner. Property owners were informed of their choices; removing the hazard or altering it to meet the Ontario Building Code.

Findings up to Date

As of the end of the summer season, the students attended all 1,295 properties that needed to be inspected this season. Out of those 1,295 properties, 33 were placed ‘On Hold’ in need of a follow up, have a locked gate, or are pending action from the property owner in order to reach compliance (2.5%). In addition, 72 of the properties were able to be labeled as vacant land meaning that the property did not have any sort of dwelling or septic system. As a result, the

students have completed 1,190 septic re-inspections. This means that the completed properties passed the inspection and are following the OBC requirements for septic systems, or the property owners have reached compliance with the program by fixing any minor outstanding issues.

The types of problems that the students had come across this season can be identified in seven different categories (see Appendix A for a visual representation):

1. Maintenance: septic systems with concerns that do not require follow-ups such as not enough grass growth or overgrowth on the septic bed.
2. Grey Water Discharge: properties in which the septic systems were discharging grey water onto the ground. Such violations include outdoor showers, sinks and washing machines that drain onto the ground.
3. Unsafe Outhouse: outhouses that are not built according to Code and either need to be repaired to meet compliance with the Code or taken down.
4. Clearance Issue: The system does not meet the regulated amount of clearance prescribed in the Code to its surroundings (structures, waterbodies, wells) to be considered safe.
5. Refused Entry: properties where access to view the septic system was denied by the property owner.
6. Inaccessible: properties that the students were unable to access due to terrain or other concerns preventing entry (i.e. gates).
7. Other: properties that contain issues or concerns other than the ones listed above. Such concerns include guard dogs, structures or heavy objects on the septic bed, etc.

Challenges

A considerable challenge students faced was the occasional discrepancy between the alignment of mapping features and property data (property data is populated with MPAC information and is not always current). When this would happen, the students needed to bring the concern to the attention of Seguin Township and the issue would be resolved from there.

Another challenge the students faces was the limited amount of septic permit copies that were available to them on behalf of both NBMCA as well as Seguin Township. The main concern was that although NBMCA typically provides all septic files for use, not all were available for use due to timing issues. Therefore, some extra time was spent accessing septic files using the offices of the Parry Sound NBMCA branch, Seguin Township as well as the head NBMCA office in North Bay.

Improvements

In order to improve the discrepancy between the alignment of mapping features and property data, using the system ASYST instead of MPAC would cause fewer errors, as ASYST seems to be updated more frequently. This would allow for less confusion when using the GIS system and less returned letters as a result of outdated property information.

In addition, more communication between the supervisors of the program would be beneficial in creating less confusion to the students as well as creating a quicker start to the program because all parties would be informed and have a unified vision for the season. A meeting between Seguin, NBMCA and the students at the beginning of their season would be a great way to introduce all parties, outline training procedures, ensure all are on the same page,

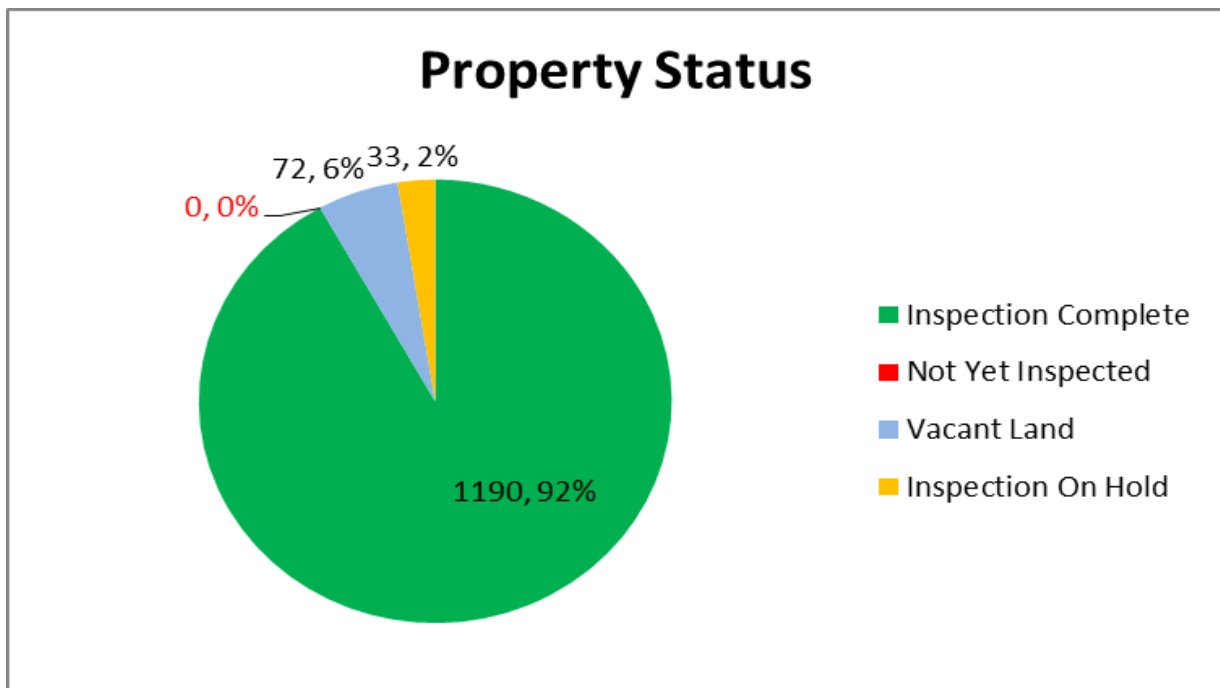
clarify concerns that have not already been formally addressed and cover the follow-up procedures concerning any from the prior season.

Conclusion

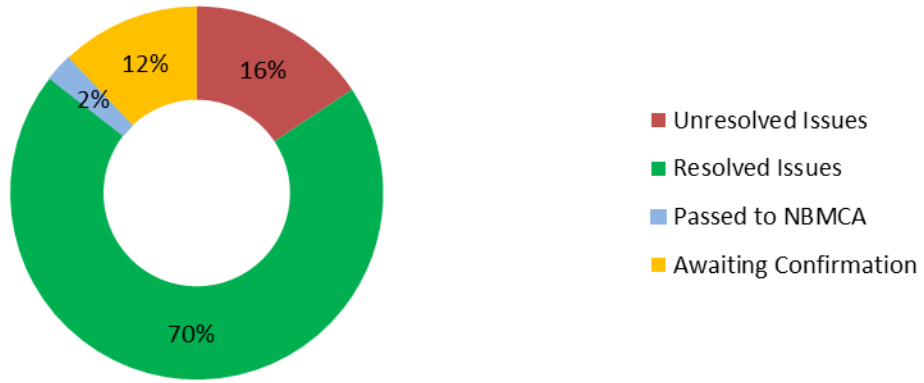
Overall the students have accomplished a record breaking number of septic inspections this season which creates high hopes for the program's success in future seasons. These achievements can also be credited to Mark Vandermeer of Seguin Township, and Robin Allen of the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority for their guidance and supervision, Cathy Balkwill, Collin Hedrick and Ella Bird of North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority for their guidance with program content, Chris Mahon for his technical expertise, Kerry Marshall for her assistance with mailing and locating contact information, Bev Martin for her help with mailing and data, Andrea Spinney for her technical guidance for the Council presentation and Christine Dixon for her guidance with field work matters. With lots of positive feedback from property owners about the program, it can be concluded that residents of Seguin appreciate the hard work that goes into the program in order to maintain the environment, as well as the steps made to ensure the education and importance of a healthy septic system.

Appendix A: Graphs

Note: In the graphs there are two corresponding numbers for each section of the graph. The first number represents its amount, while the number following the comma is the percentile rate.



Status of Concerns Found



Concerns This Summer

