

## Exploring Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned with Municipal Re-inspection Programs for Residential On-site Wastewater Systems in Ontario

This research project explores successes, challenges, and lessons learned with municipal re-inspection programs for residential on-site wastewater systems (i.e. sewage system maintenance inspection programs) in Ontario. This research has been initiated by the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations, due to concerns brought forward by their membership of over 50,000 property owners regarding the state of their rural communities' onsite wastewater systems. There is a need to share the knowledge about how septic maintenance programs and inspections are being done, why they're done, whether the programs are seen to be effective (and the metrics used to evaluate efficacy), and how much these types of programs cost. To date, these programs have been delivered in an uneven manner across rural Ontario – leaving citizen groups, taxpayers, and municipal councils requiring more information.

The collaborative research team working on this project is made up of experts from the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations, Ontario Onsite Wastewater Association, Canadian Environmental Law Association, University of Guelph, and Memorial University of Newfoundland. This project has also received endorsement from the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, as well as funding from the Rural Policy Learning Commons.

Field research will consist of semi-structured interviews resulting in the creation of short case studies of at least five rural municipalities' re-inspection programs for residential on-site wastewater systems. Additional research currently being conducted by project team members will also be relied upon in this study. These additional projects include: three Masters of Rural Planning and Development thesis projects related to on-site wastewater systems, a larger literature and policy scan of septic inspection practices in Canada and the United States, and case studies evaluating the efficacy of septic maintenance programs from the perspective of residential homeowners.

For more information or to provide comments/concerns on the project, please contact Sarah Minnes, Project Manager: [sminnes@grenfell.mun.ca](mailto:sminnes@grenfell.mun.ca). All outputs of this research will be available on our project webpage: <http://rplc-capr.ca/septic-maintenance-project/>



IMPROVE LIFE.



Canadian  
Environmental Law  
Association  
EQUITY. JUSTICE. HEALTH.