

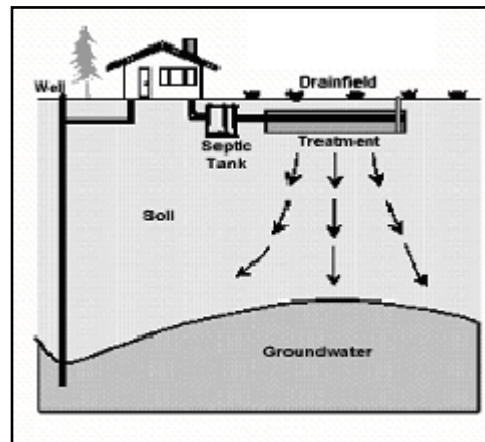
## What you can do to help

Streams are healthiest in undisturbed countryside. As more people move into its watershed, the stream may show signs of stress. The amenities associated with human development, including houses, roads, lawns, and livestock, tend to generate increasing amounts of erosion and non-point source pollution, however by improving our understanding of the factors that endanger streams, we can learn to be good stream stewards. See additional information at [www.urwa.org/education/education.html](http://www.urwa.org/education/education.html).

### Responsible Septic Management

#### ➤ How a Septic System Works

Septic systems have two main components including a septic tank and a subsurface disposal area. The tank receives wastewater and allows heavy solid particles to settle and light materials to float. Bacteria in the system help break down organic matter in the wastewater. The tanks should be sized according to the expected daily flow of wastewater from your home.



The subsurface disposal area generally consists of a distribution box and perforated distribution lines installed in subsurface gravel-filled trenches. The disposal area receives wastewater from the septic tank and removes harmful microorganisms, organic chemicals and nutrients. In order for this part of the system to function properly, it must be constructed carefully on suitable soil.

#### ➤ Septic Suitability in the Peapack Brook Subwatershed

The suitability for a septic is determined by examining the detailed, site-specific soil profile and conducting permeability testing of the soil horizons. The type of system permitted on each soil is then based on the most limiting zone identified in the soil profile.

The USDA published soil surveys and maintains extensive data on the suitability of soils for various land uses. The Soil Survey of Somerset County has a table listing the degree and limitation of the soils for septic tank adsorption fields.

Soil factors that limit the adsorption fields in the Peapack Brook subwatershed include depth to bedrock, depth to groundwater, soil permeability, slope, and proximity to streams and other water bodies.

➤ Septic System Maintenance

They are some simple maintenance activities you can perform to keep your system functioning properly.

1. The system should be inspected and pumped out on a regular basis, every two to three years.
2. Know the locations of all parts of your septic system, the tank(s), distribution box, and distribution lines and keep heavy vehicles away from the system.
3. Direct drainage from roof, footing, and basement away from the disposal field.
4. Do not plant deep-rooted vegetation near the system, this could clog or crack the tank and piping.
5. Do not use the system to dispose of hazardous household chemicals, as this could destroy the helpful bacteria that break down the waste and could lead to groundwater contamination.
6. Do not use or install kitchen garbage disposals, as they add excessive solids and grease to the system.
7. Avoid using septic system additives. These biological and chemical additives usually do more harm than good.