



What's the problem?

Our wastewater. Most of it goes into antiquated, deteriorating single home cesspools or septic tanks. Some of it then gets into our drinking water and into our waterways, causing potential problems - algae blooms, loss of marine life, contamination with pharmaceuticals, and possibly even health issues. Although many of us have good drinking water now, even this is threatened by the worsening wastewater situation.

Our cesspools are dying. We will have to repair and replace them, as well as maintain their replacements for decades to come. And despite our investment in them, they will not significantly alleviate the problems that currently exist, or the problems that are getting worse.

What's the solution?

We may be able to go on patching and using existing technology for a while, but that will do nothing to solve the current problem or head off the worsening quality of our ground water and surface waters.

There are advanced wastewater treatment systems designed for single homes and for community clusters of homes that *do* significantly reduce the problematic output (mostly very high nitrate levels). These replace existing cesspools and septic tanks.

We have received grants to help identify the best types of systems for our area and to figure out how to create a better overall wastewater treatment plan for the community. We also have the opportunity to try out pilot *wastewater districts* (called "Decentralized Sewer Districts") in which the local community would have more direct control over how they manage their wastewater.

How much does it cost?

That is what we are figuring out. We have grants to set up a pilot project using advanced systems. The overall and long range costs will depend on which homes participate and the number of homes involved. That's why we first need to do this survey, to see who might fit the model and who is willing to be considered. Obviously, costs will be a major factor in everyone's decision to be involved.

No one will be brought into this project until they know exactly what will be involved, including real numbers about costs, and unless they volunteer to participate after they get all the facts. Peconic Green Growth will also help the community seek further subsidy if any future projects result from this study.

Once again, we have money to help run these pilots and to subsidize the initial engineering report for advanced wastewater systems for some homes in the community.

How do you get into the pilot?

To be included in the pilot projects, several things must occur. You must:

- be in a priority area based on your lot size and water conditions
- fit into one of the proposed zones that are developed based on the survey for either a single or clustered system
- agree to be included

Identifying Priority Candidates for the Pilot

The greatest needs for wastewater upgrades are for homes that are located on small lots or where the depth to groundwater is very shallow. The maps viewable at <http://peconicgreengrowth.org/orient-project/> show the areas that are most at risk, and which will be given priority consideration for the clustered systems in the pilot.

High Priority:

ORANGE or RED (lot size <15,000 SF)

DEEP PURPLE or RED (shallow depths to groundwater < 7')

Priority:

YELLOW (lot size 15,000 – 20,000 SF)

LIGHT PURPLE (shallow depths to groundwater 7-13')

All other properties may be candidates for clusters if located close to homes joining a cluster. And all other properties are good candidates individual, enhanced onsite systems.

What happens if you are not in the pilot?

You get to watch and learn from your neighbors. This is NOT a mandated program. We are trying to identify a range of solutions to our wastewater issues. This pilot may lead to a broader understanding of cost-effective systems, and it may lead to a recognition by governmental agencies that they need to help (and subsidize) advanced approaches.

What's next?

Please fill out the questionnaire. Please do it even if you are not interested in being part of the pilot at this time. We need to know all we can about the community's current wastewater systems and your views on costs and activities related to the handling of our wastewater. Members of Peconic Green Growth and Orient Association are happy to meet with neighborhoods and housing associations to discuss this further. Once the survey is complete and we have the data needed to prepare a specific proposal, there will be a public meeting on **July 11, at 10 AM at Oysterponds School** to discuss the information we collected, the options available, and next steps. The participating engineers will be present. For more information contact PGG at info@peconicgreengrowth.org or 631 680 9656.