



# Friends of the Muscatatuck River Society

Stewards of our natural resources

Volume 1, issue 2

## Tips for Maintaining Your Septic System

- Do not put too much water into the septic system; typical water use is about 50 gallons per day for each person in the family.
- Do not add materials (chemicals, sanitary napkins, applicators, and so on) other than domestic wastewater.
- Restrict the use of your garbage disposal.
- Do not pour grease or cooking oils down the sink drain.
- Make a diagram showing the location of your tank drain field and repair area.
- Install a watertight concrete riser over the septic tank to simplify access.
- Periodically have the solids pumped out of the septic tank.
- Maintain adequate vegetative cover over the drain field.
- Keep surface waters away from the tank and drain field.
- Keep automobiles and heavy equipment off the system.
- Do not plan any building additions, pools, driveways, or other construction work near the septic system or the repair area.
- Grow grass or ground cover over and around the septic tank to prevent erosion.
- Plant beneficial evergreens around the leach-field such as pines to absorb water.



Muscatatuck River at the Vinegar Mill

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### Special points of interest:

- *Septic System Maintenance Tips*
- *Composting Toilet System*
- *Recycling Facts*
- *BMP for the month of June*
- *Clean-up Dates*

## Alternatives to the Conventional Septic System, Composting Toilet System

A composting toilet system contains and processes excrement, toilet paper and sometimes food waste. Unlike a septic system, a composting toilet system relies on unsaturated conditions (material cannot be fully immersed in water) where aerobic, or air-

requiring, bacteria and fungi break down wastes, just as they do in a yard waste composter. If sized and maintained properly, a composting toilet breaks down waste to 10 to 30% of its original volume. The resulting soil-like material, called humus, legally

must be removed by a licensed septage hauler in accordance with state and local regulations. Because they require little to no water and produce a usable end-product, composting toilet systems traditionally have been used by public

Inside Story Headline

# Recycling Facts



The recycling of one glass container saves enough energy to light a 100-watt bulb for 4 hours (EPA). The environmental impact with recycled vs. virgin results in 20% less air pollution and 50% less water pollution (NASA). Did you know that 1 ton of glass made from 50% recycled materials saves 250 lbs of mining waste (EPA). Glass can be reused an infinite number of times; over 41 billion glass containers are made each year (EPA).



Every pound of steel being recycled saves enough energy to light a 60-watt bulb for 24 hours (Penn State University). Every year we create 11.5 million tons of ferrous wastes (Steel Recycling Institute). One ton of recycled steel saves 2,500 lbs of ore, 100 lbs of coal and 40 lbs of limestone (Center for Ecological Technology). Enough iron and steel is discarded in the U.S. to continually supply the nation's auto-makers (Steel Recycling Institute).



## Tires

California is the largest generator of waste tires (33 million), in a country where 270 million tires a year are scrapped. But tire recycling is on the rise. Sixty-six percent of those tires are reused nationwide, compared with only 11 percent in 1990, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

## Composting Toilets Continued.....

Facilities, parks, cottages, and remote homes. However, tightening wastewater regulations, growing awareness of pollution sources, and compatible gray water systems like micro-flush toilets are making them a viable alternative to septic systems and central sewage treatment plants in many areas, particularly those with poor soil drainage and proximity to surface water and groundwater. The main components of a composting toilet system are:

- A composting reactor connected to a dry or micro-flush toilet
- A screened air inlet and an exhaust system
- A means of ventilation to support the aerobic organisms in the composter
- A means of draining and managing excess liquid and leachate
- Process controls to optimize and facilitate management of the processes
- An access door for removal of the end-product

The advantages of using a composting system: composting toilet systems do not require water for flushing, which reduces domestic water consumption. These systems reduce the quantity and strength of wastewater to be disposed of onsite. They are especially suited for new construction at remote sites where conventional onsite systems are not feasible. They have low power consumption, can accept kitchen waste, reduce household garbage, and eliminate the need for transportation of wastes for treatment/disposal. Composting human waste and burying it around tree roots and non-edible plants keeps organic wastes productively cycling in the environment. Composting toilet systems divert nutrient-and-pathogen containing effluent from soil, surface water and groundwater. Composting toilets are an excellent alternative, and promotes stewardship of our land and streams.

## BMP for the month of June Filter Strips

**Filter strips:** Strips of grass or other vegetation used to intercept or trap sediment, organics (such as manure), pesticides, and other pollutants before they reach a water body. Some pesticides are broken down to harmless materials by microbial action in the filter strip. In Indiana, filter strips protect the soil from erosion. The strips typically vary in width from 20 feet on nearly level soils to 60 feet on sloping soils. They can be planted to forage crops, and hay can be harvested. Crop removal might be essential to the effectiveness of the strip because plant nutrients that erode from a field are trapped in a filter strip, and the fertility level of the strip could become excessively high if no nutrients were removed. Trees can also be harvested from filter strips. To be effective, filter strips must be placed along drainage ways and streams that lead to a larger water body. Drainage ways are low in the landscape and often in poorly drained soils, and streams are often surrounded by terrace or floodplain landforms, so these criteria are used in soil evaluation rules. In practice, however, filter strips may be used on many other soils. Soils on slopes more than 18% are not used as cropland and thus do not need filter strips. Talk to your local Soil and Water Conservation District to find out more about filter strips and how you can prevent sediment and pollutants from entering our streams.

## Stewards of our natural resources

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Educating and Promoting  
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### Events for 2004

#### River Clean-Ups

- April 3rd
- June 12th
- October 2nd

All clean-ups will be held at the Vernon Commons located behind the Vernon courthouse. Registration will be from 8-9 a.m.

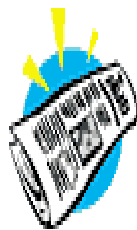
#### Recycle Days held at J.C. Fairgrounds

- April 10th Scrap Metal Collection
- April 17th Special Collection
- September 18th Scrap Metal Collection
- September 28th Special Collection

## More Recycling Facts



Enough aluminum is thrown away to rebuild our commercial air fleet 4 times every year. Recycling aluminum results in a 95% energy savings; recycling of one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for 3 hours (Reynolds Metal Company). Environmental impact with recycled vs. virgin reduces pollution by 95%.



Recycling paper has an environmental impact with recycled vs. virgin, results in 95% less air pollution and each ton saves 60lbs of air pollution (Center for Ecological Technology). Recycling of each ton of paper saves 17 trees and 7000 gallons of water (EPA). Every year enough paper is thrown away to make a 12 foot wall from New

York to California.



If we recycled every plastic bottle we used, we would keep 2 billion tons of plastic out of landfills (Penn State University). We also use enough plastic wrap to wrap all of Texas every year (EPA).

