Local Government and Site Development — Sanitary Codes to Better Protect Water Quality

Collaboration of interested persons from around the bay wanting to work on solving shared environmental problems that affect our shoreline and beaches, tourism and economy, and quality of life.

... "Collaborating to Better the Bay"

Iosco, Arenac, Bay, Tuscola, Huron, Saginaw, Midland counties

Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative (SBCI) is...

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- ... "Collaborating to Better the Bay"
- Iosco, Arenac, Bay, Tuscola, Huron, Saginaw, Midland counties

SBCI is comprised of:

- Concerned individuals
- Waterfront property owners
- Tourism/Visitors Bureau’s
- Fisherman
- Marina owners
- Farmers & Ag-business reps
- Environmental organizations
- Economic development, Chamber of Commerce, Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance
- Local government representatives and...
- Elected Officials

SBCI has a workplan of priority issues;

Genesis of this effort is the frustration with beach closings in the Saginaw Bay.

- Of the 28 public beaches sampled all but 5 have a history of chronic closures or advisories due to high bacteria levels experience; (MDEQ Beachguard)

- The 5 beaches are located on nearer to Lake Huron on outer bay (Huron and Iosco)
The beaches of Saginaw Bay are an important part of our community...

Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative (SBCI)
Arenac, Bay, Tuscola and Huron Counties

Beach Closings...
- Identified as a top priority for SBCI
- Health Departments were expanding testing methods at beaches (still are.. *Crypto*)
- Years of publically funded studies identified sources of bacteria as Combined Sewage Overflows, septic systems, livestock access, and urban run-off.
- Active programs in place to address urban stormwater>> need to target CSO’s
- SBCI CSO Workgroup formed to review CSO discharge data

SBCI CSO Work group
- Reviewed the bacterial sampling data of “CSO” (storm event) discharges by the City of Bay City and City of Saginaw over past 2 two years;
- >90% discharge samples meet recreational contact standards (well below 300 *E. coli* per 100 ml water at anytime)
Regional Septic Code Work Group

- Waterfront property owners
- County Commissioners
- Save Our Shoreline (SOS)
- The Conservation Fund and WIN
- Bay County Health Department
- Tuscola – Huron County Health Department
- Central Michigan District Health Department
  - ( Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, Roscommon)

Draft Code Highlights

- Combine common elements but allow flexibility for variable site conditions;
- Promote groundwater and the surface water interface as Public resources,
- septic discharge knows no boundaries;
- Two permitting phases:
  - 1.) Permit to construct and
  - 2.) Permit to operate (new)

Permit Framework – Draft

- Permit to Construct: Site design, Certified Installers, inspections;
- Permit to Operate: Proposed 5 year term that will require proof of maintenance (pumping) and inspection of system for renewal of permit (in lieu of time of sale)
- Identifies new Prohibited items – pharmaceuticals, chemicals etc

Septic Revolving Loan Fund

- Originally a GLRI application for regional effort
- Bay County received funding from The Land Conservancy, WIN, Community Foundation and PIRGM settlement ($94,000)
- Funding of last resort
- No income limit
- Lein placed on property
- Early payoff incremental fees added, $500 after year 2, another $500 after year 4, and again in year 6.
Success:

- Self reporting of problem septics (or neighbors)
- Greater authority by Health Dept to inspect septic systems on regular basis
- Increased maintenance (pumping) and greater understanding of hydrology’s Big Picture leading to protection of water resource

What can you do...???

Participate in the Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative

There’s no fee, sign up for a Workgroup or just stay informed.

Your local elected officials are good contacts for information on SBCI.

..a cleaner Saginaw Bay