Reclassification Septic Restrictions

Only the 3 legislatively mandated A(1) restrictions will apply. These are:

1. No direct discharge of any wastes that, prior to treatment, contained organisms pathogenic to human beings.

2. No new indirect discharge systems (e.g., in-ground septic system) with a design flow greater than 1,000 gallons per day (gpd). The design flow of an existing soil-based system that discharges to Class A waters may not be increased of the total design flow will exceed 1,000 gpd. In addition, for a permit to be issued, there must be no more than one soil-based disposal system per lot and no more than one lot per application. A system exceeding 1,000 gpd in place prior to 1-1-07 may be permitted for replacement at the current capacity.

3. No siting of solid waste management facilities and application of biosolids or septage in Class A watersheds.

Question: What are examples of development that would require a septic system with a capacity of 1,000 gpd or greater? (Breweries, inns, restaurants, etc...)

Answer: A few examples:

- Shared systems that serve (typically) 3 or more single family residences.
- Inns, hotels, or motels with >20 sleeping spaces (less if meals, laundry, or onsite staff living quarters).
- Restaurants with greater than 25 to 40 seats, depending on the number of meals served per day.
- Overnight summer camps with >22 campers or staff.
- Campgrounds with central toilets without showers serving >20 campsites.
- Campgrounds with central toilets and showers serving >13 campsites.

Question: Would a typical or large residence need a design flow of 1,000 gpd?

Answer: It would have to have greater than 11 bedrooms; but a triplex with two four bedrooms residential units plus a one-bedroom apartment would be over 1,000 gpd.

Question: How plentiful is phosphorus in the discharges that flow from well-functioning septic systems?

Answer: Several scientific studies have tried to quantify phosphorus lost to waters from poorly functioning septic systems. The consensus is that a well-functioning system will lead to only minimal or trace amounts of phosphorus discharge, whereas old, leaky, malfunctioning, or failed septic systems can provide important (but less than 10% of the overall P budget to lakes) phosphorus contributions to adjacent waters.

Question: Is phosphorus removed from the discharge of a septic system as it filters through the soil into groundwater?

Answer: Yes, soil can absorb or remove phosphorus from water, a process that is sometimes referred to as attenuation. Depending on the soil type, phosphorus from wastewater can be absorbed and retained in the soil. Unabsorbed phosphorus can travel in groundwater into wells or toward a waterbody and become a source of contamination.