

SESSION 5: *Onsite Wastewater Treatment*



T W O N
T E X A S
Well Owner
N E T W O R K

ARROYO COLORADO WPP
IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT-
CAMERON COUNTY OSSF
INVENTORY

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Onsite Wastewater Treatment

- What is an On Site Sewage Facility (OSSF)?
- Why are we concerned about wastewater?
- Evolution of onsite wastewater treatment
- Function of a septic system
- Evaluation of septic tank operation
- When should a septic tank should be pumped?
- How to live with a septic system



Onsite Wastewater Treatment



Permitting Wastewater Treatment Systems

- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Chapter 285 for 5000 gallons per day or less
 - On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSF)
 - Local Authorized Agent; Usually local Health Department
 - TCEQ Regional Office
- TCEQ, Chapter 217 for more than 5000 gallons per day.

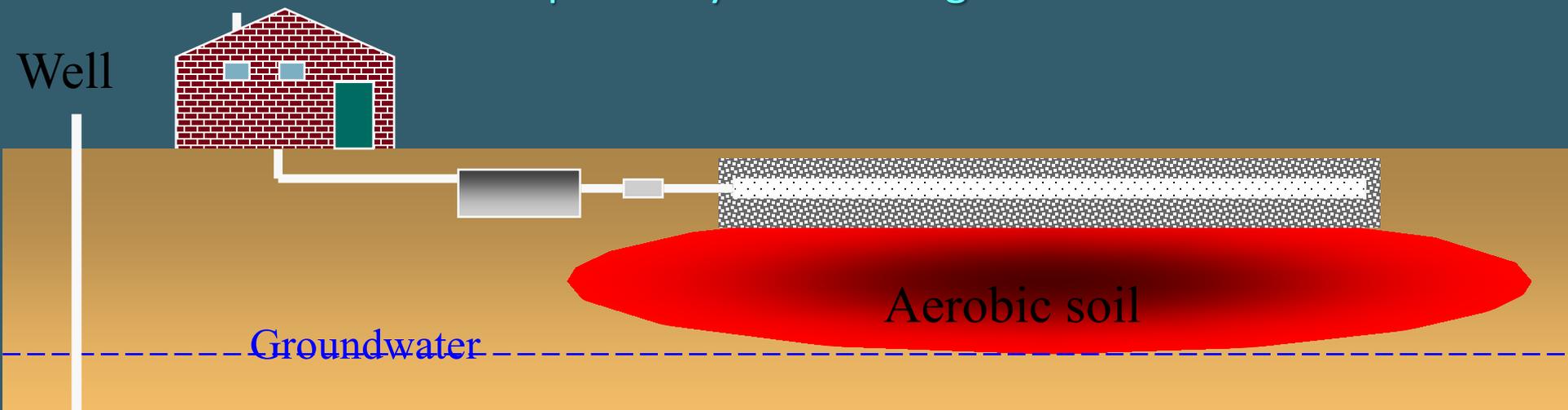


Malfunctioning Onsite System



Evolution of Wastewater Management

- Evolving goal:
 - Disposal: effluent goes away versus treatment
 - Dispersal: TREATMENT
- Public health AND environmental issues addressed
- Management:
 - Disposal: often no management at all
 - Dispersal: system management is critical



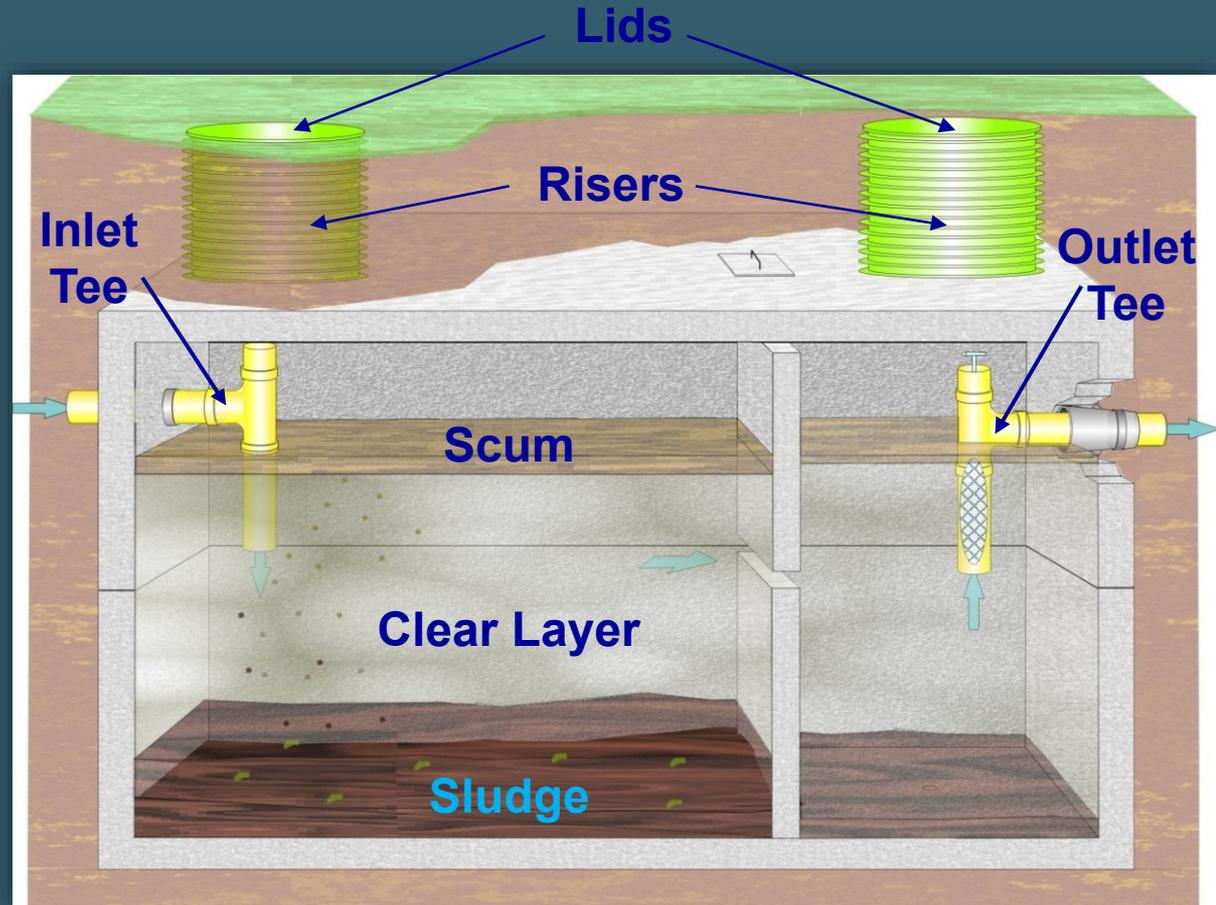
How do we make the OSSF work?



- Evaluate the wastewater source:
 - Hydraulic and organic loading
- Evaluate site
 - Wastewater treatment
 - Wastewater acceptance
- Choose a final treatment and dispersal component
- Choose the appropriate pretreatment system
- Operation and maintenance

What is a Septic Tank?

- Water tight containers
 - Concrete
 - Plastic / Fiberglass
 - NOT Metal
- Detention time
 - Typically 2-3 days
 - Calm conditions
- Gravity separation
 - Heavy sinks
 - Lighter floats
- Anaerobic digestion



Square & Round Septic Tanks



Round-500 gallon



What is a Septic Tank?

The diagram illustrates the flow of wastewater from a house through a septic system. It is divided into two main sections: 'To House' and 'Final Treatment and Dispersal'. The 'To House' section shows a pipe leading from a house into a 'Septic System Pretreatment' tank. This tank is divided into two chambers. The 'Final Treatment and Dispersal' section shows a pipe leading from the second chamber of the pretreatment tank to a distribution pipe with multiple outlets, which discharges the treated effluent into the ground.

GBRA NOTICE

HOW A SEPTIC SYSTEM WORKS

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System
For More info

To House

Conventional Septic System Pretreatment

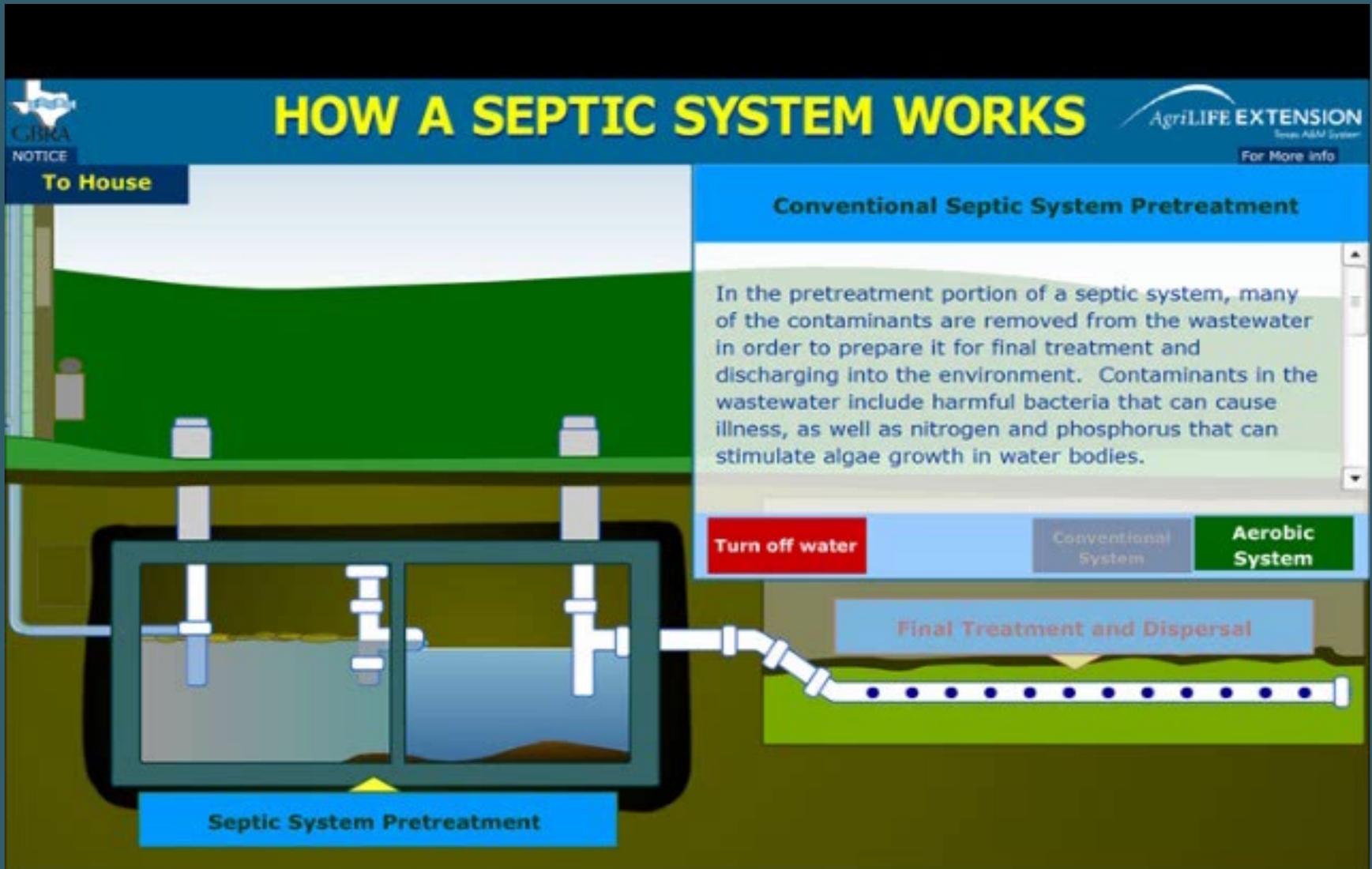
In the pretreatment portion of a septic system, many of the contaminants are removed from the wastewater in order to prepare it for final treatment and discharging into the environment. Contaminants in the wastewater include harmful bacteria that can cause illness, as well as nitrogen and phosphorus that can stimulate algae growth in water bodies.

Run the Water Conventional System **Aerobic System**

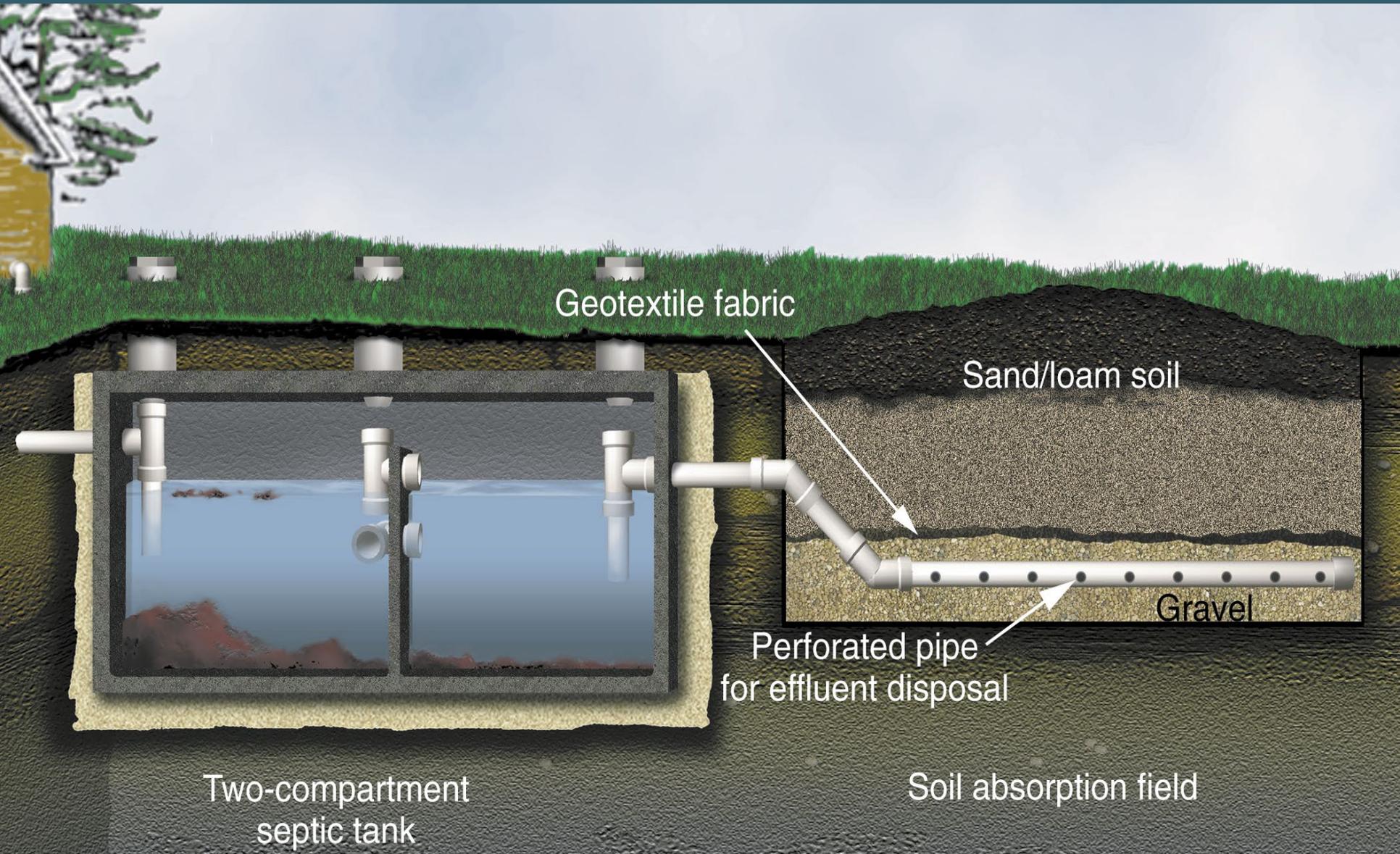
Final Treatment and Dispersal

Septic System Pretreatment

What is a Septic Tank?



Conventional Septic Tank System

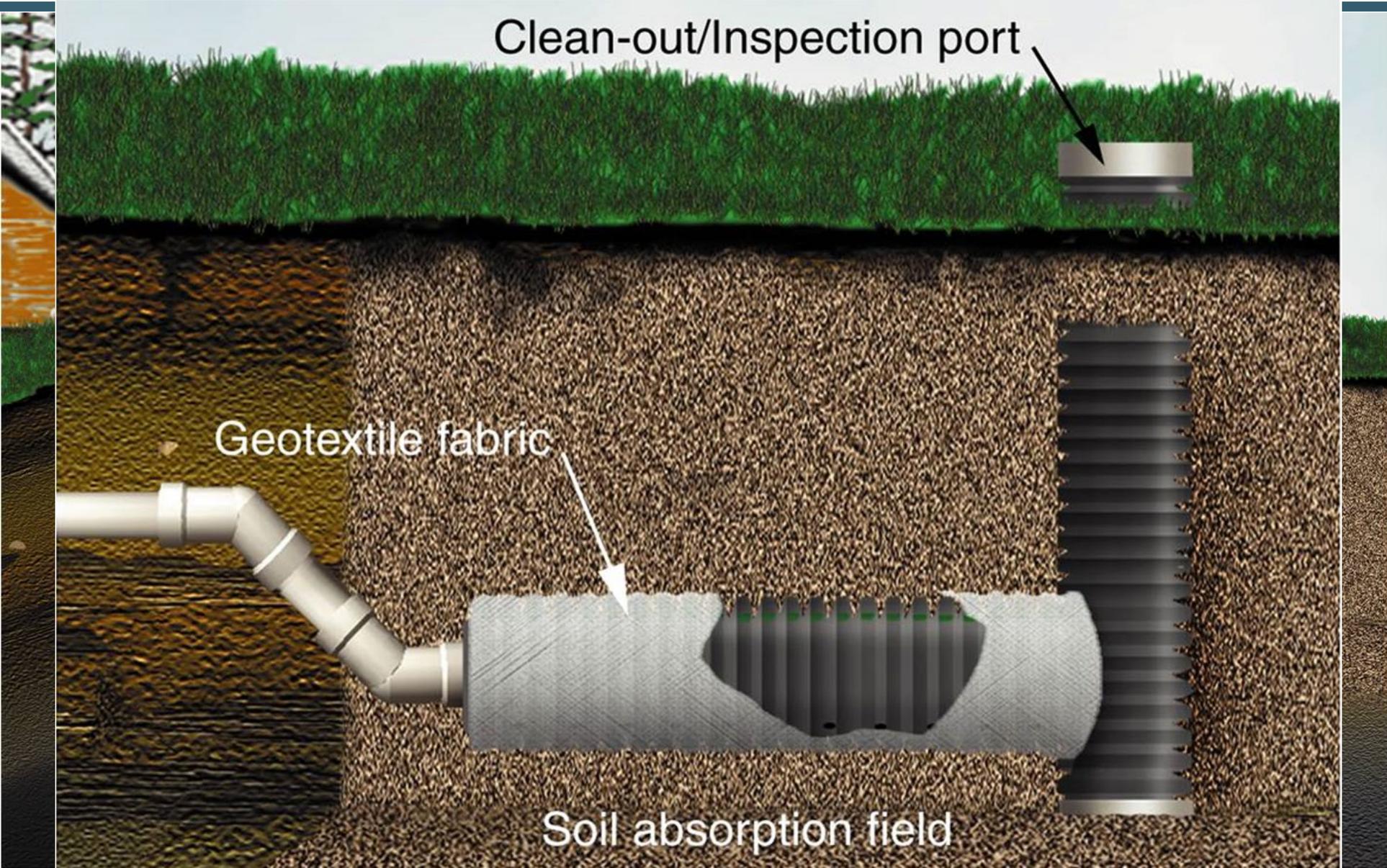


Gravel-less Pipe Distribution

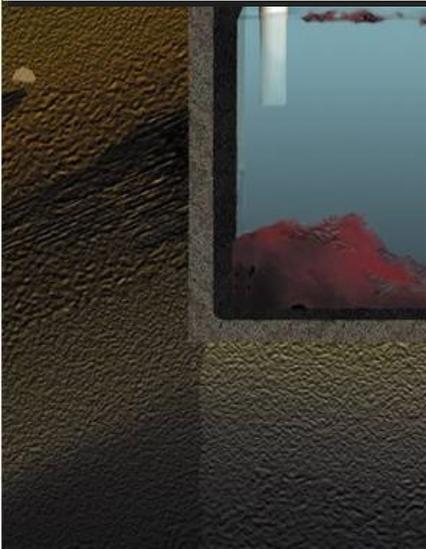
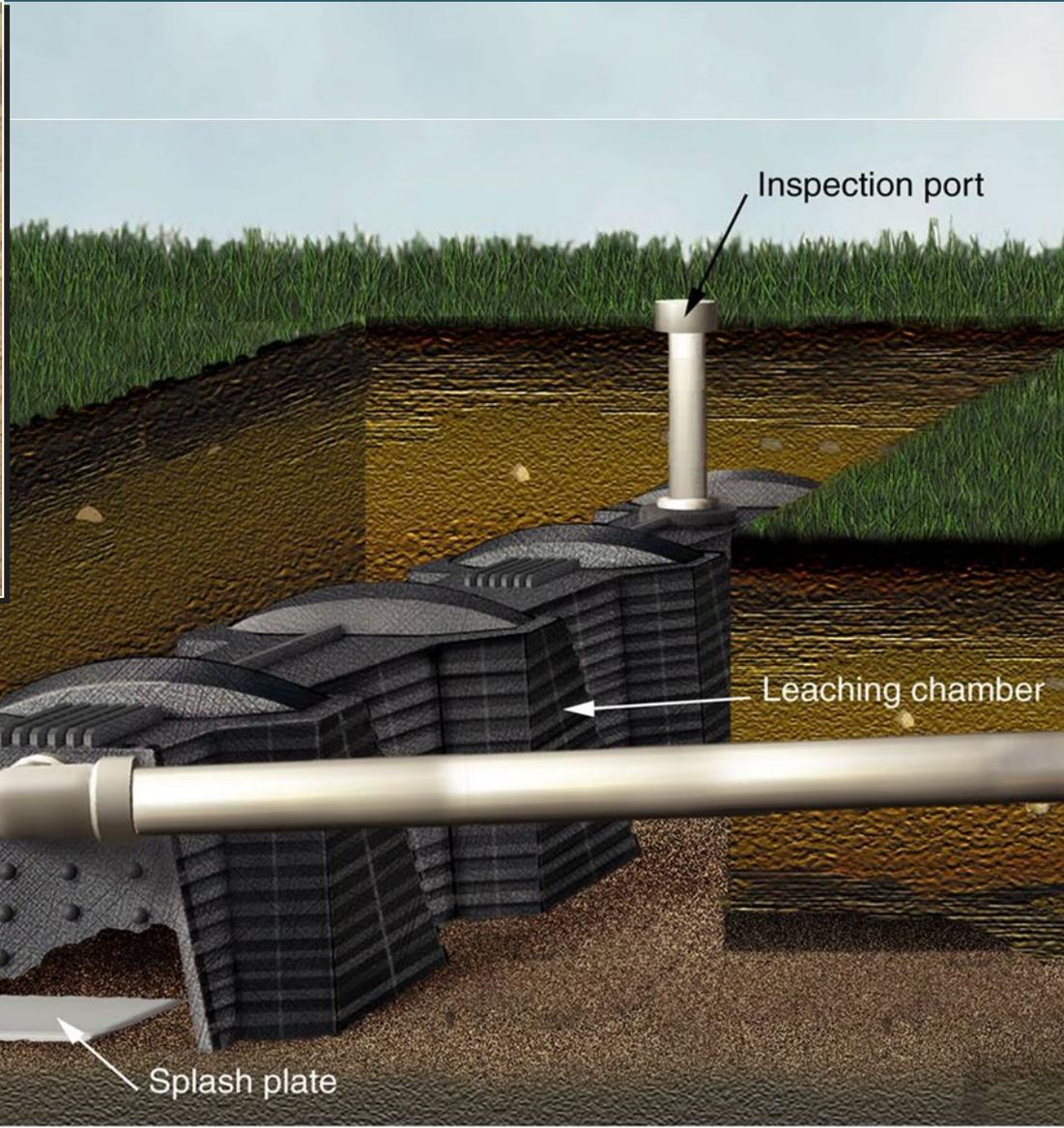
Clean-out/Inspection port

Geotextile fabric

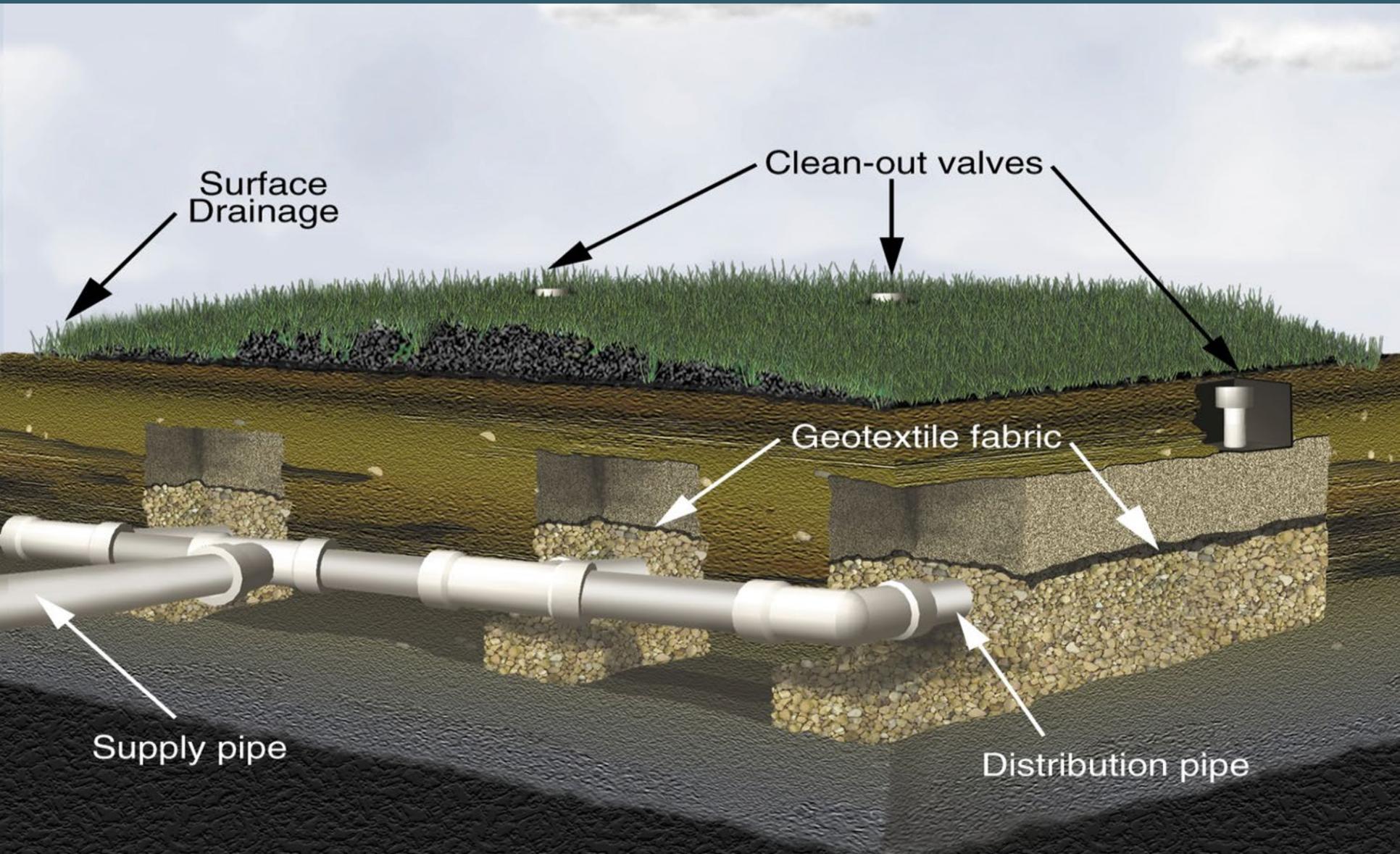
Soil absorption field



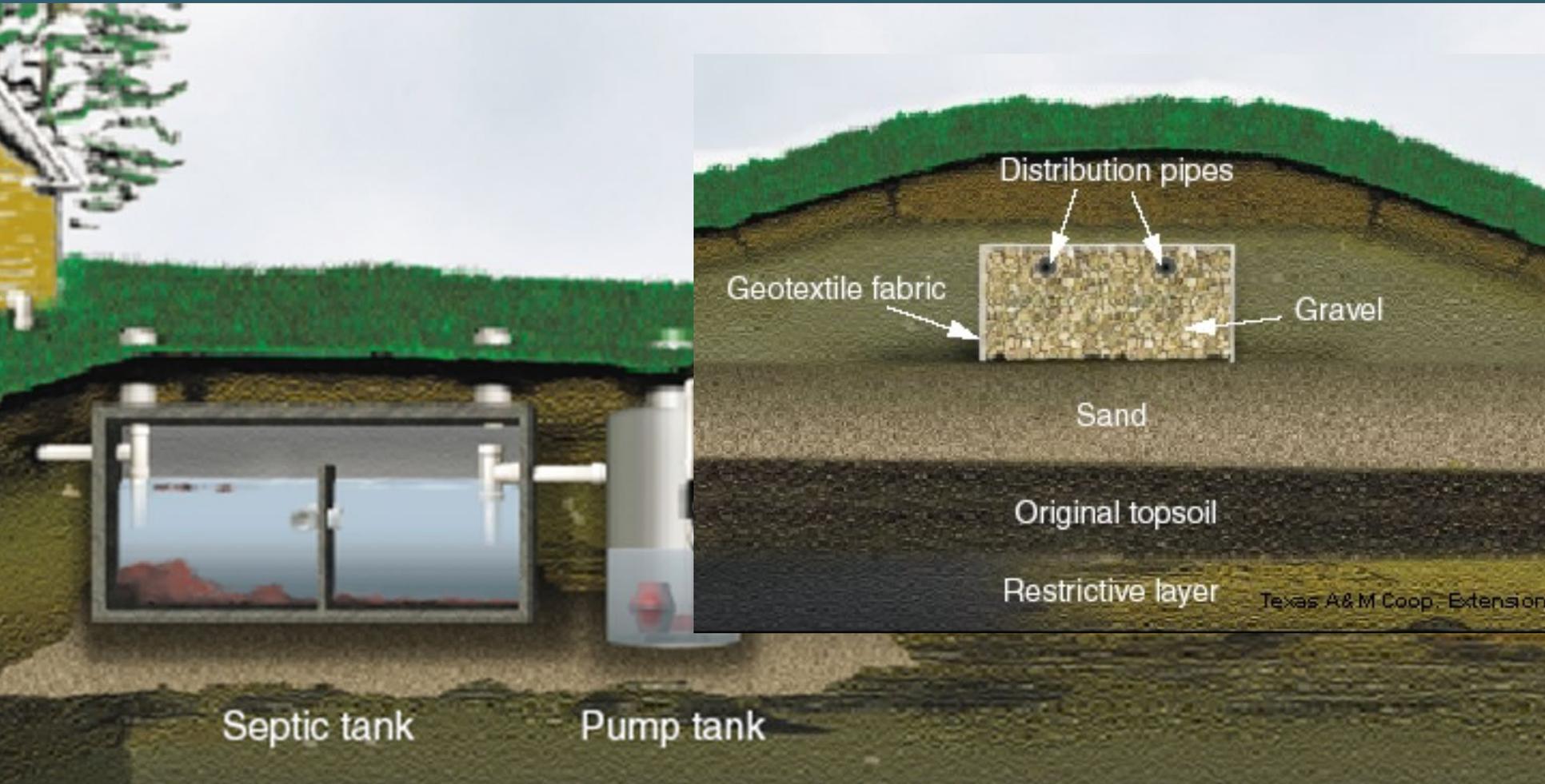
Leaching Chambers



Low-Pressure Distribution



Mound Distribution Field

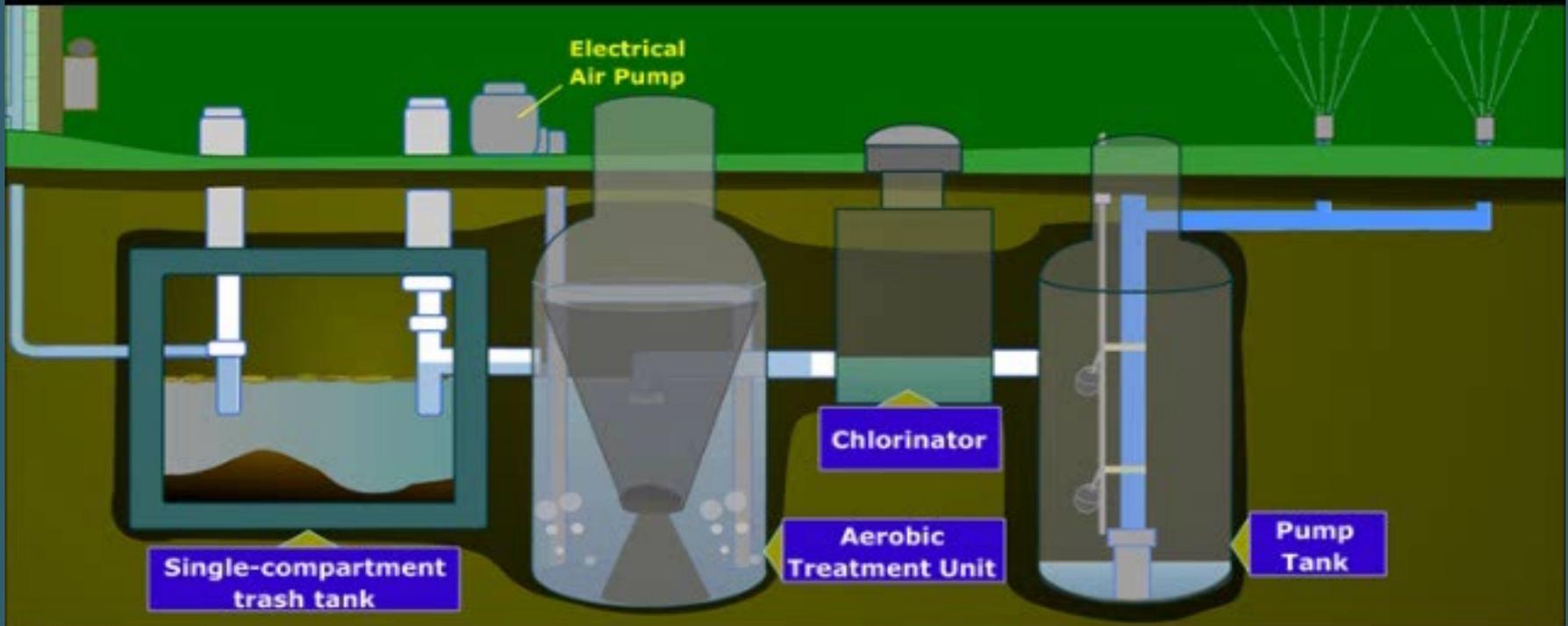


Role of Vegetative Cover in Treatment System



- A healthy cover crop is essential for the system to function properly.
- Plants will:
 - Take up water and nutrients
 - Stabilize the soil and prevent erosion
 - Support beneficial soil organisms
- Do NOT park vehicles on drainfield
- Do NOT construct decks, driveways or buildings over drainfield
- NO woody vegetation over drainfield

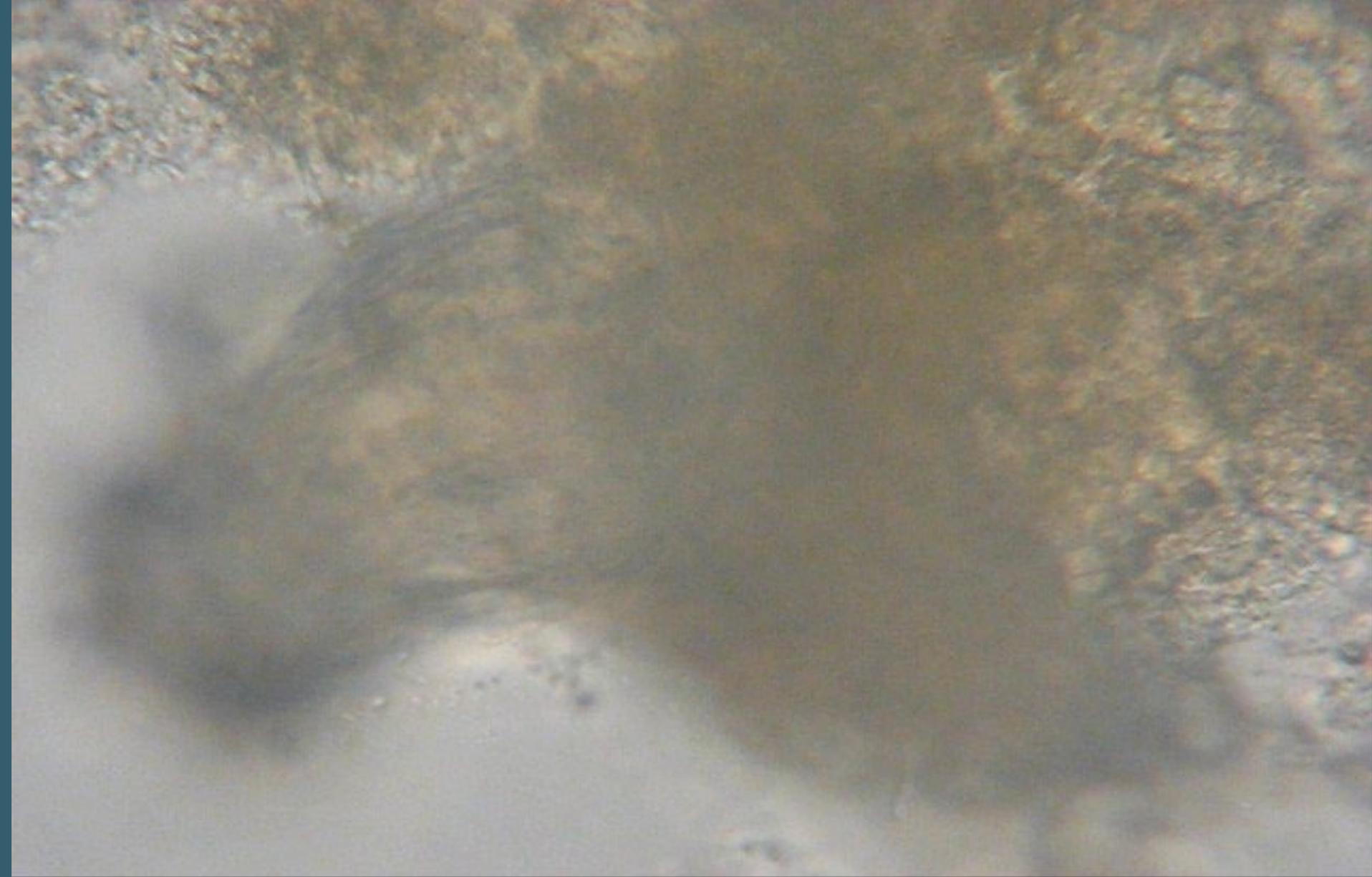
What is an Aerobic Treatment Unit?



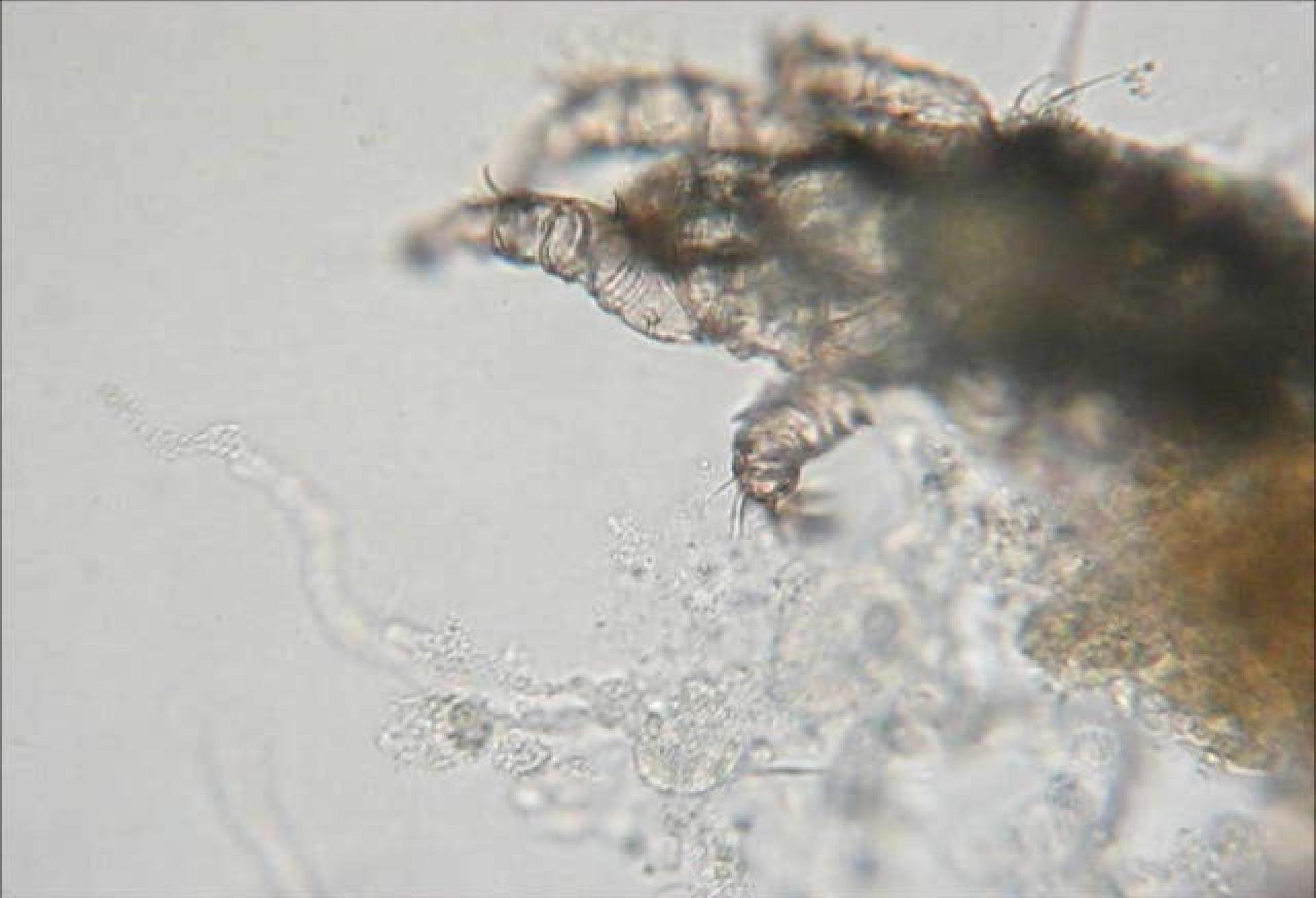
Aerobic Treatment Unit

- **Aerobic Microbes**
 - Require oxygen to live and grow
 - Consume waste and bacteria
- **Air supply**
 - Compressor / Aerator
 - Diffusers
 - Oxygen transfer to wastewater
 - Mixing of food and organisms
- **Clarifier**





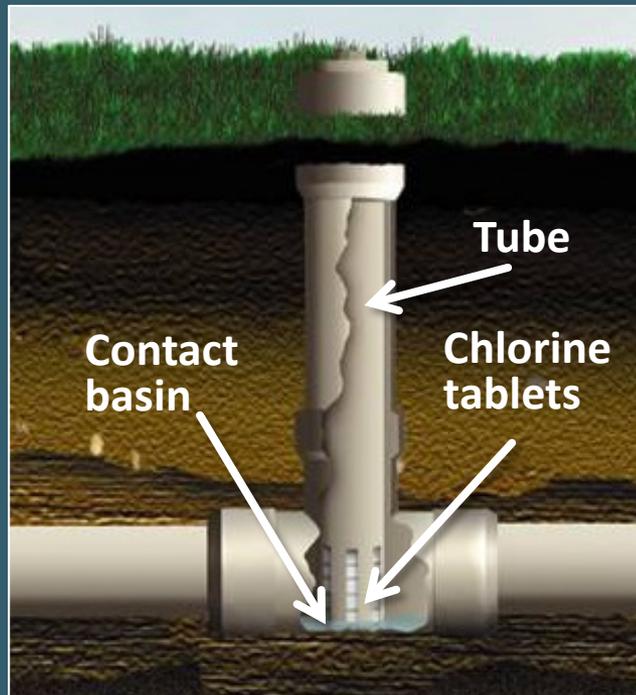
Large rotifers attached to aerobic treatment media feeding on bacteria and organic nutrients pH 6.94, DO 4.54 ppm



Mite on aerobic treatment media pH 6.94, DO 4.54

Aerobic Treatment Unit System

- Disinfection
 - Disinfection, NOT sterilization!
 - Chlorinator
 - NOT SWIMMING POOL TABLETS!
 - UV light
- Distribution
 - Pump tank
 - Spray field
 - Subsurface drip



Water Quality – Spray Field

- High potential for human contact
- This is effluent – **NOT DRINKING WATER!!!!**
- Soil microbes are the final treatment!
- A healthy cover crop is essential for the system to function properly.
 - Take up water and nutrients
 - Stabilize the soil and prevent erosion
 - Provide food and habitat for beneficial soil organisms



Subsurface Drip Distribution



FEEDING THE SYSTEM

Conventional and Aerobic Systems

FATS, OILS AND GREASE

Constituent	State at room temperature	Comments
Fats	Solid	Non-toxic to the system, origin – animals, will separate in water
Oils	Liquid	Non-toxic to the system, origin – plants, trouble separating in water
Grease	Solid	Residual material on appliances; solid material on pans/equipment; petroleum products; moisturizers; bath oils; tanning oils; <u>Toxic</u> to the wastewater system

Kitchen

- Dishwasher
 - Hydraulic surges of wastewater
 - Space out loads
 - Organic load
 - Clean/scrape plates
- Garbage Disposal
 - Increases scum by 20%
 - Pumping required 1-2 years sooner
 - Organic matter has not been digested, so it will take longer to break down
 - Small particles take longer to settle



Laundry



- Use should be spread out
 - Returning from vacation
- Liquid soap is recommended
 - Use less
 - Remove risk of fillers in powders
 - Use bleach sparingly
- Consider a high efficiency washer

Bathroom

- Only urine, feces, soap, toilet paper and limited amounts of cleaner should go down the drain
- No feminine products, prophylactics, cigarette butts, etc.
- No every-flush toilet bowl sanitizers
- Bath and body oils
 - Increases fats, oils and grease
 - If usage is great, may need more maintenance



Septic Safe?

Toilet Paper

- Excessive use results in faster sludge build up
- Treated toilet paper (with lotions) prevents paper from settling
- Wet wipe disposal is discouraged



Prescription Drugs and Antibiotics

- Can kill microbes living in system
 - Won't discriminate helpful organisms living in the system
- Additional treatment components may be necessary
- Increase maintenance
- Do not pour unused medicines down the drain



Septic System Additives

- Not been proven to be beneficial to system performance
- **Not recommended**
- Breaks up particles that are settled at the bottom and may suspend them
- Suspended solids may load to downstream components



Cleaning Products

- Cumulative effects on system performance
- Look at labels!
 - DANGER: means the chemical will kill the bacteria, and its use should be minimized or eliminated
 - WARNING: means limited use should have a minimal impact on the system.
 - CAUTION: typically means the product will have little effect.

including acrylic, fiberglass and vinyl. **Not recommended for use on unpainted wood.**

PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS: HAZARDS TO HUMANS AND DOMESTIC ANIMALS

CAUTION: Causes moderate eye irritation. Avoid contact with eyes or clothing. **EYES:** Hold eye open and rinse slowly and gently with water for 15–20 minutes. Remove contact lenses, if present, after the first 5 minutes, then continue rinsing eye. Call a poison control center for treatment advice. Have the product container or label with you when calling a poison control center or doctor or going for treatment. **PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL HAZARDS:** This product contains bleach. Do not use or mix this product with other household chemicals such as ammonia, toilet bowl cleaners, and cleaners as acid as this releases hazardous gases.

inches from surface until thoroughly wet. Let stand 30 seconds. Rinse or wipe clean. For sensitive skin or prolonged use, wear gloves. Avoid prolonged breathing of vapors. Use only in well-ventilated areas. **WARNING: EYE AND SKIN IRRITANT.** Vapors may irritate. Harmful if swallowed. Do not get in eyes or on clothing. For sensitive skin or prolonged use, wear gloves. Avoid prolonged breathing of vapors. Use only in well-ventilated areas. **Not recommended for use by persons with heart conditions or chronic respiratory problems such as asthma, emphysema or obstructive lung disease.** **FIRST AID: IF IN EYES:** Hold eye open and rinse slowly and gently with water for 15–20 minutes. Remove contact lenses, if present, after the first 5 minutes, then continue rinsing eye. **IF ON SKIN OR CLOTHING:** Take off contaminated clothing. Rinse skin immediately with plenty of water for 15–20 minutes. **IF BREATHING IS AFFECTED:** Move person to fresh air. If person is not breathing, call 911 or an ambulance, then give artificial respiration, preferably mouth-to-mouth if possible. **IF SWALLOWED:** Call a poison control center or doctor immediately for treatment advice. Have person sip a glassful of water if able to swallow. Do not induce vomiting unless told to do so by a poison control center or doctor. Do not give anything by mouth to an unconscious person. Call a poison control center or doctor for further treatment advice. Have the product container or label with you when calling a poison control center or doctor or going for treatment. **PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL HAZARDS:** This product contains bleach. Do not use or mix this product with other household chemicals such as ammonia, toilet bowl cleaners, and cleaners as acid as this releases hazardous gases.

Drain Cleaner

- Toxic drain cleaners can impact ability to properly treat wastewater
- Affect bacteria activity



OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Gases and Chemicals of Concern

- Hydrogen sulfide
- Sulfuric acid
(converted from H_2S)
- Chlorine gas
- CO(X)s
 - Carbon dioxide
 - Carbon monoxide
- Methane



Common Biological Hazards Near Site



- Kids
- Pets
- Insects
- Snakes
- Vegetation
- Pathogens

Accessibility Issues

Accessibility = ease of maintenance

- Depth of installation
- Inspection ports and risers
- Encroachment



Site Conditions

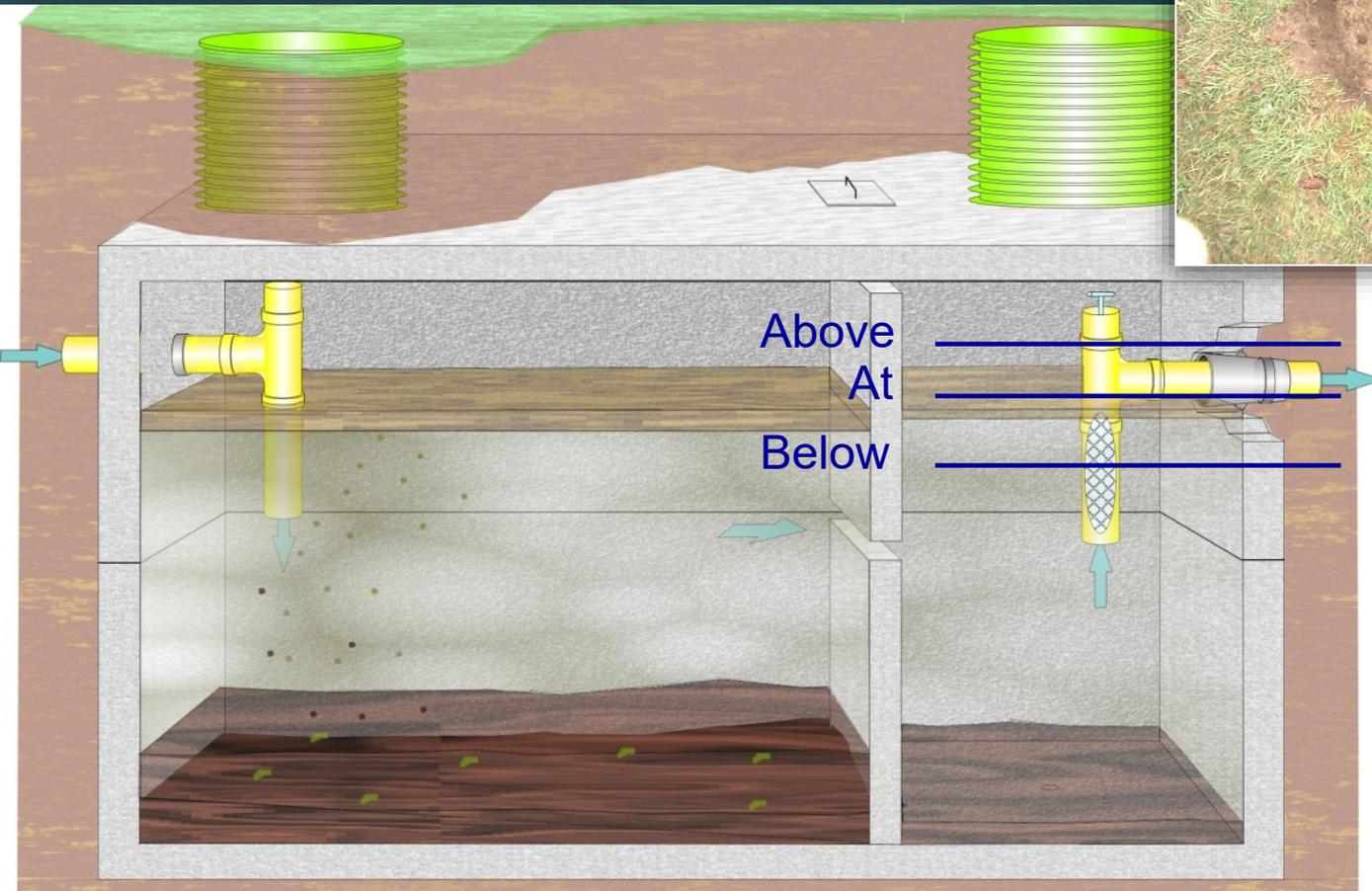
- Divert stormwater away from all OSSF components
- Odors?



Operating Condition

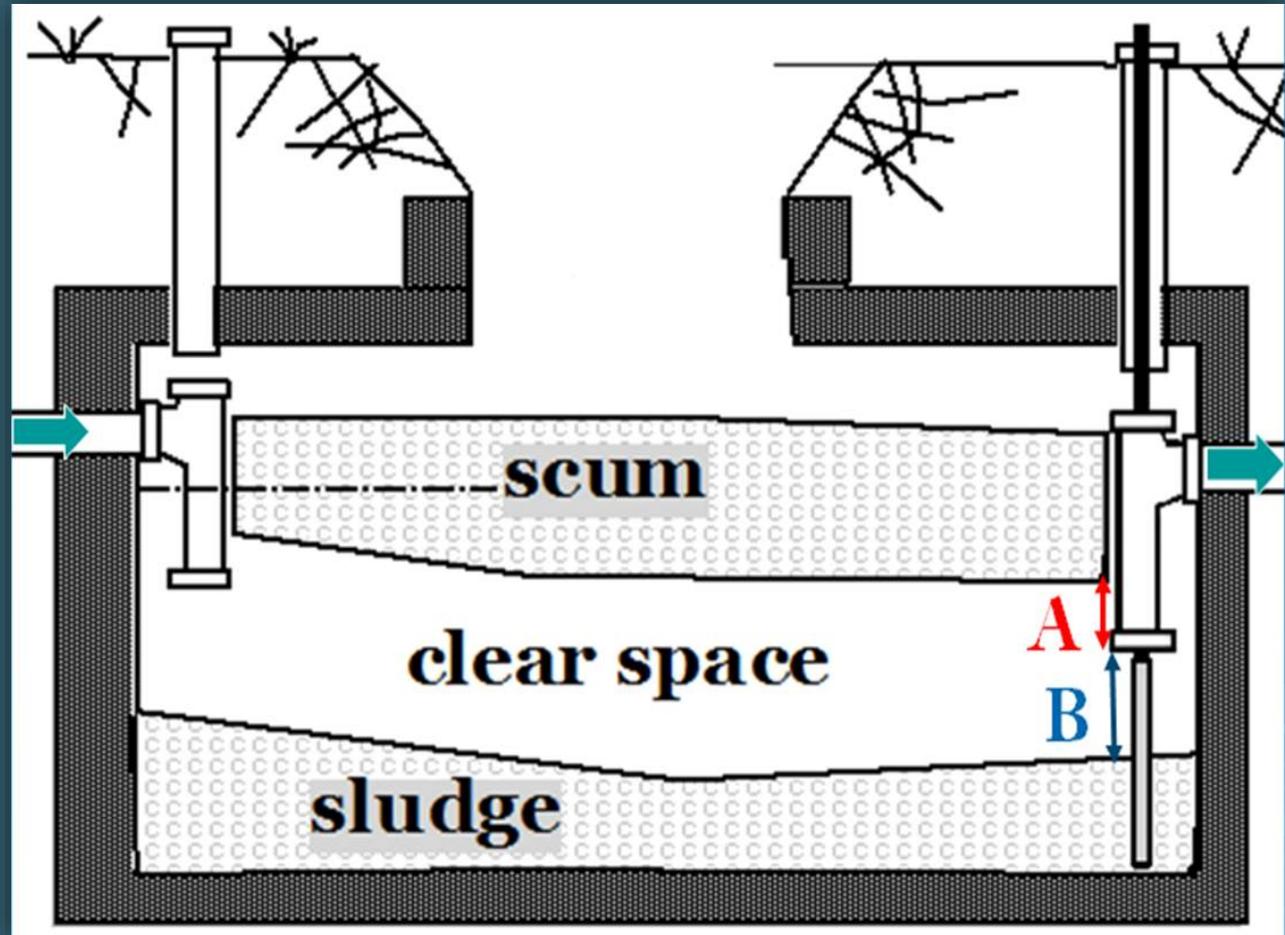
Liquid level with respect to outlet
(inches):

- At, above and below



Septic Tank Pumping Recommended?

- Should be pumped when total solids reach 25-33% of tank capacity
 - If 'A' is less than 3"
 - If 'B' is less than 12"
- Typically required every 3 to 5 years
- Pump during dry seasons to reduce the risk of tank floatation



Measuring Solids



Scum Layer

Clear Layer

Sludge Layer



??

Septic Tank Pumping Recommended?

Tank Size (gals)	Household Size (Number of People)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
500	5.8	2.6	1.5	1.0	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	—
750	9.1	4.2	2.6	1.8	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.3
1,000	12.4	5.9	3.7	2.6	2.0	1.5	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.7
1,250		7.5	4.8	3.4	2.6	2.0	1.7	1.4	1.2	1.0
1,500		9.1	5.9	4.2	3.3	2.6	2.1	1.8	1.5	1.3
1,750			6.9	5.0	3.9	3.1	2.6	2.2	1.9	1.6
2,000			8.0	5.9	4.5	3.7	3.1	2.6	2.2	2.0
2,250				6.7	5.2	4.2	3.5	3.0	2.6	2.3
2,500					5.9	4.8	4.0	4.0	3.0	2.6

Note: More frequent pumping needed if a garbage disposal is used.

What happens if you don't maintain OSSF

Your tanks will fill up and begin to back up into your home-possibly causing backflow flooding into the house via showers and toilets.

Pumping

- Removal of septage from a wastewater treatment system component
- Necessary to prevent accumulated solids from moving into downstream components
 - Drain fields
 - Pumps
- TCEQ Registered Sludge Transporter



Cleanout behind House-Backing Up



2nd Cleanout Full



Looking for the clean out port



Almost there



45 minutes later-clean out port



Tank is completely full



Pumping out tank



Pump out in full swing

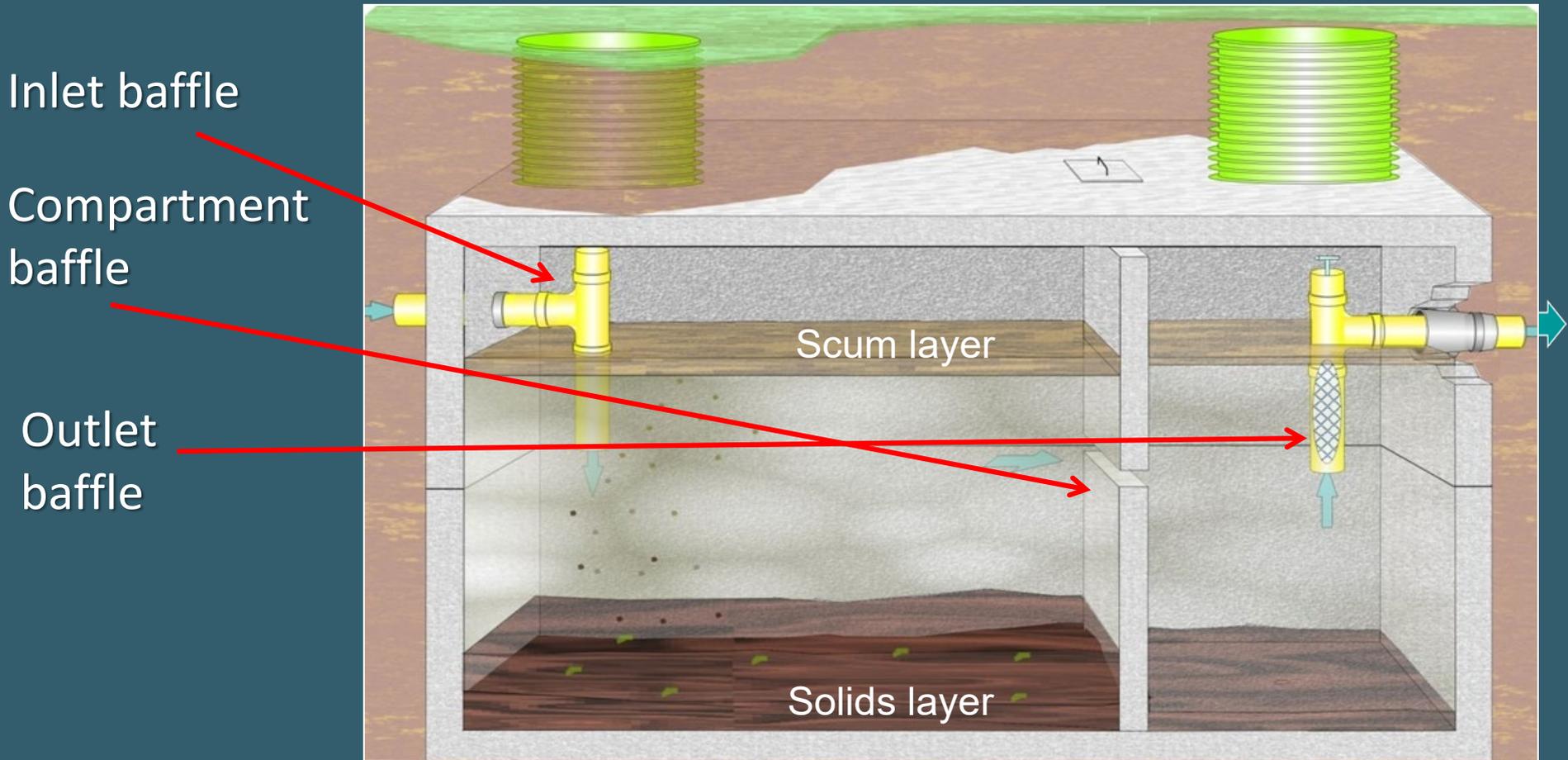


Looking for 2nd tank



Baffles

- Critical to retention of solids in the septic tank
- Determine if baffles are in place



Baffles



- Concrete
- Plastic
- Fiberglass
- PVC tee



Inspection of outlet T



Effluent Screens

- Installed at the septic tank outlet
- Trap solids trying to leave the septic tank
- Protect the drainfield
- Screen is washed off directly into the inlet side of the septic tank



Locating 2nd Tank



Pumping out 2nd tank

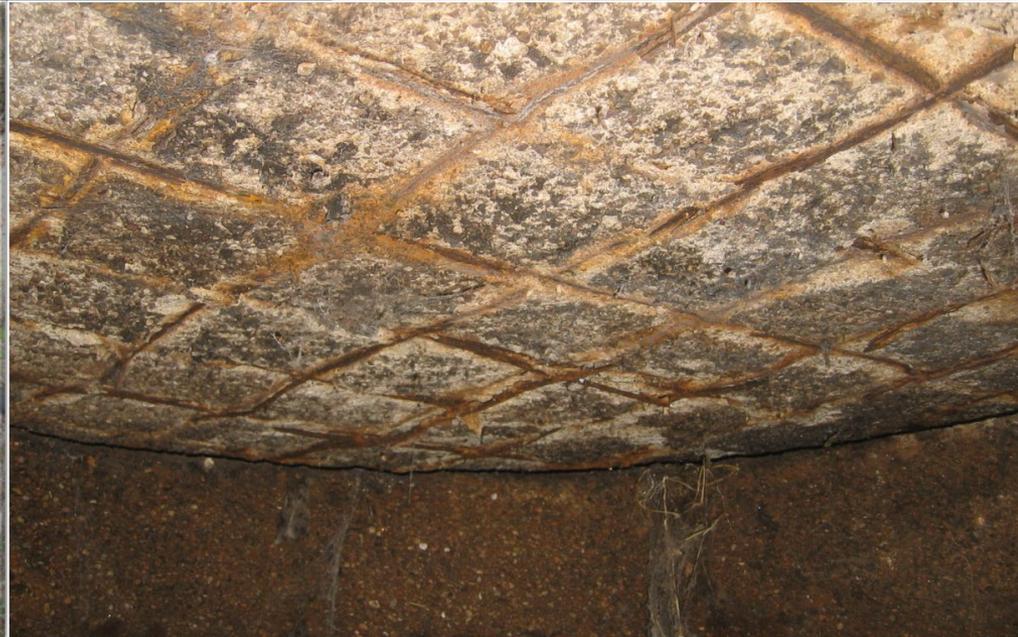


Good contractors do it right!



Tank Structural Condition

- Watertight (no visual leaks)
- Rebar exposed
- Root intrusion
- Corrosion or spalling present
- Cracks or Flex



Clean out is clear



Clear



Why Perform Maintenance?

- Keep systems functioning properly
- Maintain effluent quality
- Early detection of problems
- Public health
- Environmental protection
- System reliability



Early plumbers



Questions?



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ARROYO COLORADO

**Know it. Respect it. Enjoy it.
Conócelo. Respétalo. Disfrítalo.**

On-Site Sewage Facility
Website:
ossf.tamu.edu

