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## **STAKEHOLDERS DISCUSS WELL AND SEPTIC SYSTEMS IN CLINTON, GRATIOT, AND MONTCALM COUNTIES**

ST. JOHNS, Michigan—A group of area residents is meeting to discuss what can be done to improve water quality in Mid-Michigan with the intention of making recommendations to local governments. The group—which calls itself the Well and Septic Stakeholder Group—consists of a broad array of local interests including realtors, banks, agriculture, septic installers and well drillers as well as the Mid-Michigan District Health Department. The group is focusing on water resources in Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm counties.

The group is motivated by the concern that a percentage of septic systems in the area are thought to be failing and discharging sewage into area drains, streams and lakes. It is known that a few rural homes—mostly older ones—have no septic system and discharge directly into drains.

An effort to create an inspection program for septic systems failed to garner support from local governments in 2007 because it was thought it would impose unreasonable costs and delays on real estate transactions.

The Health Officer of the Mid-Michigan District Health Department, Marcus Cheatham, said “The group is looking at approaches that will have the support of the business community such as homeowner education, working more closely with Drain Commissioners, things like that. I’m really interested to see what they come up with.”

Funding to support the meetings comes from a federal grant to support the Clinton Conservation District’s Upper Maple River watershed management plan.

The final meeting of the group is June 17 and will run from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. If you are interested in attending a meeting, please contact [jbeard@pscinc.com](mailto:jbeard@pscinc.com).

The Clinton Conservation District is a local unit of government established in 1954 to carry out programs for conservation— the wise use of natural resources for current and future generations. The guiding philosophy is that decisions on conservation issues should be made at the **local level**, by **local people**, with technical assistance provided by government.

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