



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

206 N. COMMERCE STREET
CENTREVILLE, MARYLAND 21617
PHONE: 410-758-2281

April 29, 1997

Mr. D. Steven Walls, Director
Queen Anne's Co. Dept. Of Public Works
P.O. Box 56
Centreville, Maryland 21617

RE: Romancoke on the Bay
Kent Island Estates
Sanitary Survey in the Spring of 1995

Dear Steve,

As a follow-up to our office's sanitary survey conducted in 1990 of the above referenced subdivisions another survey was completed in the Spring of 1995. It should be noted that the weather pattern was one of extreme drought and caution should be exercised as to whether this survey is comparable to a normal wet season. However, this survey's information is valuable in providing additional data for future sewer need evaluations in the Kent Island Estates and Romancoke on the Bay area.

The following comments and results are offered:

I. Background Information

1. A physical survey of this type is only a representation of what was observed or documented on the given survey day.
2. Some of the septic systems showing septic wastes, laundry wastes or kitchen wastes on the ground surface or weeping into nearby ditches, may be exhibiting these conditions only during the seasonal high water table period.
3. Conversely, other systems not shown as failing in this matter during the survey time, may be failing now due to age, lack of maintenance, or increased usage.
4. Other systems observed may be failing intermittently during peak usage even though the survey found no evidence.
5. Of particular importance, is the fact that septic systems are by nature an interim means of waste disposal and will eventually clog to the point they cannot handle the given house's wastewater flow. When this occurs they will "back-up" into the house's plumbing or weep-out to ground level. They then have to be replaced, repaired, or added on to, if there remains a suitable replacement or "recovery area"; state regulations for old lots of record required only one replacement area.

II. Recent and Current Health Department Activities

1. Our office starting in 1989-1990 began implementing more stringent and in general more costly methodologies when repairing or replacing a septic system.
2. Drainfield systems were required in many instances to be elevated and a method of low pressure dosing was utilized to evenly spread the wastewater over the entire drainfield. This requires pump chambers, alarms, pumps, electrical wiring and in general a more complex maintenance procedure. It is our experience (as a generalized statement), the average homeowner lacks the experience or aptitude to assure routine maintenance of his or her septic system. They usually respond when it "doesn't work." (I.e. "The car is

- completely broke down")
3. When a homeowner has their septic system repaired by elevating their waste disposal area, they often impact negatively upon surrounding properties. Typically, the run-off water now diverts more intensely to a lower surrounding lot. Hence, some of these repair jobs bring complaints from neighbors about the effects upon their property.
 4. Most repairs are now utilizing sand-lined trenches. Use of this technology hopefully will cause the "clogging mat" to form more closely to the land surface. If this "clogging mat" forms close enough to the surface we may be able to physically dig out failed clogged trenches and replace with fresh sand in an attempt to rejuvenate existing drainfields.

III. Results of the 1995 Sanitary Survey are as follows: (Please see 5-25-1990 attached letter to J. L. Hearn for comparison to 1990 Sanitary Survey)

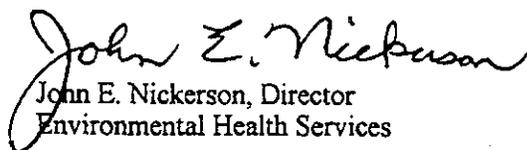
1. Romancoke on the Bay
 - a. 160 Homes were surveyed
 - b. 31 Homes had septic wastes, laundry wastes or kitchen wastes ponding in the grass or discharging into nearby ditches.
 - c. Of the occupants at home, 15 were in favor of public sewer and 10 were opposed.
2. Kent Island Estates (Section I, II, III)
 - a. 592 Homes were surveyed
 - b. 86 Homes had septic wastes, laundry wastes or kitchen wastes ponding in the grass or discharging into nearby ditches.
 - c. Of the occupants at home 98 were in favor of public sewer and 74 were opposed.

IV. Other Comments:

1. Seasonal high water table readings observed in piezometers and auger holes indicate that approximately 80% of the houses discharge septic wastes directly to the groundwater during the wet season.
2. There are no known shallow wells in either subdivision and both subdivisions are served by individual deep wells screened in the Aquia Aquifer.
3. The well casings must pass through the shallow unconfined aquifer in which septic wastes are being discharged. This poses some health risks if the well casings pit or crack or if the grout is inadequate.

In summary, our Environmental Health Division considers public sewer as the long term vision for providing adequate waste disposal for the Kent Island Estates-Romancoke on the Bay subdivisions. If you have any questions please call me at 758-2281.

Sincerely,


John E. Nickerson, Director
Environmental Health Services

CC: The Honorable Queen Anne's County Commissioners
Dr. Devadason, Q.A. County Health Officer
Mr. LaMonte Cook, Acting County Administrator
Mr. Steven Kai-Zeigler, Planning Director

Enclosures: 5-25-90 Letter to J.L. Hearn
11-7-94 Letter to Steve Walls
Regarding Master Water and Sewer Plan Update Issues.