

Disease Vectors

Household wastewater contains pathogens and nutrients, some of which septic systems cannot remove. These are removed by the final treatment step that occurs in the soil after water has been released from the system.

When untreated waste escapes a septic system due to leaks, overflows or malfunctions, this water can make people and pets sick. How can this happen?

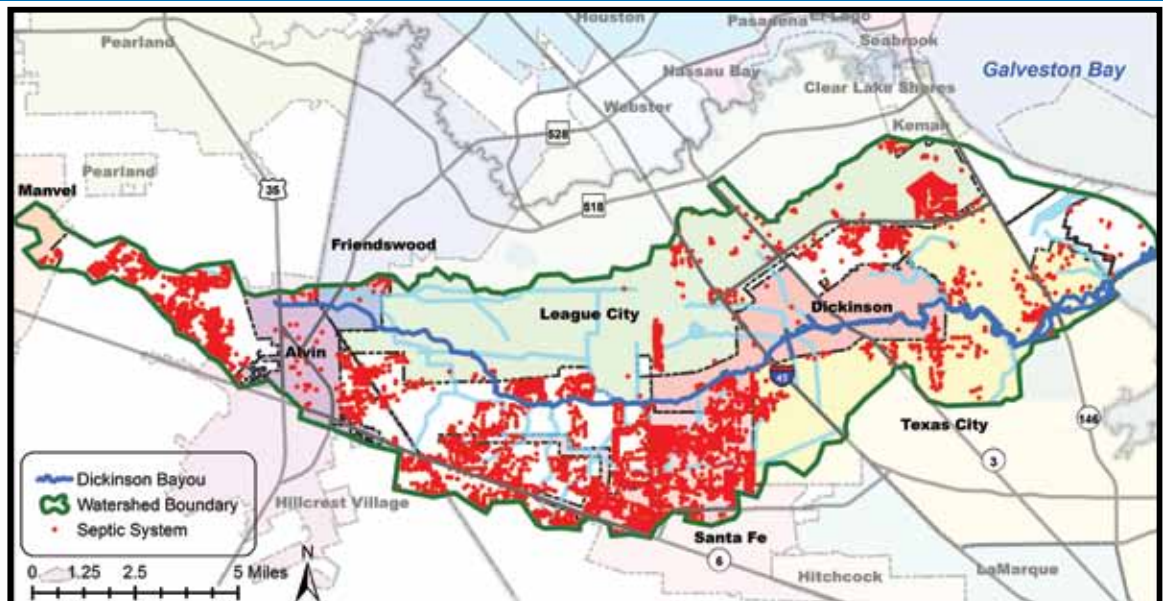
- Dogs and other pets will play in standing water and can easily transfer pathogens onto you as you pet them, or track them into your home.
- Flies and other insects land in the untreated wastewater, then travel to your outdoor dining areas or find their way into your kitchen, where they spread diseases.
- Partially treated or untreated water can also flow across your yard and into drainage ditches or directly into our creeks and bayous.

Traditional trench and leach field systems do not work well in the heavy clay soils and gumbo clay commonly found in Galveston and Brazoria counties. This is why most newly installed systems are required to be aerobic treatment units. The final step in a traditional septic system depends on soil infiltration; this is problematic in clay soils and often causes the system to not work at the designed specifications.

Maintenance is essential for all septic systems. A system that is properly designed, installed and maintained should function well for many years. Responsibility rests with the owner to keep their septic system in good working order.

Dickinson Bayou Watershed

Dickinson Bayou is considered by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to have high levels of bacteria and low levels of dissolved oxygen, and therefore does not meet its designated use. Malfunctioning septic systems have been identified as major sources of bacteria entering Dickinson Bayou. Find out more at www.dickinsonbayou.org.



The Dickinson Bayou watershed consists of all the land that drains into Dickinson Bayou. This watershed is located between Houston and Galveston, Texas. It is 105 square miles and contains 9 cities (Alvin, Dickinson, Friendswood, Kemah, League City, Manvel, San Leon, Santa Fe and Texas City) and two counties (Galveston and Brazoria).