

## **Opportunity to Take Action to Reduce Nitrogen in Ground Water**

Grant funds from the Bay Restoration Fund are available to help homeowners with septic systems upgrade to add a pretreatment device to replace a conventional septic tank.

Frederick County Health Department's Environmental Health Services staff has teamed up with the Canaan Valley Institute (CVI) to upgrade Onsite Sewerage Disposal Systems (OSDS) throughout the county, reducing the concentration of nitrogen in the system's effluent by 50% or more. The first commercial system is anticipated for installation this fall. Details of the steps involved in participating in this initiative are listed here (Health Dept fax of 10 steps).

CVI helps to identify and prioritize potential sites; coordinate with homeowners, select appropriate technologies, oversee installation, establish a management framework, and coordinate reimbursement requests with MDE. CVI is continuing to take applications to reach their goal of 60 OSDS upgrades by the end of 2009.

Although this is a terrific opportunity for County residents to take positive environmental action by installing pretreatment devices to replace septic tanks, routine septic maintenance is a key responsibility for all septic owners who are encouraged to have their systems inspected and pumped every three to five years. For further details on good system maintenance, see

<http://www.co.frederick.md.us/documents/Health%20Department/Health%20I&R/Septic%20Tank%20Manual.pdf>

As a result of the considerable success of the program in Frederick County, CVI has applied for Washington County to receive BRF funds in 2008. The Washington County program will focus on the Antietam and Conocogeague watersheds, both of which are listed on EPA's 303(d) list as impaired for fecal coliform.

For more information on Frederick County's participation in Maryland's Bay Restoration Fund or to apply to the program, please contact Dave Gatrell at 301 600-3157 or [dgatrell@fredco-md.net](mailto:dgatrell@fredco-md.net), or Kristin Mielcarek, Watershed Circuit Rider, Canaan Valley Institute, P.O. Box 673, Davis, WV 26260, 304-678-3446, [kristin.mielcarek@canaanvi.org](mailto:kristin.mielcarek@canaanvi.org).