

# Lake George Taking More Steps to Tackle Faulty Septic Systems

By Anthony F. Hall

Eric Murdock, a nationally-recognized expert in advanced onsite wastewater treatment systems, has been invited by the Town of Lake George to offer his assistance in its efforts to ensure that all systems within 100 feet of streams and 500 feet of Lake George comply with environmentally sound standards.

According to Supervisor Dennis Dickinson, Murdock will meet with residents at the Diamond Point Community Church on Monday, June 23 at 10 am to gather information and conduct tests that will enable him to fully assess the site and recommend the best location for the church parsonage's new system.

According to Kathy Bozony, who has been coordinating Lake George's Septic System Initiative, Murdock is a proponent of a technology that may be especially suited to Lake George.

"The technology was approved by New York State in 2011, but no one on Lake George is familiar with it, although it is designed for small sites near water bodies. We invited Eric Murdock to Lake George to help introduce this new technology to the area," she said.

Dickinson said he hopes Murdock's visit can assist the trustees of the Diamond Point Church as well as local residents develop efficient, cost effective systems that will protect Lake George and its tributaries from pollution that can be traced to failing septic systems.

"We want to develop models for everyone, and this site could be one of them" said Dickinson.

"Every site has its own challenges, especially those near water bodies," said Murdock. "The more challenging the site, the more sophisticated the system will be. There are different techniques to address a site's particular soils and its proximity to a stream or drinking water source."

Murdock will also lead a seminar on septic system design in Lake George for engineers, installers and regulators on August 5.

"Although I do engineering, my primary business is advising other engineers as well as towns and watershed associations," said Murdock, who helped plan Alternative Treatment Units for the US EPA's Skaneateles Lake Demonstration Project in the Finger



Eric Murdock

Lakes.

The Town of Lake George launched its Septic System initiative last summer, with an inventory of the systems along Smith Brook in Diamond Point.

"The Fund for Lake George has done testing in Diamond Point and verified that we have problems. We need to get them resolved," said Lake George Supervisor Dennis Dickinson.

According to Murdock, once wastewater permeates ground water, bacteria and nutrients can reach a stream or lake.

But with new septic systems, water quality can be restored relatively quickly, said Murdock.

Dickinson emphasized that the town is seeking the cooperation of residents and business owners and is not considering any enforcement actions.

Rather, he said, "The town wants to be an active partner, assisting in every way possible."

The Town has applied for grants that will enable it to pay half the costs of designing and engineering a new system, if a new system is warranted.

Moreover, he said, "The Fund for Lake George has offered to help pay for the installation of a new system if the homeowner is financially strapped."

Once a new septic system has been installed, the information will be permanently filed with the town and become part of the public record.

"That's verifiable, valuable information for a homeowner to have," said Dickinson. "When it comes time to sell the home, the value of the property will be higher than it would be without a certified system."