

DEQ's Septic and Onsite Wastewater Treatment Programs

October 20, 2023

Andy Ulven

Water Quality Planning Bureau



DEQ's Mission: Champion a Healthy Environment for a Thriving Montana

Within the mission lies an inherent challenge: grow and develop in a sustainable way that protects all beneficial uses of water.

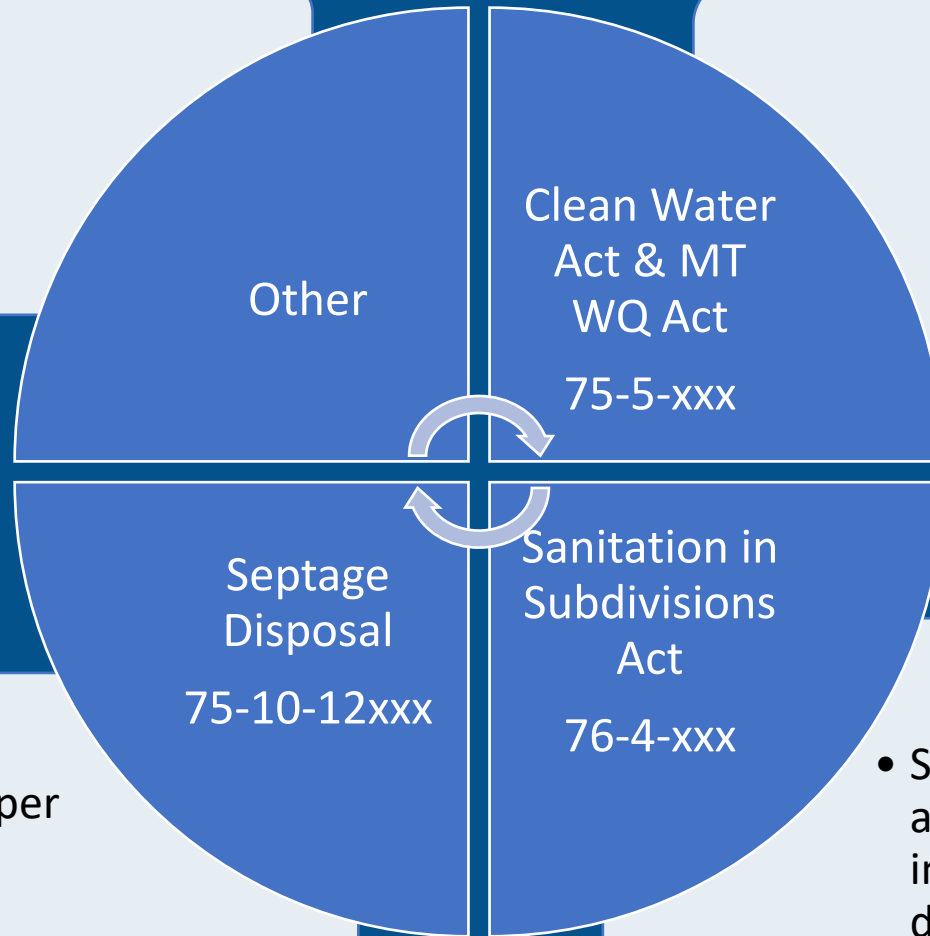


Three-fold challenge for DEQ:

- New development: rules and standards to evaluate
- Existing systems: maintenance, upgrades, connection to centralized treatment
- Septage management

Programs & Underpinning Statutes

- Enforcement
- Communications



- 303 (d)
- TMDL
- 319 funds
- Groundwater discharge
- Standards & Modeling

- Septic Tank Pumper Program
- Land application

- Standards for review and approval of subdivisions, including sewage disposal
- SATF, nondegradation

Limitations

- Onsite/septic systems follow low-density development
- LGU planning directs development, MCA 76-3-xxx
- Counties permit individual septic systems, MCA 50-2-xxx
- Public will/sentiment
- Septic leachate is a nonpoint source of pollution

Solutions and Optimism

- Local/regional level key: LGU planning with DEQ support
 - Flathead Septage Treatment Facility
- Funding to help exists
 - SRF, 319, DNRC HB 6 grants
- Positive changes within DEQ
- Education and outreach, partners
- Research can improve policy and DEQ program delivery

Questions?

