



GRATTAN TOWNSHIP

Grattan Township
12050 Old Belding Rd.
Belding, MI 48809

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Water Resources Division
P.O. Box 30458
Lansing, MI 48909-7958

January 3, 2017

To Whom It May Concern;

As Supervisor of Grattan Township in Kent County, there are grave concerns regarding the sanitary system surrounding one of the popular lakes in our Township. Majority of the residents on Cowan Lake as well as the Kent County Health Department share this concern.

Cowan Lake is a fifty-eight acre lake located in the northwest corner of Grattan Township and the southwest corner of Oakfield Township. Due to the large number of completely failed or failing septic systems around Cowan Lake, these Townships, along with the residents around Cowan Lake, are investigating the feasibility and costs of providing a wastewater collection and treatment system to serve the residents with lakefront property. In 2017, petitions in favor of a Special Assessment District among the lake front residents resulted with over sixty percent approval of installing a new sewer system. Unfortunately, the financial responsibility of each individual home owner is going to be well over \$30,000. The expectation of this financial burden for a majority of the residents whose income range is low, limited or fixed is improbable and discouraging.

Studies by the Kent County Health Department in 1990 indicated that 28 percent of individual septic systems serving homes around the lake had failed. The letter from the Kent County Health Department dated December 21, 2017, describes the dire condition the sanitary

system surrounding this lake is to date. Considering only thirteen percent of the septic systems conform to current standards, it is now time for Cowan Lake to get a system to keep their lake clean and not contribute waste to the surrounding watersheds.

Septic systems are failing due to age, high groundwater tables and poor soils for drain fields. This is leading to public health risks and degradation of water quality in the lake. The attachment titled *Cowan Lake Association May 24, 2016* indicates with sixty-seven lakefront dwellings, there is insufficient room within the parcels to replace these systems. Also see in this document a pie chart that demonstrates the failure percentage of the septic systems around Cowan Lake (pg. 13). The “Property Size” chart shows the secondary problem of not having large enough lots to install a new septic system (pg. 14). Individual properties are shown with their wells (blue circles) and their proximity to the septic systems (red squares and rectangles) (pgs. 16-26). The increase in property values as vacant lots become buildable and current lots increase in value with a sewer system as opposed to septic (pg. 27).

In 2016 Prein & Newhof produced a feasibility study and those numbers reflect on the application. Factored in as well is the upgrade of the wastewater treatment site to handle the additional load. A copy of this document is included.

If there are further questions or information required to understand the necessary action that is required to prevent sanitary issues surrounding Cowan Lake, please contact the Township at (616) 691-8450.

Thank you for your consideration,

Grattan Township Supervisor
Franklin J. Force

Encl: Strategic Water Quality Initiatives Grant Application
Kent County Health Department Bullet Point Presentation
Kent County Health Department Letter of Concern
Site Map of Cowan Lake Location
Prein & Newhof Feasibility Study
Cowan Lake Septic/Sewer Committee