

## Information about Pits

### Why do I need pits?

- Pits provide a more accurate reading of the soil and its ability to treat sewage.
- The requirement for pits was set by the Board of Health and approved by the county commissioners in early 2005. Since then, turnaround time for septic permits has been significantly decreased, as less time is needed to evaluate the soil.
- NC law requires backhoe pits for any soil containing saprolite, which occurs in approximately 50-75% of soil evaluations. Having pits initially eliminates the need for revisits every time saprolite is found, also speeding up the process.

### How do I dig pits?

- Pits can be dug with a backhoe or trackhoe. These can be dug by the property owner, the septic contractor or any trackhoe operator.
- They need to be 4' deep, 4' long, and 2-4' wide, depending on the width of the bucket.
- Dig them with the contour of the land and don't forget to make a step for easy entrance and exit.
- If necessary, pits can be hand-dug with a shovel, or post-hole diggers. They need to be 4' deep by 2' square.

### Where do I dig pits?

- Two pits are required in the area of initial septic drainfield, approximately 60ft-75ft apart, and one pit in the repair area, 50 ft-75 ft from the previous 2 pits.
- **DO NOT** dig the pits in the following areas:
  - o Ravines/gullies/depressions
  - o Drainage ways
  - o Within 50 ft of a surface water body (creeks/ponds/streams/etc.)
  - o Within 100 ft of any water supply (wells or springs)
  - o Within 5ft of a proposed house site
  - o Within 15ft of graded area
  - o Within 10 ft of property lines

### What if I'm still not sure where to dig pits?

- See below for an example or contact the Environment Health office.
- Contact an experienced septic contractor. A list of local contractors can be provided from the EH office.

