

CHECK THE SOILS BEFORE YOU BUY

Prepared by: Robert JL Thompson, MS-Engineering, EHST, EIT

4 March 2015
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Soils can contain a hidden liability that seriously limits development. Before you make any irreversible decisions be sure to have an environmental consultant take a look at the parcel. Investigating soils in advance can save you a lot of headaches further down the road.



WET SOILS

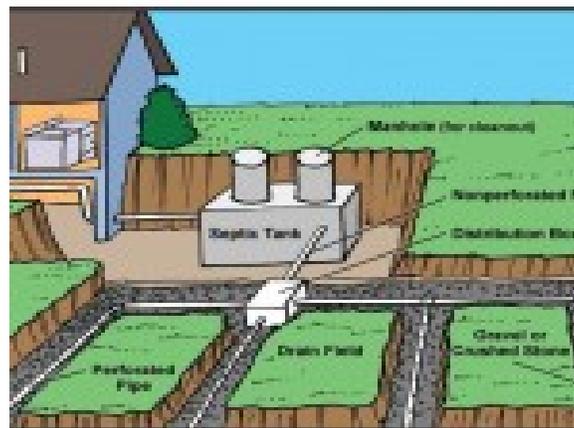
Did you know that a parcel can contain wetlands even if you never see water on the ground surface? We have seen a number of property owners become surprised by the discovery of hidden wetlands.



DEPTH TO WATER

Another way wet sites can be problematic is by limiting space suitable for onsite stormwater and wastewater management. These systems require soils with approvable qualities such as:

- Acceptable Infiltration Rates
- Appropriate Soil Structure
- No Saturation Near Surface



Septic drainfields can require as much area as a house

INFILTRATION RATES

Stormwater and wastewater infiltration systems must also be installed a number of feet above the water table. We often see that the water table height fluctuates throughout a site. This can be an important design element causing the drainfield to infringe upon your development envelope.



A test pit with a high water table

CONTAMINATION

Another challenge you can't see from the surface is contaminated soils. If this isn't discovered in time it becomes the buyer's responsibility to contain, clean, or remove the contaminated soils. When purchasing commercial land be sure to ask EMS about Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments to determine whether there are any indicators of hazardous contamination.



SPEAK WITH A CONSULTANT

EMS offers preliminary site assessment services to evaluate land for potential concerns. We evaluate sites for problem soils and high water table conditions to help you determine whether the parcel can support your development goals. We also consider additional red flags such as geohazards, drainage, surface waters, and other environmental conditions that can impact development.



When you think you found the right property for your needs give us a call to learn more about our preliminary site assessment services.