

## Outhouse, Septic Care, and Pumping

### **Dear Silver Lake Homeowners Association:**

This memo provides guidance for maintaining all of our outhouses, as well as guidelines for preparing your outhouse for pumping if and when that service may be provided. If you have questions, please feel free to call SLHOA Board Member, Scott Carroll, at 510-502-9648.

### **Outhouse Maintenance**

**Human waste and toilet paper should be the only waste put into your outhouse pit.** Do not dispose of baby wipes, feminine products, or other non-biodegradable items into your outhouse. Make it clear to guests that plastics and other materials that do not decompose, or are slow to decompose, need to go into the garbage bin, not in the outhouse.

Do not pour lye or baking soda in your outhouse pit as they can kill off the beneficial bacteria and block enzymes needed to break down waste.

Reduce the pile in your outhouse by regularly treating the contents with an enzyme or enzyme/bacteria-based waste digesting agent such as **Rid-X** or **Septonic**. These products will break down human waste, oils, and cellulose – such as toilet paper. Using these products can help reduce both the size and the smell of your waste pile. Rid-X and Septonic require water to perform their digestion, and work best when they can penetrate into the waste pile. So be sure to soak your outhouse for a few days ahead of application. If possible, stir the contents with a stick and mix the product with generous amounts of water when it is applied. Many cabin owners do this at least once at the end of the season, so that the break-down has the entire off-season to work its magic.

### **Outhouse and Septic Pumping**

**Homeowner Required Prep Work:** The sanitation trucks are designed to pump liquid waste, not dry/solid waste, meaning we need to condition our waste piles in order to have any degree of success. At a minimum of five (5) consecutive days prior to the sanitation truck arriving, cabin owners must prep their outhouses (includes all types of outhouses, pit, vault, and septic) by thoroughly soaking the content of their outhouses, filling them at least two thirds (2/3) with water and stirring, breaking up the content in the bottom. The waste must be loosened and thoroughly liquefied so it can be drawn up by the truck. You can use a product like Rid-X or Septonic in the first two days to help advance this process.

You may also wish to reassess the condition of your outhouse pit prior to requesting pumping. If it's not that bad, using Rid-X or Septonic may be all you need to break down what waste may be in there. Also, if your outhouse pit is more of a rock pit, than a dirt pit, the sanitation truck will likely not be able to pump it out properly due to the lack of water retention. If you pour in a bucket of water and it simply seeps through all the rocks, then you may have difficulty getting it into the proper condition for pumping. Again, consider using Rid-X or Septonic to break down the paper and waste.

**Please direct all questions to Scott Carroll, SLHOA Board Member, (510) 502-9648.**