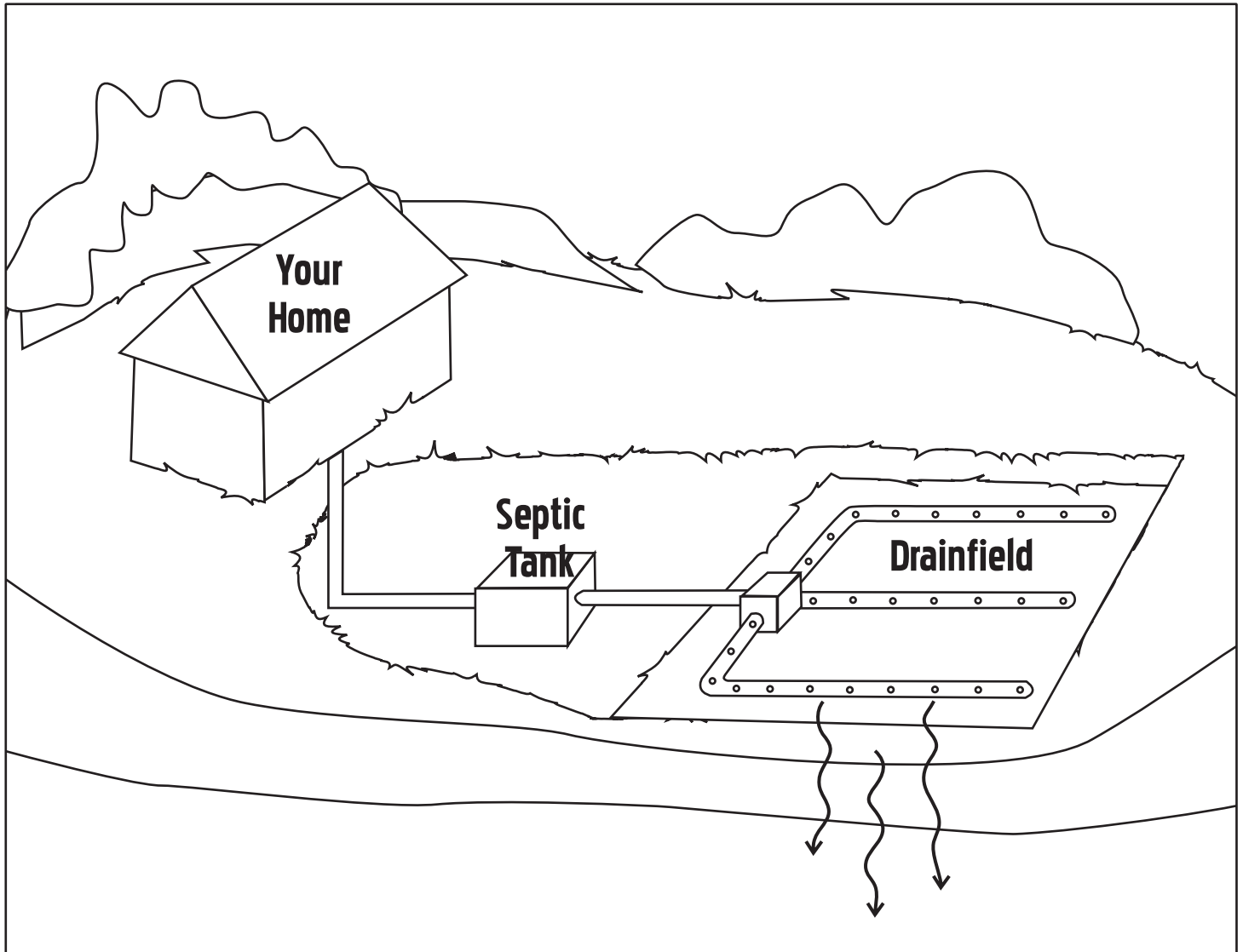


## About Your Septic System



A septic system consists of four main components. The first component is a home's indoor plumbing. This is simply the system of drains and pipes located inside a home that transports wastewater outside to the next major component, the septic tank. The septic tank is an underground, watertight container, made of concrete, fiberglass, or other durable material that resists corrosion.

The septic tank serves as the primary place of treatment for wastewater. Here, solids settle to the bottom of the tank and partially decompose with help from naturally occurring bacteria. A layer of soaps, greases and scum float on top of the liquid wastewater. Over time, the floating scum and submerged solids accumulate and must be removed by a qualified septic contractor.

The liquid wastewater contained in the septic tank is called effluent. The effluent exits the septic tank and enters the next major component of a septic system, the drainfield. Made of a series of parallel, underground, perforated pipes, the drainfield allows wastewater to percolate into the surrounding soil.

The soil is the final and most important component of a septic system. This is where the majority of wastewater treatment actually occurs. Through various physical and biological processes, most bacteria and viruses in wastewater, as well as some nutrients, are consumed as the wastewater effluent travels down through the soil layers.

The Groundwater Foundation  
[www.groundwater.org](http://www.groundwater.org) 1-800-858-4844