

Summary

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

AMENDMENT TO THE UPPER DELAWARE WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Public Notice

Take notice that on **JAN 14 1997**, pursuant to the provisions of the New Jersey Water Quality Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 58:11A-1 et seq., and the Statewide Water Quality Management Planning rules (N.J.A.C. 7:15-3.4), an amendment to the Upper Delaware Water Quality Management Plan was adopted by the Department of Environmental Protection (Department). This amendment adopts a Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) for Frelinghuysen Township in Warren County. This WMP is but one component of the regional WMP required of the Warren County (Pequest River) Municipal Utilities Authority. The WMP proposes the construction of two new sewage treatment plants (STPs) to serve the Johnsonburg and Marksboro areas. Both STPs will discharge to the ground waters, 0.231 million gallons per day (mgd) and 0.076 mgd, respectively. The Johnsonburg STP will serve existing and potential developments in Village Neighborhood (VN)-1, and portions of Agricultural Residential (AR)-2 and AR-3 zoned areas. The Marksboro STP will serve existing and potential development in VN-2, and portions of AR-2 and AR-3 zoned areas.

The existing Westbrook Farms Industrial Park/Dark Moon Road industrial area and surrounding Research, Office and Manufacturing (ROM) and AR-2 areas are identified as a Ground Water Discharge Area For Facilities With Design Flows of Less Than 20,000 Gallons Per Day (GPD).

The WMP also proposes an expansion of the existing Forest Manor Health Care Center STP discharge to ground water from its present discharge of 0.004 mgd to 0.015 mgd. The proposed STP expansion is needed to accommodate the proposed expansion of the facility from a 42 bed facility to a 120 bed facility.

The WMP proposes an expansion of the existing Frelinghuysen Township Elementary School STP discharge to ground water from its present discharge of 0.0017 mgd to 0.0038 mgd. The expansion is necessary to accommodate an increase in the student population to 250 students.

The ROM and Highway Commercial (HC) zoned areas along Route 94 are identified as Ground Water Discharge Areas for Facilities With Design Flows of Less Than 20,000 GPD. The remainder of the Township is identified as an Individual Subsurface Sewage Disposal System Ground Water Discharge Area For Facilities With Design Flows of Less Than 2,000 GPD.

This amendment proposal was noticed in the New Jersey Register on January 16, 1996. The notice identified projected wastewater flows of 0.175 mgd for the Johnsonburg STP and 0.057 mgd for the Marksboro STP. The Johnsonburg STP proposed sewer service area also included the Westbrook Farms Industrial Park/Dark Moon Road industrial area. Changes made since the preliminary notice reflect corrections in calculations and clarifications to the proposal which was noticed with only an initial review. The modifications made do not reflect significant changes to the actual intent of the initial proposal. Additionally, the Department received no requests for review of the proposal. Comments on this amendment were received during the public comment period and are summarized below with the Department's responses.

COMMENT: The location of the present site of Forest Manor Health Care Center is not an appropriate site for a STP due to the presence of wetlands, seasonal flooding and runoff.

RESPONSE: The site does have wetlands and a few areas indicated as prone to flooding. However, the portion of the site scheduled for construction of the proposed addition, STP and disposal beds is not located in a flood prone area. There is a relatively low lying area on the easterly portion of the Forest Manor site directly adjacent to State Park Road where the roadway forms an embankment to the property and water must pass through a corrugated metal pipe to discharge from the site to downstream areas. According to the applicant, this area is normally dry but in extreme rains the limited capacity of the pipe causes water to backup and temporarily inundate the low part of the field. The disposal beds area will not be located in this area but rather on high ground in front of the existing Forest Manor building. Similarly, the STP is to be located in the middle part of the site on high ground distant from the low lying area. Forest Manor has completed a wetlands delineation. The low lying area in question was delineated as wetlands and Forest Manor obtained a permit to disturb those wetlands as part of the proposed construction. A detention basin is proposed for construction at that location and will be designed in accordance with the Township's Stormwater Ordinance.

COMMENT: The present conventional sewage treatment system is being fed detergents, solvents, pharmaceuticals and human wastes. Expanding the ground water discharge five fold into an area of wetlands and aquifer recharge does not demonstrate good waste management practices.

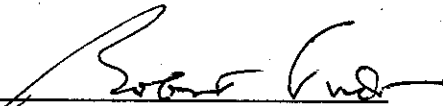
RESPONSE: The list of wastes (except for solvents) is typical of sanitary wastes. According to the New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NJPDES)-Discharge to Ground Water application, the applicant proposes a STP capable of discharging effluent treated to ground water quality standards for nitrate-nitrogen with bacteria and viruses being removed by the filtering action of the disposal beds. The discharge of non-sanitary waste is prohibited. The NJPDES permit will require monitoring of the treatment plant effluent for volatile organic chemicals, some of which are solvents. This type of system is routinely approved by the Department and usually functions well if operated properly. Therefore, it is not considered a significant threat to the aquifer.

COMMENT: A public hearing was requested due to concerns regarding the expansion of the Forest Manor Health Care Facility.

RESPONSE: The Department generally holds hearings when the proposed action generates issues that can reasonably be addressed through a wastewater management plan rather than at the permit stage. All of the public issues raised to us focus on the proposed Forest Manor Health Care Facility, specifically with regard to issues of ground water discharge design, stormwater management and wetlands, which are essentially permitting issues. Issues regarding development patterns, long-term wastewater needs or wastewater capacity were not raised. Recognizing there may still be a benefit to additional public knowledge of the wastewater management plan proposal the Department is willing to attend an informational meeting at the Township held in conjunction with the Township and the health care facility representatives. Numerous attempts were made by the Department to schedule such a meeting prior to adoption of the amendment; however, due to scheduling conflicts among the various parties it was not possible. Due to the extensive delays in the progress of the amendment, of which the health care facility was not responsible, the Department did not feel there was a need to additionally detain the facility in obtaining its permits

based on waiting for a meeting schedule which has thus far been unattainable. If the commenting parties remain interested in having an informational meeting the Department is willing to attend.

This amendment represents only one part of the permit process and other issues will be addressed prior to final permit issuance. Additional issues which were not reviewed in conjunction with this amendment but which may need to be addressed may include, but are not limited to, the following: antidegradation; effluent limitations; water quality analysis; exact locations and designs of future treatment works (pump stations, interceptors, sewers, outfalls, wastewater treatment plants); and development in wetlands, flood prone areas, designated Wild and Scenic River areas, or other environmentally sensitive areas which are subject to regulation under Federal or State statutes or rules.



Robert Tudor
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Department of Environmental Protection

1/14/97

Date