

Dearborn County Water Quality Management Plan Update

Public Meeting Summary: May 9, 2011, 7-9 p.m.

Dearborn County Adult Center, Lawrenceburg, Indiana

Twenty-seven people attended the public meeting. A 25-minute PowerPoint presentation about the Dearborn County Water Quality Management Plan Update project was given by OKI staff at the beginning of the meeting and is posted on the Dearborn County website.

Part of the presentation concerned the considerations that had gone into proposing wastewater facility planning areas (FPAs) and the designated management agencies (DMAs) for them. It also included a revised draft FPA and DMA map which was being displayed for the first time at the public meeting and simultaneously on the Dearborn County website.

Comments were invited both orally in a question and comment period after the presentation and in writing through a survey questionnaire that was available at the meeting in hard copy and is also available through the Dearborn County website until June 8.

The oral questions and comments that followed the presentation are summarized below:

Question: Why were comments at the last meeting (on April 11th) ignored? Please explain what's shown on the map for the Manchester area.

Response: The FPA map has been updated because of input from the April 11th Advisory Committee meeting and responses provided by some of the management agency members of the committee after that meeting (which are posted on the county website). The map is different, but comments were not ignored. They were incorporated into the map revisions.

Question: Why limit our boundaries so much? The South Dearborn Regional Sewer District (SDRSD) plant has a capacity of 6 million gallons (MGD) per day.

Response: Input from the Advisory Committee at the April 11th meeting made it clear to OKI that cities can't be expected to pay for solving problems outside their boundaries, like the hot spots of failing on-site wastewater treatment systems. (A summary of the April 11th meeting is available on the Dearborn County website.) So who will pay to address problems in the unincorporated areas?

The Dearborn County Regional Sewer District (DCRSD) is best positioned to address the hot spots in the unincorporated areas of the county, as it is the only entity that has expressed consistent interest in doing so and it has access to local

funding which can be used for that purpose. The DCRSD has a history of operating by interlocal agreements in which they build sewer systems which then are connected to existing treatment capacity. With that approach, OKI staff would expect that additional interlocal agreements could be undertaken to address hotspots such as Guilford, which could then send sewage to the South Dearborn Regional District plant for treatment.

Question: Were the things on the considerations slide used to put the DCRSD in control of treating the areas proposed?

Response: The items on the slide contributed to the decision about the areas for which the DCRSD is proposed as the designated management agency (DMA), which means DCRSD would be responsible for planning how the areas get treatment.

Question: How much weight was put on each bullet of the considerations slide? Was the last bullet (the wastewater management agencies' current and planned service areas, current and planned treatment capacities, operational issues, and institutional resources) given the greatest weight, especially for funding?

Response: It's not a weighted system. OKI took specific local issues into consideration in tandem with the situation for each wastewater management provider. For example, the FPA boundary west of Aurora was brought in more tightly based on comments from Aurora that they didn't want to expand sewer service beyond where they provide water service. The western FPA boundary for Dillsboro was also tightened at Dillsboro's request so it did not include the unincorporated problem areas around Lake Dilldear. Other changes were made in response to input about topographic constraints for LMH service in an eastern portion of the county, and that Moores Hill can't borrow additional funds for collection system expansion because they have a 40-year loan for their current treatment plant construction.

Question: Why are the hot spots outside most of the FPAs except for the DCRSD? Why leave the hot spots to an additional layer of bureaucracy?

Response: The hot spots were put completely into one FPA or another as it is most realistic to expect that they would be addressed by one management agency. The area previously identified on OKI's FPA maps as "Rural Dearborn County" was in fact an FPA, but one for which a management agency had not been named because population densities at the time did not warrant planning for centralized treatment. In this plan update, OKI is labeling FPAs with the name of their DMA because of suggestions from some Advisory Committee members that such labels make it clear who is responsible for planning in a given area.

- Question: Does the DCRSD then have jurisdiction in the FPA?
- Response: The idea behind designated management agencies for FPAs is that they are responsible for evaluating wastewater treatment alternatives and pursuing those that are environmentally sound, technically feasible and cost-effective.
- Question: When a 208 Plan update is adopted, and I'm an individual with a wastewater problem, what agency can I go to in order to make sure someone takes care of my problem?
- Response: The DMA for wastewater treatment and collection in your FPA, unless there are multiple DMAs for collection in your FPA, in which case you would go to the DMA serving or nearest you.
- Comment: According to state law, all unincorporated areas are the county's responsibility for wastewater treatment because the county permitted the unincorporated developments.
- Comment: If homes must be condemned for failing septic systems, Dearborn County must step up to resolve the problem.
- Comment: It's good that the hot spots map addresses density, because some unincorporated developments were planned at a density that promised eventual centralized sewage service.
- Comment: We can't count on interlocal agreements. At this point, some sewage will be sent to Ohio rather than treated locally for the benefit of Dearborn County tax payers, who make sewage service possible. Dearborn County tax payers are also Dearborn County customers and rate payers. Additional flow to St. Leon helps to stabilize rates, and to increase plant capacity for Dearborn County tax payers.
- Comment: We should look at un-bundled rate structures, in which new customer rates go down as projects are built and paid for. Such a rate structure looks at 1) construction/installation; 2) transport; and 3) treatment.
- Comment: Yes, my sewer bill in Dillsboro recently decreased, because the town recently paid off construction and installation.
- Comment: There isn't enough money to provide sewers to many of the areas with septic problems. Besides, some areas can be made suitable for septic systems if the right amount of space is available, or there are other new technologies available for on-site systems besides septic tanks.
- Response: That's a good point. Water quality management planning does not necessarily assume that centralized treatment will be provided throughout every FPA, as

sewer service depends on many factors. The idea is to identify management agencies responsible for evaluating alternatives and planning, thus avoiding duplication of effort.

Comment: Dearborn County needs the foresight to set aside money for extending sewer service to areas with pollution. Problems arose years ago as a result of poor planning. Progress is being made. For example, the DCRSD addressed the lack of service on Stewart Road even though it's in an incorporated area.

Comment: An overriding problem is that nobody has had enough money to do much.

Following the question and answer period, participants at the meeting were encouraged to visit displays set up in the room and provide additional input. The displays were organized into a series of exhibit stations. Below are comments summarized from the Non-Point Source and Land Use/Population Trends stations:

Non-Point Source Pollution Displays

- Old Flood Hazard maps do not accurately show all of the area subject to flooding.
- More recent digital maps placed additional areas that are already developed into the flood hazard zone. Bonnel Road is a good example of this problem.
- A house off Jameson Road is being threatened by a landslide down a 40% slope behind their house, which was built at least eight years ago. Heavy and constant rain this spring is causing the problem.
- (Lawrenceburg and Greendale) – Dearborn County will not get official FEMA digital maps until the levees in Lawrenceburg and Greendale are certified. Aurora also may have levees. This affects St. Leon, Dillsboro, Moores Hill, West Harrison, and unincorporated Dearborn County, even though they are not protected by the levees. FEMA and IDEM had pledged the digital maps by 2006 or 2007.
- Now Dearborn County does not know when the flood map process will resume. When people seek building permits, the County must refer to outdated and sometimes inaccurate maps from 1981.
- We need to avoid instances where a developer or a prospective homeowner is bounced back and forth between the DCRSD and a municipality for sewage service.
- Much will depend on inter-local agreements, which will depend on better cooperation among the sewage service providers.

Population and Land Use Displays

- LMH:
 - Could reasonably serve to the top of hill (Bell Arbor/Haas Rd. vicinity to N.E. of the currently proposed area.

- Guilford area service discussed - options exist for either Greendale or Lawrenceburg to serve and send treatment to SDRSD.
- Much discussion about extending sewer service to Logan at Mt. Pleasant and North Dearborn roads
- Surprised no hotspot is shown on Haas Road, Morgan Road, and North Dearborn Road
- St. Leon: Western area should go to Trackville Road to 46 to E. Tanners Creek.
- Need to get water providers to turn off water service to households that do not pay their sewer bill. (Some households will pay the water portion of the water/sewer bill, and then say they don't have enough money to pay the sewer bill.)
- The notch between the Dillsboro FPA and DCRSD FPA southwest of High Ridge was questioned – what is the purpose of this notch-out? (it accounts for the existing High Ridge FPA)