

Woodridge Lake Sewer District Update

Since the last issue of *Breezes*, the Woodridge Lake Sewer District (WLSD) Board, its planning committee, staff and consulting engineers, have continued to focus on two critical tasks.

The first of these is investigating our collection system to identify and limit the Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) of water into the system. This is due to problems with the system itself creating excess flow and volume spikes which occur during periods of prolonged rain or winter thaw. These spikes have been measured at between 55,000 and 340,000 gallons a day.

The second is negotiating with the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to agree upon appropriate tests of our groundwater disposal system's ability to absorb wastewater into a ridge and furrow system of filter beds which absorb wastewater from our treatment plant and hold it underground until it ultimately discharges into the Bantam River. Although the negotiations have been long, we believe we are now close to an agreement with the DEEP. If all goes well, the actual testing of our groundwater disposal system will take place next spring. We recently retained environmental counsel to assist us in this negotiation and to guide us through the process of developing a new Facilities Plan.

Since 1989 when the Consent Order permitting our operation was issued, environmental regulations have become more stringent, requiring, at a minimum, an upgrade of our plant. In addition, the Consent Order permitted the WLSD to treat and dispose of a limit of 100,000 gallons of wastewater a day. Securing an increase in that limit will be difficult. We are in an AA watershed, CT's highest water quality level. In the past, the DEEP has proposed that we construct a pipeline and pumping stations to send our sewage to Torrington's treatment plant. We know this would be a very expensive solution.

The WLSD has developed, and the DEEP has approved, a Scope of Work for the WLSD to create a new Facilities Plan. The DEEP has agreed to pay 55% of the cost of this work from the Connecticut Clean Water Fund. The WLSD taxpayers voted to fund the remainder of the cost. The Scope of Work includes I&I work; testing of our groundwater disposal system; evaluations of the Torrington solution or upgrades to our current system; and a comparison of costs. The

WLSD Board is committed to finding an environmentally sound and financially acceptable solution for our sewage disposal.

For all of the reasons described it is exceptionally important for us to reduce the flow of water into our collection system. We have historical flow data from the six pump stations located around the lake, as well as other data, which have helped us to identify problem areas. Our I&I work has and will include inspection of individual homes to identify faulty or illegal hook-ups to the system and broken connections or sump pumps; clearing of the WLSD's easements where they run through homeowner's property; CCTV inspections of sewage pipe segments for breaks or other sources of inflow and the examination and repair of manholes; smoke and dye tests to determine if drains, downspouts and such are improperly connected to the sewer system; and flow meters installed in individual homes. We expect more of this activity in the near future.

Wherever the I&I program has affected individual homeowners, the WLSD has notified homeowners in advance through letters, certified letters, 911 reverse telephone calls, individual telephone calls and other means. As of this writing, the homeowners involved have been extremely cooperative. Because of the great importance of the I&I program to all of us as a community, we expect that homeowner cooperation will continue.

Each issue of *Breezes* through the past year has contained updates on our work. Several community meetings have been held as well. As our work progresses, we will keep you informed through postings on our website at www.wlsl-dgoshen.org.

