

DEEP CREEK DISPATCH

Fall, 2003

Newsletter of the
Property Owners' Association
of Deep Creek Lake, Incorporated

Sewers Are Coming

Earlier this fall the Garrett County Commissioners voted to enlarge the Deep Creek Sanitary District. Areas to be included are the top of Marsh Mt.(Wisp) and the mountain on the other side of McHenry Cove in the Gravelly Rd. area. Sewers are needed in these areas because of building currently under way, or planned by several developers. Some development has already occurred on Marsh Mt.

It is our understanding that the developers will install sewage transmission lines within their development and bring lines down the mountain to connect with existing lines. Some of the force main transmission lines are not of sufficient size to carry the increased flow, and the plans and current estimate includes a new force main off the back side of Wisp (Marsh) Mountain proceeding across the west end of the dam to the Deep Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant.

In addition, the existing waste water (sewage) treatment plant on Mayhew Inn Rd. is in need of major maintenance and improvements to meet more stringent discharge requirements which have been proposed by the State of Maryland, and which will be required by increased discharge to the Yough River.

The more controversial part of these changes and plans is who will pay and how much. The first plan was a non starter. Under the original proposal all current and future users would pay an equal share as an ad valorem property tax. Some future users would start paying years before they received service. Wow! Fortunately the commissioners realized (with some input from your POA and others) that such a plan was grossly unfair.

The estimated cost to fix problems with the existing treatment plant and to increase capacity is \$15.6 million. It is further estimated that of this, 45% is attributed to replacement and improvement and 55% is for increased capacity. The major maintenance portion also

includes work on some of the transmission lines and pumping stations. Because we have a pressure system, more maintenance is required than for a gravity flow system. Assuming a 20 year loan at 4.75% interest, yearly payment for the 45% amount of \$7,076,000 amounts to \$550,000. Distributed among the current users this comes to \$169 per ERU. An ERU is an equivalent residential unit. It is assumed that a typical residence generates 262 gallons of sewage per day. Currently there are 3,249 active ERU's. Motels, hotels, and restaurants and homes with more than 3.5 bathrooms are counted and charged as more than one ERU. This billing procedure is not typical of most sewage treatment systems. Usually there is a public water system, and each user has a water meter. The sewage treatment bill is based on the number of gallons of water used. Although 380 customers in McHenry are on a public water system, the rest of Deep Creek Lake (DCL) does not have a public water system and there are no meters. There are inequities in the present system. A small weekend summer cottage generates a lot less sewage than a larger year 'round home, or a so called mini hotel but both may pay the same depending on the number of bathrooms. As long as costs are low the difference is also low. Currently the annual cost per ERU is \$248, so the typical cost difference between a large and small user might be in the order of \$100. However, as annual costs increase the difference will be hundreds of dollars. Under the present fee structure, a home with lots of bathrooms pays a much larger initial connection charge. Currently the actual fee depends on the number of bathrooms as follows: 0 to 0.5 bathrooms free, 3.5 to 6 bathrooms is \$3,500, and 6.5 to 9 bathrooms is \$7,000, and for more than nine bathrooms the tap on fee is \$10,500.

One solution is either water or sewage meters. Recording watt meters have been suggested for the grinder

pumps. This sounds simple and cheap, but several technical problems are not obvious. As flow in the main line increases, pressure increases and the amount of current (Watts) required to pump the same amount of sewage increases, or if the float associated with the grinder pump sticks, the pump will run on and on. The Department of Public Utilities (DPU) has investigated effluent sewerage flow meters and the estimated cost including installation was \$2,000, not including meter reading and other annual costs. They believe the best solution will be expansion of the McHenry public water system so that regular water meters can be used, at least for that portion of DCL. In fact the DPU hopes to increase the McHenry water system from 100,000 gallons per day (GPD) to 1,000,000 GPD. They have published a Request for Proposal (RFP) to study such an increase. In addition the DPU will be testing some existing community wells for possible inclusion into the McHenry system. These test are to begin this December.

Many residents have asked why sufficient monies were not set aside for these expensive maintenance items. Although we don't have all the answers and financial data, we do know that additional expenses were incurred over the years by adding a provision to discharge the septic tank pumper trucks at the treatment plant rather than spreading on farm fields. The storage tanks were added to try to level the gallons per day to be treated. This is of course due to heavy loads on weekends, and more flow in summer than in winter. Such changes to flow are always difficult for any continuous process.

Residents may also remember a plan to increase treatment capacity utilizing a spray irrigation system at the White Face Farm. More recent engineering estimates indicate expansion of the existing treatment facility will cost less per gallon of increased capacity, and would be able to treat more total waste water.

We now see how the cost to a current user will total \$417 per year (the present rate of \$248 plus \$169 for major maintenance and improvement). How about the new folks on the hill? They will pay \$591 per year (\$343 debt service + \$248 user fee), plus an estimated average \$5,000 tap on fee. Whether the developer or new property owner pays the connection fee will make little difference, since the developer will certainly pass on his costs into the selling price of the property. The \$5,000 charge is required since all the new homes on the mountain tops will be not built at once at the instant that the sewage treatment plant is expanded, but the annual debt service cost of \$ 571 will begin at once.

The DPU is "wading through the minefields" of regulations to see if much of the work can be made eligible for various grants. One problem is the Smart Growth legis-

lation passed by the Glendening administration. "Smart Growth" requires expansion into areas that already have infra-structure, rather than expand into new areas. This scheme does not seem to fit well in DCL.

The plan for the subsequent expansion of the DCL Sanitary District will be to include Sandy Beach and Stockslager Rd., followed by Turkey Neck, Green Glade, and Hazelhurst by 2008. Further expansion of the treatment plant will be needed to add those areas, although sewerage from the south end of DCL may be treated at a location other than the Mayhew Inn Rd. facility. Cost estimates for those changes are not yet available. To accommodate these areas will require that the treatment capacity be increased from 1.4 million gallons per day (MGD) to 2.1 MGD. Phase I of the overall plan to serve the mountain top developments is planned to increase capacity from 0.6 MGD to 1.4 MGD. A collection and conveyance study for the south end of DCL is being performed by Whitman, Requardt, and Associates. It is possible that providing sewers to much of this area may not be economically feasible. The *Dispatch* will keep you posted.

Many have asked about the recent flurry of public utility proposals, not only for DCL but other areas of the County. In the past, the Garrett County Sanitary District came under direction of The Garrett County Sanitary Commission. Members of this Commission were paid a small salary and they paid Sanitary District manager and his staff. The most recent manager was Ron Patrella, who reported to the Sanitary Commission. In April of 2003 the County Government (i.e. County Commissioners) was given authority over the former Garrett County Sanitary District through State legislation. Shortly after the Governor signed the legislation into law, the Garrett County Department of Public Utilities (DPU) was formed and Mark Tonkovich was appointed director. Mark reports to the County Commissioners, and is advised, not directed, by a citizen advisory commission.

Zoning

Many of you may recall that recent Zoning Ordinance amendments which had been proposed by the POA to limit so called "mini- hotels" included a provision that required one parking place per bedroom. Silver Ridge, the community on the South side of Glendale Road across from the Silver Tree, applied for a variance to allow only one parking place per two bedrooms. They had submitted a site plan prior to adoption of the ordinance, although it appeared to the casual observer that construction did not begin until after the changes were adopted. Your POA wrote a formal letter objecting to

granting a variance, and POA President Judge Fred Thayer was in attendance at the public hearing to voice our objection. We are happy to report that the requested variance was turned down by unanimous vote of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Recycle

The Garrett County Supervisor of Solid Waste would like to remind property owners that a Refuse Site Permit is NOT required to dispose of recyclable materials at the County collection sites. Newspapers, glass bottles, and aluminum cans are collected at all sites. In addition, the Kings Run Road site (just off US 219 north of Oakland) accepts corrugated cardboard and number 2 plastic (typically milk bottles). The Grantsville site collects used motor oil, and recently began accepting number 1 plastic (polyethylene terephthalate—PET) typically soft drink bottles. In 2002 Garrett County recycled 17% of its solid waste.

Next year the Weber Rd. Site (just off US 219 South of Oakland) will be expanded. When completed that site is expected to collect all the items mentioned above. For questions about Garrett County's recycling program call 301-387-0322.

The 2004 refuse sticker for your windshield is now on sale. Pick up the application at your favorite collection site.

Corrections

Catherine Mateer, the lady who handles your buy down, wants you to know that her correct e-mail address is: catherine.mateer@dgs.state.md.us. The address in the last issue of the *Dispatch* was in error.

We also reported that Barry Weinberg was the chairman of the Deep Creek Lake Policy and Review Board (a.k.a. P&RB); the chairman is John Foreman.

Rescue Squad Service to DCL

It has been reported, and confirmed by Brad Frantz, director of the Garrett County Office of Emergency Management, that during the period from Aug. 2002 to July 2003, 58 percent of calls to the Northern Rescue Squad's ambulance resulted in either no response or a delayed response. The McHenry area of DCL is growing rapidly. Currently areas north of the US 219 bridge over DCL are served by the Northern Rescue Squad located in Accident. Areas south of the bridge are served by Southern Rescue, which is currently located in Oak-

land, but is planning to move to Mt. Lake Park. Although there has been talk of a third squad in the McHenry area, present plans call for improvements to the Accident group. Volunteer manpower (or women power) is typically in short supply. Help from lake area residents is urgently needed and would be greatly appreciated.

2004 United Way Campaign Kicked off in Garrett County

The fourth year of the local United Way campaign started in October. The Board of Directors of the POA has endorsed this charity. We do not give our funds, but urge our members to do so. To obtain United Way monies, an agency must provide information showing specific benefit to Garrett County residents. The agencies supported and their program descriptions are presented in the enclosed brochure. The United Way and the POA Board appreciate the past support of POA members. You have been leaders in group giving the last three years. Please fill out the attached form and send your contribution to the United Way in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

Summary of August General POA Membership Meeting

State Senator John Hafer, Delegate George Edwards as well as County Commissioners Gregg, Beard, and Holliday greeted the members.

Paul Durham, lake manager announced a public hearing set for Sept. 6 concerning an annual pass for boat launching at the State Park. The Secretary of the DNR will make a final decision on this matter.

Paul also indicated that about 50% of the carrying capacity surveys had been returned. In response to concerns raised by the *Dispatch* and the POA, Paul explained that if those responsible for group docks would send a list of names and addresses of slip holders, additional surveys could be sent to a sampling of this group. Paul also reminded those present that dock permit holders can pull boats at the State Park without fee if they show their dock permit (a.k.a. buffer strip use permit).

John Foreman, chairman of the P&RB told the membership that the Governor had appointed Wendell Beitzel as replacement for Ursala Franklin.

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POA Board Members

Name & e-mail	Term	phone	Name & e-mail	Term	phone
Lou Battistella 2004	'04	301-387-2094 Lbatt859@aol.com	Carole Perez, Secretary	'05	301-387-5406 clperez@mindspring.com
Michael Belmonte	'06	301-387-6371	Ted Rissell, VP, Membership'05		301-387-6463 tedriss@earthlink.net
Katheryn Gemberling	'04	301-384-2850 kgember@aol.com	Mark Rothman	'06	301-229-7992 mrothman@paleyrothman.com
T.R. Janes	'05	301-334-2118 trjanes@ejslaw.net	Jack Seelig	'06	703-323-7076 jwseelig@hotmail.com
Scott Johnson	'06	301-387-8547 scottjohnson@coldwellbanker.com	Robert Sutton	'05	301-387-4957
Jonathan Kessler	'06	301-387-6229	Fred Thayer, President	'04	301-387-9439 fthayer@mindspring.com
Ed King	'05	301-387-5702 ed.king@longandfoster.com	Roger Titus, Vice President..	'04	301-365-2930 rwtitus@venable.com
W. Tom Myers, Treasurer	'05	301-387-9162 tom@mountaineerlog.com	Barry Weinberg	'06	
William Nickles	'04	301-387-2506 bnickles@gcnetmail.net	Frank Wolffe	'04	703-356-7604

Cathy Mateer of the Department of General Services reminded property owners not to cut down trees on the buy down area, either before or after purchase of the buy-down.

Randy Whittier, acting captain of the DNR Police, answered a few questions. These included an explanation of why the boat noise test is conducted at the dock. He did not explain however, why the test is done at idle and why the maximum allowable noise level is 90 decibels.

Barry Weinberg was elected to the POA board to replace Ed Peters who resigned at the end of his three year term.

e-mail

Many of you have supplied your e-mail address on your POA membership application. This has been recorded along with your mailing address, home and lake phone numbers. This year the *Dispatch* was able to transfer the e-mail addresses to a Netscape address book. We sent two e-mails to about 900 members. First, we wish to apologize to those who received the first message. We sent notice of an important public hearing concerning

expansion of sewers at DCL. Unfortunately we called the message "Urgent Notice" and did not send with "blind cc's". As a result of the subject, the anti Spam feature used by AOL deleted our "Urgent Message." And those who did get the message got a list of hundreds of POA members. We are sorry for the inconvenience and our lack of Internet savvy.

There was a second public hearing about the sewers and we again sent an e-mail. A different subject matter was selected and the blind cc feature was used. However, again the anti Spam feature available on AOL blocked the message, as it had "learned" that your *Dispatch* editor is a Spamer.

However, if there is a need to reach as many of you as possible with a truly urgent message, we will try again, keeping in mind our lessons learned.

Membership

As of November, POA membership stood at 1305, with 279 reporting that they are full time DCL residents. A 2004 dues notice will be sent with the Winter 2004 issue of the *Dispatch*.