

LAKE PEWAUKEE SANITARY DISTRICT NEWS JULY 2009

Please visit our web site at lakepewaukeesd.org

THE STORM OF 2009 – On June 19th we experienced a 24 hour rainfall event of over 5.5 inches. Although it was not as bad as last year's epic storm, it did cause us problems. A large area of homes without power caused a tremendous amount of water from flooded basements to enter the sanitary sewer. This was ground and rainwater that normally would have been pumped to the road ditches by sump pumps.

By 6AM the pump station downstream of this area was to the point that with all three pumps running at the same time they could not keep up with the flow. At this time we began to by-pass from a manhole into wetlands. This is a decision that is not taken lightly. It is done only when there is danger of backing sewage into basements. The by-passing continued at the minimum rate possible until the threat had passed.

We were also required to by-pass at our main pumping station on Elm Street in the City of Pewaukee. The by-pass was for about 15 minutes when two of the three pumps at that station became plugged with debris that was flushed down the sewer lines with the high flows.

The debris that plugged up the pumps is a constant problem. Under normal conditions, when the pumps are starting and stopping, most of it will pass. At the very minimum we have two other pumps to take over, when the pumps run continuously that is not the case. During this event we were required to dismantle and clean pumps seven times

So what is this debris? It is all of the disposable items that are not flushable. These may include, handi-wipes or other cloth cleaning towels, disposable diapers, toilet cleaning brushes, rubber gloves, tampon applicators and condoms. This is just a few of the items that get tangled together as they flow down the line to our pump station. Underwear, golf balls, two by four chunks, rope, mop heads and a complete insulated sweat shirt have found their way to our pumps. There is only one way to remove this material and that is to take the pump apart and remove it by hand. This is a most unpleasant job, to say the least.

We ask that you please read the label carefully on all disposable products to see which are flushable and which are not. Make sure you dispose of them properly. And please remember the same products that plug our pumps have the potential to plug your private lateral.

LAKE CONDITIONS- as of this writing we are beginning to see milfoil starting to grow, although it is in small patches. Water clarity has been very good and in some of the deep water areas we can see the milfoil but it is still too deep to cut. Shore clean-up had been going well until the high winds kept us from getting to some shorelines. We are hoping to have all properties cleaned by the Fourth.

FLOATING DEBRIS - We would like to extend a special thanks to all of you that have been stacking weeds for pick-up. It has allowed us to get around with the normal clean-up crews faster. For those of you who are unfamiliar with this service, if you rake and stack floating weeds on a pile where our transport can reach them, we pick them up on Mondays and Fridays. Please do not stack them on your pier. If high winds or other conditions would keep us off the lake, you could be left with a stack in your way for the weekend.

EQUIPMENT ON THE LAKE – We have received several calls regarding operations of the various equipment on the lake and what it is doing. To help prevent confusion on what piece of equipment is in your area the machines are color coded.

The Transports are blue. We use them to pick-up stacked weeds on Mondays and Fridays. Their main function is to pick up weeds from the shore barges and harvesters when their storage holds are full.

The Harvesters are yellow. Their job is to cut and harvest plants from the end of the piers to approximately the buoy line. We do not cut from the ends of the piers to shore.

The Shore barges are orange. They are used to pick-up floating debris along the shoreline. They generally have a crew of three, one to operate and two in the water to push the weeds to the conveyor. Although they may look like a harvester, they do not have a cutter bar and cannot cut weeds.

CHEMICAL TREATMENT – The District has not done any chemical treatment in the lake since 1984. It was discontinued because the long-term sub-lethal effects on people, animals and aquatic life are relatively unknown, in our lake areas that were treated had less native plants and more milfoil in following years and we could no longer get long term liability insurance for the use of aquatic herbicides. Any treatment that is being done is by a private contractor.

There are studies that have shown that the chemical may reside in the sediment for over 100 days. The chemical manufacturer has indicated these studies are flawed, however, as an employer we have chosen to err on the side of caution and our crews will not work in the water in areas that were treated. We will pick up any weeds that have drifted into the area and are stacked up by the homeowner.

