

Canaan Valley Wastewater Project  
Public Meeting  
2/15/06  
Canaan Valley Fire Hall

6:05pm Rob Stull called the meeting to order, did introductions. Rob then provided some basic background on the project. In 2002, a centralized wastewater treatment plant was proposed and an engineering firm, Thrasher Engineering, did a feasibility study for Hamrick PSD (HPSD) on a centralized plant. Hamrick PSD then requested that CVI examine other options for wastewater treatment in the Valley. In late 2004 CVI presented HPSD with a feasibility study for a decentralized treatment option. The feasibility study showed that decentralized treatment was economically and technically feasible.

Also in late 2004 CVI received a State and Tribal Assistance Grant for a decentralized wastewater treatment option. In 2005 EPA provided resources to study each of the existing plants in more detail as part of the process for applying for the STAG funding. The engineering firm of Lombardo and Associates (LAI) was contracted to do this work. CVI continues to work with HPSD to provide them with information they need to make an accurate comparison between the centralized and decentralized option.

Tonight Pio Lombardo from LAI is presenting the results of the more detailed study of existing package plants (or wastewater treatment facilities WWTF) that have volunteered to participate in this part of the project, called a facilities plan.

6:15 Pio began his presentation of the results of the draft facilities plan. He went over the components of the draft facilities plan. (See the presentation). Pio explained that tonight he wanted to go over these components and also get some feedback on what LAI has created as a “preferred plan.” If possible Pio would like to get a consensus on what people think about the preferred plan.

LAI evaluated 3 different scenarios that included consolidation of some WWTFs. The results of the evaluation showed that there is no economic incentive for combining any plants. Non-economic factors, like siting and permitting, made individual plants preferable.

The draft plan also recommends that all facilities be replaced with recirculating media filter, except for Timberline and CVSP lodge which are recommended to be membrane bioreactors. Pio then discussed the how waste would flow through these systems.

Pio presented the capital costs for “volunteer” plants.

A question was asked about what volunteered meant. Rob explained that these were the plants who had agreed to be studied under the facilities plan and that Timberline and Canaan Valley State Park (CVSP) had already engaged other engineering firms to do this

same work and so are not included here. Timberline and the CVSP have been involved in discussions and have shared information for the draft plan, but they are not shown on this table.

Pio then presented a summary of operation and maintenance (O&M) costs for the new plants. He noted that the repair fund was for things like equipment replacement and that the depreciation fund is for long-term replacement of major things like buildings and new treatment plants.

Pio then presented the projected user charges. Pio explained that EDU stands for equivalent dwelling unit which more or less represents a 3 bedroom house. Restaurants and other businesses would be multiple EDUs.

Pio explained that a recommended way to charge costs would be to have all possible users, including those with undeveloped properties pay for capital costs and current users to pay for capital costs and O&M costs. Paying for capital costs on unused lots would reserve capacity in the treatment plant for the structure eventually built on that lot.

One person noted that Pio's rate estimates represent, at the high end, a 75% increase in their current monthly rate.

Another person asked if numbers represented current value or for the cost when the new systems are built. Pio noted that the numbers are for current values. She also asked what could be done with the plants that are out of compliance and if the variable use was the reason. Pio noted widely varying use is likely a major reason for lack of compliance and that the technology that is currently used is not good for variable flows. He also noted that tweaking is not an option—the plants really need to be upgraded.

Another question was asked about how the build out numbers were created, because it seems like a lot more development could happen. Pio responded that he estimated a build out of one EDU per acre. Pio also noted that there are more potential users in areas outside the areas served by the systems that have been studied. Updated information on participating plants can also still be added. (These numbers should be updated because Pio's potential buildout numbers were lower than the number of units Northlake alone plans to build)

Someone else asked what additional users would do to the user rate. Pio noted that more development would help lower the rates.

Someone else asked if the rates presented would be in addition to current rates. Pio noted that these rates include the cost of treatment and does not include the cost of collection. Pio noted that if collection systems are leaky, then that is going to drive up costs.

With the cost comparison between centralized and decentralized systems, Pio presented life cycle costs. Life cycle costs include building and operating the system for the life of the system. These costs also include all plants in the Valley, not just the ones that have

volunteered for the study. The decentralized system is projected to be \$726,000 less expensive over the life of the plants. This is not a lot given the total costs of the projects.

Another question asked for the life cycle of the plants. It is 20 years for both types of plants.

A clarification was made that the centralized plan would only treat the wastewater from the existing plants.

Pio then went over the non-economic factors.

Another question was asked. If you have 17 discharges isn't it more likely to have a problem than if you have one discharge? Pio noted that if one single discharge fails then you are likely to have a bigger impact. Ed Winant pointed out that the technologies suggested are filters and if they don't work they will back up and not discharge anything. New technology including monitoring would make both the decentralized and centralized plans much more reliable than the current package plants.

Question: What happens when those currently using on-site systems are forced to connect to WWTF? Pio noted that, if the on-sites systems are well managed, there is no reason right now to predict that would happen.

Someone asked what the definition is of "smart growth". Pio noted that it was development that takes into consideration **over** environmental conditions in planning for development.

Pio emphasized again that a public entity must apply for and use the STAG resources. HPSD is currently the entity of record for the Valley and they are currently considering all the information generated from the draft facilities plan.

Another question was asked about representation on the HPSD board, as no one from the Valley is on the board. Rob noted that this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Another issue that needs to be discussed is the ability to have a separate rate structure for the Valley.

A citizen also noted that over time different rates could be combined even if they start out separate.

Another noted that if HPSD can't be guaranteed a separate rate they most likely won't agree to take over wastewater in the Valley. Shouldn't we be exploring other options for a CV management district? Rob noted that HPSD still hasn't said no. If MPSD decide not to take over the management wastewater treatment for Canaan Valley then other solutions will be pursued. If they say no, then other options can be explored. Pio noted that creating a new PSD would take time. He asked PSC representatives how long would it take to get a new PSD created. Geert Bakker noted that it would at least take 6 months

and likely more, and that legislation discourages creation of new PSDs and that none had been created since this legislation was created.

John Forren from EPA noted that the longer the money sits out without being applied for, the more vulnerable it becomes to rescission (or being taken back by the government). The funds are not obligated until the application is accepted. Rescissions are likely to occur around the end of a fiscal year—September 30.

Pio noted that there are additional issues. For example, water use rates show that many of the plants are only using ½ of the permitted flow. Pio would suggest that if plants are built for 75% of permitted flows there would be a savings between \$2 and \$4 million. Rob used an example to explain. If a plant is permitted for 30,000 gallon per day but only currently using 10,000 gpd, then the plants can be designed for 30,000 gpd but only built for 15,000. The remaining capacity could be built when needed. This would require special permits, but it could be done.

Pio notes that decentralized has a lot of advantages, both in possibilities for cost saving and in ability to implement quickly.

Another issue is allowing current owners to maintain control of unused capacity. One way to do this would be to require developers to pay for any capacity they would like to reserve.

Pio also noted that eventually on-site systems should also be managed with the decentralized system.

Once the plan is formalized and refined, there are multiple options for actually getting the plants built. Pio noted that the systems would be more than HPSD is currently operating and that he recommends that the PSD use an outside contractor to operate and maintain the new systems for 2 to 5 years.

To adopt any preferred plan, current owners need to have agreements to have the a PSD take ownership of the plants. Then the managing PSD would adopt the preferred plan. These agreements will have to part of the STAG application.

Someone asked about how things would work if the current owners maintain collection systems. Pio noted that the owners have a choice. They can “outsource” treatment and pay a single rate to the PSD then send out bills including collection to current customers. Or, current owners can also turn over collection and the PSD would also bill all customers directly.

Pio went over the additional items that need to be completed for the STAG application. The first four are a must, the rest are discretionary.

Someone asked what they could do if they didn't like the idea of HPSD making decisions for residents of the Valley? Rob noted that she and all residents should voice their

opinions to their county commissioners because the PSD board ultimately report to the county commission.

A question was posed about the reasons that the plants are out of compliance. DEP representatives noted that each case is different. Pio noted that most of the plants are old and it would be really hard to get them into compliance given the current standards.

A question was asked about who bears the cost of having to upgrade their systems. DEP doesn't care how plants get fixed, but all the facilities will have to come into compliance one way or the other. The plants can remain in private ownership and the current owners would incur the whole costs of upgrades. They would then pass that cost on the users. The owners could alternatively turn over the plants to a public entity and some of the grant money could be applied to the upgrades. The users would then bear the rest of the costs of upgrading.

A questions was asked about loan opportunities available to make up the cost remaining after the grant money has been used. Pio noted that DEP has loan money available for 0.5% interest rate over 40 years.

A question was asked as to what would happen if they invested any money in their plants now before the STAG funding is awarded. Could they get reimbursed for that cost? The answer is no, but if they wait those costs could be included if they turn over the plant and collection system to a public entity.

Someone asked about where the money is coming from to do work right now. Kiena Smith from CVI noted that Pio's services are being paid for by EPA. Any future inflow and infiltration studies (studying the condition of the collection systems) will be paid for out of CVI's existing operating funds to work on wastewater issues.