

STATE OF WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO REISSUE A WISCONSIN POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION
SYSTEM (WPDES) PERMIT No. WI-0030767-09-0

Permittee: Ashland Sewage Utility, 2020 6th St East, Ashland, WI 54806

Facility Where Discharge Occurs: Ashland Sewage Utility, 1901 Knight Road, Ashland, Wisconsin

Receiving Water and Location: Chequamegon Bay of Lake Superior in the Fish Creek Watershed of the Lake Superior Drainage Basin, Ashland County

Brief Facility Description and Summary of Proposed Changes: The City of Ashland owns and operates a domestic wastewater treatment system. The plant designed to treat 1,920,000 gallons per day actually handles an average of 1,233,000 gallons per day. The facility consists of a step screen and aerated grit tank to remove debris before untreated wastewater enters the oxidation ditches where it mixes with activated sludge which breaks down the organic matter. Activated sludge is composed of settled solids containing naturally occurring active biological material recycled from the treatment system. Alum is added to the wastewater to precipitate phosphorus. The treated water is pumped into clarifiers where solids including phosphorus settle out. The cleaned wastewater (effluent) is disinfected year-round using a Ultra-Violet light system and discharged to Chequamegon Bay of Lake Superior. Settled solids are removed from the clarifiers; some are returned to the head of the oxidation ditches to re-seed the new wastewater entering the system. The sludge that is not used as activated sludge is treated by bacteria and organisms through aerobic digestion which reduces harmful pathogens to safe levels. Water is removed from the sludge by a belt press before it is landspread twice a year on Department approved agricultural sites. Liquid sludge can be removed prior to the belt press and landspread as needed. The plant includes a retention basin to handle wet-weather flows in excess of the peak plant capacity. Wastewater collection in the retention basin is pumped back to the plant for treatment after peak flows are over.

It is the Department's intention to renew the permit for another term. The proposed new permit expiration date will be June 30, 2021. Appropriate discharge limitations, monitoring requirements, and reporting conditions will be included in the permit. Changes from the previous permit include: 1) Currently there are two methods used to determine if a phosphorus limit is needed: a technology based limit (TBL) and a water quality based limit (WQBEL). A TBL of 1 mg/L is needed because the facility discharges more than the threshold of 150 pounds per month. At this time no WQBEL has been calculated for Lake Superior facilities because Code states that the Department shall set limits consistent with approved nearshore or whole lake model results. A whole lake model is in development by U.S. EPA. An interim limit equal to the previous limit (the TBL of 1 mg/L) remains effective this permit term. 2) The City has requested and was granted a continued mixing zone phase-out exemption for bioaccumulating chemicals of concern. A limit of 11.0 ng/L has been included.

Permit Drafter: Sheri A. Snowbank, DNR, 810 Maple Street, Spooner, WI 54801, (715) 635-4131, sheri.snowbank@wisconsin.gov

Basin Engineer: Eric DeVenecia, DNR, 1701 N 4th St, Superior, WI 54880, (715) 685-4155, Eric.DeVenecia@Wisconsin.gov

Persons wishing to comment on or object to the proposed permit action, or to request a public hearing, may write to the Department of Natural Resources at the permit drafter's address. All comments or suggestions received no later than 30 days after the publication date of this public notice will be considered along with other information on file in making a final decision regarding the permit. Anyone providing comments in response to this public notice will receive a notification of the Department's final decision when the permit is issued. Where designated as a reviewable surface water discharge permit, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is allowed up to 90 days to submit comments or objections regarding this permit determination. If no comments are received on the proposed permit from anyone, including U.S. EPA, the permit will be issued as proposed.

The Department may schedule a public informational hearing if requested by any person and shall schedule a public informational hearing if a petition requesting a hearing is received from 5 or more persons or if response to this notice indicates significant public interest pursuant to s. 283.49, Stats. Requests for a public informational hearing shall state the following: the name and address of the person(s) requesting the hearing; the interest in the proposed permit of the person(s) requesting the hearing; the reasons for the request; and the issues proposed to be considered at the hearing.

Information on file for this permit action, including the draft permit, fact sheet and permit application, may be inspected and copied at the permit drafter's or basin engineer's office, Monday through Friday (except holidays), between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Please call the permit drafter or basin engineer for directions to their office location, if necessary. Information on this permit action may also be obtained by calling the permit drafter at (715)

635-4131 or by writing to the Department. Reasonable costs (usually 20 cents per page) will be charged for copies of information in the file other than the public notice, permit and fact sheet. Permit information is also available on the internet at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wastewater/PublicNotices.html>. Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation, including the provision of informational material in an alternative format, will be made to qualified individuals upon request.

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