

STATE OF WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PUBLIC NOTICE OF INFORMATIONAL HEARING AND INTENT TO REISSUE A WISCONSIN
POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (WPDES) PERMIT No. WI-0020427-10-0

Permittee: City of Portage, 115 W. Pleasant Street, Portage, WI 53901

Facility Where Discharge Occurs: Portage Wastewater Treatment Facility, 1600 East Wisconsin Street, Portage, Wisconsin

Receiving Water and Location: Wisconsin River (Lower Baraboo River Watershed, LW21 – Lower Wisconsin River Basin) in Columbia County (SE ¼ of SW ¼ of Section 9, T12N_R9E – Lat: 43.5266 / Lon: -89.4393)

Brief Facility Description: The City of Portage owns and operates a wastewater treatment facility providing secondary treatment and phosphorus removal for a combination of domestic, commercial and industrial wastewater. The current average annual design flow is 2.102 MGD; actual flow is averaging approximately 1.5 MGD. Treatment units include mechanical raw wastewater screening and aerated grit removal, primary clarification, rotating biological contactors secondary treatment, chemical phosphorus removal, final clarification, seasonal chlorine contact disinfection and dechlorination and effluent cascade aeration prior to discharge to the Wisconsin River. Treated solids are land applied in the spring and fall on approved DNR spreading sites. Portage is in substantial compliance with their current permit.

Summary of Proposed Changes: New phosphorus rules (ss. NR 102.06 and NR 217 Subchapter III, Wis. Adm. Code) became effective December 1, 2010 that require permittee to comply with water quality based effluent limitations (WQBELs) for phosphorus. The calculated phosphorus WQBEL for Portage is much higher than the 1.0 mg/L technology based limit in the current permit and due to water quality antidegradation rules the phosphorus limit may not be increased. Therefore, the final phosphorus effluent limits shall be a concentration limit of 1.0 mg/L and a mass discharge limit of 17.5 lbs/day, both expressed as monthly averages that will apply on the permit effective date. A mercury limit of 1.3 ng/L (as a monthly average) is recommended for the reissued permit. However, Portage has applied for a variance from the mercury water quality standard used to establish that limit and if approved (by EPA), an Alternative Mercury Effluent Limit of 3.1 ng/L as a daily maximum will apply on the effective date of the permit and Portage will continued to be required to implement a pollutant minimization program. Total residual chlorine monitoring frequency reduced from Daily to 5/Week. Annual acute whole effluent toxicity (WET) testing will be required in the reissued permit (five tests total) whereas the current permit required four WET tests. Quarterly effluent monitoring for Total Nitrogen parameters (nitrite/nitrate + total Kjeldahl nitrogen = total nitrogen) is now required

Permit Drafter: Phillip Spranger, DNR, SCR Headquarters, 3911 Fish Hatchery Rd, Fitchburg, WI 53711, (608) 273-5969, phillip.spranger@wisconsin.gov

Basin Engineer: Doris Thiele, DNR, N7725 Highway 28, Horicon, WI 53032, (920) 387-7864, doris.thiele@wisconsin.gov

The Department has tentatively decided that the above specified WPDES permit should be reissued.

Limitations and conditions which the Department believes adequately protect the receiving water are included in the proposed permit. Land application of waste shall be done in accordance with permit conditions and applicable codes. All land application sites shall be approved prior to their use. To receive a list of approved sites, or to be notified of potential approvals, contact the basin engineer.

Proposed Mercury Variance: The Department has determined that a water quality-based effluent limitation (WQBEL) of 1.3 ng/L for mercury is needed to protect wildlife and human health in the above-named receiving water. The permittee has submitted an application for an alternative mercury effluent limitation (AMEL). The application included a pollutant minimization program (PMP) plan for mercury as required under s. NR 106.145(8), Wis. Adm. Code. The Department concludes that the permittee is eligible for a variance based on the information submitted, information on file and the findings provided in s. NR 106.145(1), Wis. Adm. Code. The Department and the permittee have mutually agreed upon an AMEL of 3.1 ng/L, expressed as a daily maximum, continued influent and effluent monitoring, and permit language requiring implementation of the PMP. The Department proposes to grant the AMEL, which represents a variance to the water quality standard used to derive the WQBEL, as provided for under s. NR 106.145(6), Wis. Adm. Code. The designated use of the receiving water will not change as a result of the variance. This mercury variance must be approved by USEPA prior to its inclusion in the final reissued permit.

Hearing Date, Time, and Location: May 23, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. at DNR Fitchburg Service Center, 3911 Fish Hatchery Road, Fitchburg, WI 53711

Hearing Officer: Phillip Spranger, DNR, 3911 Fish Hatchery Road, Fitchburg, WI 53711, (608) 273-5969

The Department of Natural Resources, pursuant to Section 283.49, Wisconsin Statutes, has scheduled for the time and place listed above, a public hearing for the purpose of giving all interested persons an opportunity to make a statement with respect to the above announced permit action for this existing discharge.

A hearing officer will conduct the hearing in an orderly and speedy way and will use procedures specified in Subchapter II of ch. NR 203, Wis. Adm. Code, necessary to insure broad public participation in the hearing. The hearing officer will open the hearing and make a concise statement of the scope and purpose of the hearing and shall state what procedures will be used during the course of the hearing. The hearing officer shall explain the method of notification of the final decision to grant or deny the permit and the methods by which the decision may be reviewed in a public adjudicatory hearing.

The hearing officer may put limits on individual oral statements to insure an opportunity for all persons present to make statements in a reasonable period of time and to prevent undue repetition. The hearing officer may also limit the number of representatives making oral statements on behalf of any person or group. Informational and clarifying questions and oral statements shall be directed through the hearing officer. Cross-examination shall not be allowed.

Persons wishing to comment on or object to the proposed permit action are invited to do so by attending the public hearing or by submitting any comments or objections in writing to the Department of Natural Resources, at the permit drafter's address. All comments or suggestions received from members of the public no later than 7 days following the date of this public hearing will be used, along with other information on file and testimony presented at the hearing, in making a final determination. 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.

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 (608) 273-5969 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.

Publishing Newspaper: Portage Daily Register, PO Box 470, Portage, WI 53901-0470
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