

Water from A1

(Oregon Department of Environmental Quality) discharge permit requirements.”

Effluent is wastewater, treated or untreated, which flows out of a treatment plant, sewer or industrial outfall.

The city’s effluent, which has been treated to remove contaminants, currently has no long-term storage space and must be discharged by way of irrigation or released into the Coast Fork of the Willamette River.

In 2006, the city purchased Middlefield Golf Course and began using it for irrigation purposes, easing the burden on the temperature-sensitive river. Lack of storage has been a strategic challenge for the city, however, and a large part of meeting that challenge involves managing temperature and discharge.

During high-water usage in the summer months, about 75 percent of the effluent is sent to the golf course pond to be used for irrigation.

According to DEQ standards, treated effluent released into the river must not raise the river’s temperature by a certain degree in order to reduce its impact on the ecosystem. By contrast, irrigating the plant life on the golf course requires no temperature control and saves the city the risk of violating DEQ standards.

Despite this solution, last year the DEQ issued the city a \$1,575 fine when a sudden spike in temperature contributed to micro-organism growth slightly above the regulated standard.

This was the second

time the city has been fined for exceeding allowed bacteria levels at the golf course. The previous year, the DEQ issued a \$4,500 fine that was waived after the city agreed to plant trees and vegetation on the banks of the Coast Fork of the Willamette River.

And in September 2019, during heavy rains which increased regular water flow by nearly four-fold, the city again found itself in violation of DEQ discharge restrictions when the city was forced to release its excess storage.

Because of current effluent storage methods, this wastewater management process has been somewhat at the mercy of warm weather patterns.

Efforts to make improvements to the effluent system have been in the works since May 2017 when the city hired West Yost & Associates to perform a pre-design study of the treated effluent reuse project.

The engineering consultant also outlined design considerations and options for the city to achieve its long-term goal of zero discharge into the Coast Fork of the Willamette River.

In light of a large cost estimate and the DEQ violations, the city decided to make the storage pond and pump station a priority.

The new pond will allow for the storage of about 12 million gallons of treated effluent. With this, the city hopes to pump the effluent to other irrigations sites such as Bohemia and Trailhead parks.

“Purple pipe,” or piping which carries recycled water which can be used for irrigation and industrial use, already

exists in places like Bohemia Park.

“We’re prepared for it,” said Stewart. “We just don’t have the state approval yet.”

Ultimately, the city hopes to expand its effluent irrigation system to include multiple parks and the interchange where I-5 ramps flow into Cottage Grove.

As the bid for the pond construction came in under estimates, the city will put out another bid this month for the construction of piping to some of these destinations.

“The long-term goal is that we would not discharge during the summer months that we have a discharge limit on,” said Stewart. “Just get completely out of discharging to the river and be able to discharge solely to the golf course, parks and use it for irrigation throughout the City of Cottage Grove.”

Current irrigation methods at the parks use potable drinking water, a system which Stewart hopes to replace.

“That’s pretty exciting for me,” he said. “The other benefit of us being able to utilize the effluent is ... we may be using close to 75,000 gallons of treated drinking water a day at Bohemia Park. So if we were able to use effluent, then that reduces the demand of treated drinking water, which in turn reduces the amount of water we pull out of the river, which in turn is a benefit for the environment.”

The switch is expected to reduce the cost of treating drinking water as well as extend the life of the treatment plant as about 25 percent of the city’s treated water use is put toward irrigation during summer months.

The environmental benefits, too, appear to fall in line with recent concerns raised by local citizens who have made appeals to the city to take actions which are more environmentally conscious. Stewart feels the move is congruent with such concerns.

“It’s really spot on with the kinds of things they would like to see us do,” he said. “It reduces our dependence on fertilizer, which is a petroleum product, and it helps us cool the temperature so there’s less energy being expended than if we were to build a cooling tower.”

Speaking to the safety of the method, Stewart emphasized that the effluent is being treated to DEQ standards and thus poses no risk to the population.

“Effluent is safe,” said Stewart. “In fact, we’ve been putting treated effluent on the golf course for at least 10 plus years. ... There are multiple cities throughout the state that utilize it on a regular basis. The key is that our treatment plant will treat the effluent to the level that allows that type of use. The treatment that we treat to is one step below actually physically drinking the water.”

The future pond is slated to be completed by the end of next summer, but part of that timeline will depend on negotiations with stakeholders in the project.

The project will see expansion of treatment plant’s land use into the adjacent disc golf park, relocating two or three holes from the course.

“Of course, we’re going to have to work with the disc golfers and the community who helped build it,” Stewart said.



Pet Tips 'n' Tales

By Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

Tea for Two



Pepper and Dene share a “cup of friendship” at an outside café. Pepper is Dene’s companion and partner, even when Dene is setting up the technical lighting for movie sets.

**Question:** What is as inseparable as “Pepper” and salt?  
**Answer:** Five-year-old, Black German Shepherd, Pepper and her partner, Dene.

“I have 130 contracts to distribute city phone books across Canada,” said Dene. “While working 2,000 miles from home, I ‘found’ Pepper. Her breeder arrived at the warehouse where I store thousands of books.”

Apparently, three of Pepper’s litter were to become police dogs. But after a budget cut, the department only paw-chased two. So, the breeder came with the “left over” four-month-old female puppy looking to find her a good home.

It was as if Dene had read the script, entered stage right and bought Pepper on the spot. Absolutely along the lines of a miracle because, a week earlier, Dene had decided on a German Shepherd for a walking companion and discovered it was not easy to find one. It seemed the universe’s laws of attraction united them.

Dene delivered books for the next month, up and down streets, with that healthy, leashed puppy enthusiastically walking beside him. Imagine Pepper’s joy of having a pet parent who walks you all day!

Sometimes there was, “Lots of snow,” added Dene. “Pepper loves snow! We work when it is three-feet deep. This job definitely keeps us healthy.”

According to Dene, on the delivery routes Pepper insists on walking the 14-hour days from house to house. She won’t leave Dene’s side. “I dare not leave her in the truck,” he said. “If I do, even for a few homes, she is devastated and cries and wails.”

And what does all this physical exercise amount to? “Pepper leaps fences as if she has springs for bones and trampoline feet,” said Dene.

Dene invented a way to cut down on book delivery times by using a three-wheeled tri-scooter, which he said has cut delivery time by 60 percent.

Then he wondered if Pepper could pull the scooter? “She loves the scooter,” laughs Dene, “But, the problem is that she won’t stop at each house. She wants to go-go-go. So, on our days off, I hook her up to the scooter. On our first time out, I was confident that I would not kill myself — but I had no idea of her zest for running. Now, when she sees the harness she freaks out, barking and jumping like an entire team of sled dogs. She loves ‘scooting’ and can’t wait to start. The first two minutes of our ride is always a white-knuckle ride!”

Pepper pulls Dene at a full clip for some seven miles.

Dene is also a movie industry film technician, who sets up the set’s lighting. Even though they live on an acre property, “Pepper is happier when I take her to work,” said Dene.

Pepper loves truck rides and paw-furs to be cooped up in its cab, rather than being at home so she and Dene can play during breaks.

One January his film crew was sent to northern Canada. “It was freezing,” explained Dene, “and even with the heat blasting in our RV, which is about the size of a doghouse, there was no way to keep warm. Pepper sleeps at my feet, so it was nice having a dog heater on my bed. She is worth her weight in gold in so many ways.”

Dene said Pepper is such a goofball that she probably wouldn’t have made a serious police dog. The only “shooting” she sees is with cameras.

“The producers and actors bring their pets on set, but I have a few rungs of the ladder to climb yet before she can join the crew. Until then, she is my ‘star,’” said Dene.

**TIPS:** “Pepper is on a raw-food diet,” explained Dene. “She eats the warmed, thawed frozen because it gives her more energy. Her coat is luxurious, her eyes glisten and she has a healthier powerful presence.”

LORANE NEWS

CONTRIBUTED BY LIL THOMPSON FOR THE SENTINEL

HAPPY NEW YEAR! It’s now Jan. 2, 2020. Be safe in your travels!

- School resumes on

regular schedule beginning Jan. 6. Buses will run on schedule as will all school activities.

• Rural Arts Movie night begins the new year Jan. 11 at 6 p.m. with its soup dinner. An interesting film is on the agenda. It is about a young Jewish vegetarian’s travels to Ukraine and all he learns. Movie starts at 7:30 p.m. Come out for a delightful evening in Lorane at the Grange, eating, visiting and enjoying a quality film.

• Remember grangers: meeting is the third Thursday, Jan. 16, at 7 p.m. Lots to discuss for the new year.

• Enjoy the rest of your week — the first week in 2020. Above all, be safe and careful on the roads.

New road rules began Jan. 1, so watch for bicycles. While they have to look both ways, they may roll through a stop sign.

So, be very alert! Also remember to take your bags into the store; no more plastic bags.

**6-day weather forecast**

<b>FRIDAY</b> 59°   42° Cloudy	<b>SATURDAY</b> 46°   38° Rain
<b>SUNDAY</b> 45°   34° Rain	<b>MONDAY</b> 47°   36° Partly Cloudy
<b>TUESDAY</b> 47°   37° Rain	<b>WEDNESDAY</b> 45°   36° Rain

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