

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-0022861-10-0

Permittee: Oconto Utility Commission, 1210 Main Street, Oconto, WI 54153

Facility Where Discharge Occurs: Oconto Utility Commission WWTF, 1616 Main Street, Oconto, Wisconsin

Receiving Water And Location: Oconto River (Water Body Identification Code number 440200) in the Lower Oconto River Watershed (GB03) of the Upper Green Bay Basin in Oconto County

Brief Facility Description: The Oconto Utility Commission treats wastewater generated within the City of Oconto as well as the North Shore, Pensaukee and Town of Oconto Sanitary Districts and receives sludge from the Village of Suring (WPDES Permit No. WI-0020877) wastewater treatment facility. Treatment consists of a perforated plate screen, grit removal, primary clarification, trickling filtration, aeration basins, alum addition for phosphorus removal, final clarification, chlorine gas for disinfection, and sodium bisulfate for dechlorination. The trickling filtration step is present but has not been utilized in the wastewater treatment train since 2017. In the last five years, the aeration step of the treatment process was upgraded from surface aerators to fine bubble diffusion aeration. During the proposed permit term, a new headworks will be added including new screens, grit system, influent wet well, submersible pumps, control room, and updated alum containment. Effluent is discharged on a continuous basis via Outfall 001 to the North bank of the Oconto River channel, approx. 10 ft. West of the Oconto Yacht Club inlet.

Summary of Proposed Changes: 1) Fecal coliform effluent monitoring and limits are replaced with Escherichia coli (E. coli) monitoring and limits. 2) The variable daily maximum ammonia nitrogen limit table has been expanded to include applicable limits at a lower effluent pH. 3) The phosphorus monthly average effluent mass limit is decreased from 12.2 lbs/day to 6.4 lbs/day. 4) Addition of PFOS/PFOA effluent monitoring at a frequency of every other month in accordance with s. NR 106.98(2), Wis. Adm. Code. 5) Addition of effluent chloride monitoring during the fourth year of the permit. 6) Addition of annual total nitrogen effluent monitoring (TKN, NO₂+NO₃ and Total N) in rotating quarters throughout the permit term. 7) The year in which PCB monitoring is required has been updated to 2025. 8) Addition of land application chloride monitoring. 9) Addition of annual PFAS (PFOA + PFOS) sludge monitoring pursuant to s. NR 204.06(2)(b)9., Wis. Adm. Code. 10) Addition of and updates to several Schedules: Mercury Pollutant Minimization Program, Effluent Limitations for E. coli (Outfall 001), PFOS/PFOA Minimization Plan Determination of Need, and Land Application Management Plan. 11) Updated standard language.

Permit Drafter's Name, Address, Phone and Email: Sarah Donoughe, DNR, 2984 Shawano Ave, Green Bay, WI 54313-6727, (920) 366-6076, Sarah.Donoughe@wisconsin.gov

Basin Engineer's Name, Address, Phone and Email: Laura Gerold, DNR, 2984 Shawano Ave, Green Bay, WI 54313-6727, (920) 366-6728, laura.gerold@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 above-named 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 applied 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: **Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at 11:00am,**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMlcemtpzIvGND4IpspgPiVyBVeIuj3I0-9>

Hearing Officer, Name, Address, City/State/Zip, and Phone: Sarah Donoughe, DNR, 2984 Shawano Ave, Green Bay, WI 54313-6727, (920) 366-6076

The Department of Natural Resources, pursuant to s. 283.49, Wis. Stats, 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 ensure 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 above-named 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 either the above-named permit drafter's office or the above named 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 (920) 662-5148 or by writing to the Department. Reasonable costs (15 cents per page for copies and 7 cents per page for scanning) will be charged for 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.

NAME OF PUBLISHING NEWSPAPER: Oconto County Reporter

ADDRESS OF PUBLISHING NEWSPAPER: PO Box 200, Oconto, WI 54153-0200

Date Notice Issued: Wednesday, May 15, 2024