



PRESS RELEASE

Marshall County Septic System Relief on the Horizon

02/01/2022

Residents in some unincorporated areas of Marshall County have recently received letters from County officials referencing an upcoming Hearing (February 21) that is a pre-cursor to the filing by the County for the formation of a Regional Sewer District in Marshall County.

In 2019, the Environmental Division of the Marshall County Health Department initiated an effort to consider the future of wastewater handling in 13 unincorporated communities or neighborhoods in the County. Common to these areas are high-density development, poor soils, high water tables, and in many cases conditions for code that will not allow for compliant repairs or replacement of onsite septic systems.

The resulting study (called a preliminary engineering report “PER”) originally identified 15 such areas (2 were later deleted). During consideration, County officials learned that similar counties across Northern Indiana had initiated similar plans years ago and have not yet completed all of the recommended actions included in their original plan. Two of the largest districts in the State (LaGrange and Steuben) are currently considering (over 20 years later) sewers for their final service areas.

Here in Marshall County, a scoring matrix ranked 13 areas, of these 13 areas the residential neighborhoods surrounding Latonka, Kreighbaum, Cook, Holem, Myers, Lawrence, and Mill Pond Lakes have been identified with the highest degree of need. The area includes over 600 homes all within immediate proximity to one or more of these water bodies. “This service area is a classic example of where a community-based solution will overcome individual site constraints that homeowners cannot resolve on their own,” said Ken Jones, Project Manager for the initiative.

“After issuing the direct mail and published notice for the hearing, we have received good input by phone and email and have been able to answer residents’ questions and concerns.” Jones said, “most want to know how or when their neighborhood would be considered.”

Based on the PER, all but one (the lakes area) will likely be future projects that will require further study by the District’s future appointed Trustees. For the first area, an active sewer could be 36 to 48 months away. “The plan represents a group of projects that could easily take 20 years or more to fully implement,” said Jones.

“We think that it is likely that the future District Board may adopt a triggering protocol that includes additional qualifications prior to advancing projects, such as the number of failing on-site systems, drinking water well issues, illicit discharges, or otherwise health threats or concerns.”

The Hearing is planned to be held at the Marshall County Building, Room 203 on the 21st of February at 6:00 PM. Residents can send their questions for the record to questions@marshallcountyrsd.com or call 574-200-0049. Residents unable to attend the Hearing can watch at <https://www.co.marshall.in.us> “Watch Live Meetings” under the photo of the courthouse.