

Proposed wastewater plan aims at efficient usage

By Jonathan Graham
Sentinel & Enterprise

LANCASTER -- The town's future Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan could help deal with development-related pressures on the local water supply, officials said Thursday.

Comprehensive Environmental Inc. engineer Richard C. Cote said that by more effectively collecting storm water, developments would be able to recycle the storm water back into the water system and also reduce runoff.

"The whole purpose behind this is to make sure you collect your water and use your water in the most efficient way possible," Cote said at a public hearing to discuss the CWMP.

The town's water consumption is set to rise quickly in the next few years, as a number of new developments come online, according to a recent Department of Public Works report.

Lancaster officials have been examining different ways to protect the water supply, including conservation efforts and a building moratorium.

A proposed bylaw for this spring's town meeting supported by some officials would set restrictions and possible outright bans on outdoor water use.

Selectman Alexandra Turner said the engineering firm's ideas would help with water demand problems.

"We are also having consumption problems," Turner said. "That will hopefully dovetail with our new (CWMP)."

Planning Board Chairman Victor A. Koivumaki said reduced runoff would be much appreciated in some parts of town.

"It's clearly been a problem up at the (Spectacle) Ponds," Koivumaki said.

He said developments along Route 70 had their site plans approved and followed "standard engineering procedures," but still had runoff problems.

Cote said infrastructure costs could also be reduced with this style of storm water system because less water needs to be transported to and from developed areas.

"The big difference is you're not putting in 20-inch, 30-inch, 40-inch pipes in the process," Cote said. "Where the rain falls, it stays."