



Groups question 'open-cutting' of river

By JENNIFER NOBLIT
Olentangy Valley News Reporter

Some Liberty Township residents want a say in the construction of the Perry-Taggart sewer line.

Residents requested a public hearing after the Delaware County sanitary engineer asked for permission to "open-cut" the Olentangy River from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

After discovering geological problems, the office applied to the EPA in August for approval of open-cutting on the Olentangy River.

According to Laura Fay, who is reviewing the request for the Ohio EPA, if boring under the river begins, the construction company may

Delaware County wants to 'open-cut' - or temporarily dam - the Olentangy River to install a sewer line, but environmental groups say the move must be justified.

encounter problems that may require open-cutting. "If the boring machine gets stuck under the riverbed, they may have to open-cut, anyways," Fry said.

Open-cutting will require a dewatering system across the river, and Fry said the water will have to be rerouted temporarily. Once the riverbed is dry, Tranco would dig into the riverbed and install the line.

Askle said the project, if approved, will be done in two segments. Tranco will dam one portion of the river, allowing the other portion to flow while the line is installed.

Several groups, such as Friends of Delaware County and the Ohio Environmental Council, requested the public hearing. They hope they can find out during the hearing if open-cutting is necessary and if there are any other options, officials said.

"At the public hearing I hope to find out... why they have to do this. They must justify the open-cutting," said Judi Brozof, a longtime resident of Liberty Township.

According to the Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed, open-cutting would have an adverse effect on the river.

"It's classified at the highest quality level of habitat that any river or stream in Ohio can get. It's in the scenic portion as well," said Kathy Remax, FLOW program director.

Remax said she hopes to look into alternatives to open-cutting at the public hearing as the integrity of the river environment will not be harmed.

"We need to ask ourselves as a community what we want the river to look like in 10 years," Remax said.

Matt Montague, a member of Friends of Delaware County, also had questions for the county. He said he wants a public hearing to find out if there will be more requests for open-cutting in the future.

"Will there be two, three

about the entire project." According to Askle, one tunnel already has been completed and it is not known if open-cutting will be needed for any of the other tunnels.

Kerlin Johnson of the Ohio EPA said a date for the public hearing will be announced this week.

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