

May 27 hearing set on EPD study



CEPA's Allen Davis (left) and Brice Ladson during Thursday's Richmond Hill Rotary meeting.



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Georgia Environmental Protection Division representative Jeff Larson said the EPD will hold a public meeting May 27 to gather more input about what areas they should look at as they begin a study of the Liberty County Development Authority's proposed wastewater treatment plant.

The study, which the EPD decided to conduct after community feedback through letters and a well-attended public hearing in January, is slated to begin sometime next month.

The public notice, released Friday, refers to the study as "a site-specific stream study to verify the model that was used to develop the wasteload allocation for the proposed permit."

Larson said a final determination on whether or not to issue the permit will take place around November-December.

"We're moving as fast as we can in launching a stream study of the Laurel View River," Larson said. "We generally know what a study plan consists of, but we want local input to help us decide things such as where to put monitoring stations."

On May 8, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division conducted a meeting with several stakeholders to discuss a game plan for the study. Among those in attendance were representatives from the Coastal Estuary Protection Association (CEPA), Liberty County Development Authority (LCDA), Skidaway Institute of Oceanography and Ogeechee-Canoochee Riverkeepers.

Larson said the meeting was productive, and the EPD plans to work in conjunction with all these groups as the research gets underway.

He said "their knowledge and expertise should prove to be of great value to this project."

CEPA President Allen Davis, while giving an update to the Richmond Hill Rotary Club on Thursday, said the involvement of the Skidaway group should prove to be a great environmental asset to the study.

"I believe the findings are going to show what we all intuitively believe, and that is that dumping a billion gallons of wastewater into the Laurel View River every year is a bad idea," Davis said.

The LCDA, however, remain hopeful that the findings will be in their favor and the permit will be approved.

"We're anxiously awaiting the results of the study and remain confident that the studies will show this project to be environmentally sound," Carmen Cole with the LCDA said.

EPD will be accepting written comments on the draft study plan.

To ensure their consideration, written comments should be received by close of business on June 5. Address comments to: Jeffrey Larson, Assistant Branch Chief, Watershed Protection Branch, Environmental Protection Division, 4220 International Parkway, Suite 101, Atlanta, Georgia 30354.

The Laurel View River Study Plan is available for review on EPD's website at www.gaepd.org/Documents/laurel_view_study_plan.html.

<http://www.bryancountynews.net/news/article/4166/>