

Pearce Creek dredge spoil site work progresses

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EARLEVILLE — Progress has been slow to come on the installation on an impermeable liner at the Pearce Creek Dredge Material Containment Field (DMCF) through the end of winter, but residents of nearby communities got a firsthand look Friday at what to expect at the site by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Abundant rainwater in February has made progress more difficult for Sealaska, the Corps' contractor, as they prepare the more than 250-acre dredge spoil disposal site for placement of a synthetic liner that will prevent the leaching of natural contaminants into local groundwater, said Gavin Kaiser, a Corps engineer overseeing the project. Soggy ground made compaction of soil difficult, but warmer weather has speeded up efforts. Before crews begin to place the first of the liner on the site Monday, however, residents of the communities of Bay View Estates, West View Shores and Sunset Pointe, whose well qualities were degraded by decades of leaching from dredge spoils, toured the site with officials.

Meanwhile, the Corps recently received confirmation that the Maryland Department of the Environment had approved its extension request on its water quality certificate, a needed state approval in order to dispose of dredge spoils. The department had originally approved a certificate in December 2014, contingent on the fact that officials begin construction on a public water service line to the residents of the affected communities.

The new certificate, which will expire March 31, 2018, was approved due to the delays in awarding of the liner contract. With the liner scheduled to be completed in October 2017, the Corps expects to dredge the C&D Canal and its approach channels in the winter of 2017-18, disposing of spoils at Pearce Creek.

About two dozen residents took time Friday to see the site firsthand, which has changed dramatically since a U.S. Geological Survey report detailed the issues there in January 2013. Crews have scrubbed all vegetation out of the DMCF, and bulldozers and steamrollers continue to compress and flatten the surface in preparation for the liner's placement. As each of the 10 sections of Hallaton geo-membrane



Pearce Creek site visit

Gavin Kaiser, an engineer with the Corps of Engineers, talks to residents visiting the Pearce Creek dredge spoil disposal site.

synthetic liner are placed, a foot of top soil will be placed back on top, hiding its presence from view and protecting its integrity, officials said.

As work of the liner progresses, so to does the solution for public water service.

Chris Rogers, an engineer with AECOM, told residents Friday that Eastern State, of Wilmington, Del., will begin construction of the transmission main for the Cecilton-provided water line this week.

Work on the installation of the distribution pipes is expected to begin next month by Reybold, of Bear, Del. After the town was unable to get an easement for the first run of the pipeline, AECOM proceeded with putting pipes into a State Highway Administration easement rather than across private property, Rogers reported. The change in plans is not expected to have any impact on the timeline for service, as Reybold will begin other sections of the pipeline as approvals are obtained for the new plan.

On-lot work to hook up homeowners to public water service will begin after the water system is put online in about a year.