

UNC responses to questions submitted by Preserve Rural Orange on Jan. 25, 2011

Re: Information about UNC's Bingham Facility

1. What will the revised wastewater treatment system be, and when will it be operational?

Please see the system description, which was submitted to DENR on Dec. 22, 2010, that is posted online at <http://www.unc.edu/community/b/1210/12-22-10%20UNC-CH%20letter.pdf>.

2. Will the wastewater system and lagoon include an overflow tank, alarms or sensors in case of malfunctions?

Yes, the wastewater treatment system will be equipped with alarms and sensors in case of malfunctions. Also, please remember that the storage ponds contain only treated wastewater that is ready to be spray-irrigated, not untreated animal waste as is the case in a hog farm lagoon.

3. What will be the maximum amount of water used per day?

The wastewater system will have a permit limit of 3,500 gallons per day.

4. How long will wastewater continue to be pumped and hauled to OWASA?

Pump and haul activities will continue until the construction project's completion date, expected to be Aug. 12, 2012. UNC's pump and haul permit from DENR is effective through that date.

5. Why have plans changed to refurbish rather than replace the wastewater system?

The School of Medicine's change in plans for the use of the Bingham Facility means that animal waste will be captured on disposable bedding at the Bingham Facility, which allows our wastewater consultants to provide an economical solution to the wastewater needs of the site. The Advantex system we will be refurbishing is the permitted system that was in place before the deemed permitted system (the one with the most problems) was installed in 2008. The refurbished Advantex system will comply with requirements of North Carolina Administrative Code, Title 15A- "Department of Environment and Natural Resources Division of Water Quality," Subchapter 2T- "Waste Not Discharged to Surface Waters," Section .0500- "Wastewater Irrigation Systems."

6. What is the schedule for applying for DENR wastewater and pump and haul permits and extensions?

The University submitted the request for the extension to the pump and haul permit Jan. 7, 2011, and received the updated permit Jan. 24, 2011. The permit to pump and haul is effective until Aug. 12, 2012.

7. What are the plans for testing the recently capped well as well as neighbors' wells for impacts of past operations, spills and potential contamination?

Both the well on the Bingham Facility site and the well on the former Lombardo property have been checked for a full range of contaminants and have come up clean. There is no plan to test the capped well. University staff have asked an N.C.-licensed hydrogeologist and soil scientist to study which neighboring wells should be tested and are waiting to receive his recommendations.

8. What plans are there for fire prevention and protection?

The University is working with the White Cross Fire Department in planning a drill during the month of May to simulate a response at the site. At this point, because no further expansion is planned, no extra fire protection will be added to the site.

9. What will happen to the propane tanks and their current configuration since the decision to provide natural gas has been canceled?

UNC is still evaluating consolidation options for propane supply for the Bingham Facility. Primary alternatives being considered are a single tank to support all facilities and two tanks, one for Buildings 1 and 2 and a second for Building 3.

10. How will the University address the facility's negative impact on the White Cross Fire Department's ISO rating and property owners' insurance rates?

It has not yet been determined whether Building 3 will have a negative impact on the White Cross Fire Department's ISO rating when it is reviewed in the next two years. Plans for a water storage tank for fighting fires, which would alleviate much of the concern, have been put on hold because of a current shortage in funding, but remain a long-term priority for the facility.

11. What are standard operating procedures in case of future malfunctions or emergencies?

For interruption of gas service or other non-emergency system malfunction, UNC staff will contact the gas provider to solve the problem. For any emergency situation, UNC staff will call 911 for emergency response and then contact UNC Department of Public Safety for notification and coordination of additional support.

12. When will the University implement Orange County's alert system or other systems for rapid notification of neighbors in case of emergencies?

The University is developing a security plan for Bingham. The security plan will address appropriate notification of the community and nearby neighbors in the event of an emergency with off-site impacts. As we have in the past, we will notify our Bingham email list of activities, emergency and otherwise, that we anticipate neighbors might want to know about.

13. How will neighbors without Internet access be notified of meetings?

As we move forward with our revised plans, we will work with PRO and the adjacent neighbors to determine a schedule for meetings. Email notice of these meetings will be sent to the email addresses we have of people who have expressed interest in being on the Bingham list. If we are contacted by property owners who want to receive notice of meetings but do not have Internet access, we would work with them on the best method to keep them informed.

14. What is the status of Building 3? How and when will it be used?

When Building 3 can be occupied in the spring of 2011, it will be used in the short term (through May 2012) as swing space to accommodate dogs from the FOBRL facility during FOBRL renovation. Approximately 50 to 60 dogs could be housed at one time. In the long term, Building 3 may be used for approximately 10,000 mouse cages.

15. What is the new plan for relocation of the current chillers and purchase of new more quiet chillers?

University staff are currently looking at the option of removing all existing chillers and installing three new smaller, quieter chillers (one as backup).

16. What is the plan for dark skies lighting for buildings and throughout the facility property?

Over the years, the University has developed expertise in “dark skies” lighting on its main campus. New lighting will follow these practices and existing lighting will be reviewed once the renovation and security plans are finalized. In the meantime, if there are particular lights that concern neighbors, we can see if there are temporary measures that can be put in place.

17. What is the new plan with regards to the current population of dogs located at the Bingham Facility? Will they be moved?

The University plans to phase out the housing of dogs at the Bingham Facility by May 2012.

18. What animals, and how many, will be located in the future at the Bingham Facility?

No set use has been determined for the long-term at Buildings 1 and 2. Building 3 may be used for approximately 10,000 mouse cages.

19. Will there be research going on at the facility? If so what type of research?

The facility will return to its historic purpose of providing space for confirming the health status of newly acquired animals and as swing space and overflow space for housing smaller research animals, primarily mice.

20. Will radioactive or hazardous materials be used or disposed of at the Bingham Facility?

No radioactive materials are used or disposed of at the Bingham Facility. Hazardous materials used at the facility will be disposed of in compliance with appropriate regulations and at approved facilities, not on site at Bingham.

21. What biosafety level will the facility be?

We do not anticipate that there will ever be research at the Bingham facility conducted beyond the BSL-2 level. It is possible that there will not even be any BSL-2 activity when the project is completed. Laboratory practices in contained facilities are prescribed by law and regulation, and UNC has an outstanding record of lab safety in such facilities.

22. How will waste, bedding and animals be transported to and from the facility, how often and when?

Nonhazardous waste will go to the landfill, while hazardous materials will be sent to an approved facility for disposal. It is impossible to estimate either the quantity of waste or the frequency of transport until we have small animals on site, which is not likely until renovations have been completed at FOBRL.

23. What are the future plans for the facility looking forward three years?

(Same as 18.) No set use has been determined for the long-term at Buildings 1 and 2. Building 3 may be used for approximately 10,000 mouse cages.

24. How many people will be working at the facility?

Again, this is a question that cannot be answered until we know how many and what species of animals will be on site. The theoretical maximum is probably in the range of 15 people.

25. What will be the hours of operation?

Research facilities husbandry staff work normal 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. hours, seven days per week. Research can sometimes require 24-hour activity, so there may be people on site at irregular hours.

26. What will be the organization chart and structure of the Bingham Facility going forward? Will Bob Lowman continue to be the responsible contact?

Upon completion, Bingham will become a facility of the Division of Laboratory Animals, and the DLAM director will become the responsible party. Until completion of the project, Bob Lowman will continue to be the responsible party.

27. What are the University's plans for the Lombardo property?

The Lombardo property will be used as a residence for a caretaker for the Bingham Facility, to enhance round-the-clock security.

28. What are the University's plans for a memorandum of understanding regarding communications, safety, compliance, environmental practices, buffers and future uses?

The University currently has no plans to create an MOU covering all these topics. After some clarification of priorities reached during the meeting with neighbors, we are looking at drafting a statement that addresses how we will communicate with neighbors regarding major changes at the facility.