

## Orange County Commission for the Environment

### Questions about Bingham Facility for UNC follow-up after 3/8/10 meeting

Q: Now that UNC has decommissioned the incinerator at the Bingham Facility, where are those items being incinerated?

A: We are no longer using the incinerator on the Bingham Facility site, but we have not yet decommissioned it, although we do plan to do that. The items that would have been incinerated there in the past are now being sent to the same facility that incinerates medical waste for UNC Health Care, Stericycle in Haw River.

Q: What is UNC's estimate of the volume of each of the four recent spills from the Bingham Facility (to compare with estimates presented by Preserve Rural Orange)?

A: Here's a brief summary of the recent spills/leaks at the Bingham Facility and their results:

- Pipe leak, Nov. 18, 630 gallons of highly treated wastewater seeped into the ground.
- Leak from large holding pond, confirmed by DENR inspection Dec. 14, undetermined amount of highly treated wastewater reached Collins Creek. This was the first Notice of Violation from DENR. We reported the leak to DENR to be at a rate of 1 gallon per minute based on capturing and measuring the water coming out of the underdrain, but since we don't know if that was a constant rate, when the leaking began or how much of the water was groundwater or from other sources, we cannot accurately calculate how much water leaked out. While we don't have an exact number of gallons that leaked from the pond, we estimate it was less than the 120,960 gallons that Preserve Rural Orange has claimed.
- Broken check valves (probably from freezing temperatures), Jan. 14, at most 100 gallons treated wastewater seeped into the ground.
- Broken piping for spray irrigation, Feb. 18, about 1,800 gallons treated wastewater seeped into ground. This was the second Notice of Violation from DENR.

And here are a few key points about the incidents:

- The incidents described above have **not** resulted in the release of any toxins in the environment. The leaks were of highly treated wastewater approved to be spray irrigated on the site, so there has been no contamination of the soil, groundwater or creek.
- DENR issued notices of violation about two of the incidents not because any contamination occurred but because our wastewater treatment permit is for spray irrigation, not for discharge into the creek or onto the ground.
- Because of the leaks, UNC shut down the wastewater treatment system at the Bingham Facility the week of Feb. 22. It will remain shut down until we can be certain it is operating correctly.

Q: A list of pharmaceuticals used at the facility?

A: A list of the chemicals used at the facility is attached.

Q: Have the problems that were identified with the use of UV light in the treatment system been resolved?

A: The wastewater treatment systems at the Bingham Facility have been shut down since the week of Feb. 22, so we are pumping and hauling the wastewater to OWASA for treatment. We

have made some repairs to piping that were required by DENR, but otherwise we have been concentrating our efforts on an integrated water study rather than making repairs to the current system. The study will help us determine how we want to treat wastewater at the facility in the future, which may or may not involve the UV light step. If it does, of course, we will correct the problems before resuming its use.