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MSD Hits 4-Decades-Long Goal; Closes Last Outdated Wastewater Facility

All city wastewater now treated at five regional plants, reducing risk of stream overflows

LOUISVILLE – MSD has completed a 36-year journey to eliminate more than 300 small, inefficient and outdated wastewater treatment plants scattered throughout the community and transition to a modernized regional wastewater treatment system. The demolition of the final remaining outdated wastewater treatment facility – McNeely Lake Water Quality Treatment Center (WQTC) in southeastern Louisville – occurred today, several weeks after it was taken offline.

The closure of the smaller “package plants” across Jefferson County is notable as these outdated, inefficient, sometimes leaky facilities are not subject to the same stringent water quality standards as today’s modernized MSD regional wastewater quality plants. The plants are called package plants because they are constructed and assembled at a factory and then shipped and installed pre-packaged as a complete unit.

“We’ve looked forward to this day for, literally, decades,” said Brian Bingham, MSD chief of operations. “We’ve made significant environmental improvements since we started on our quest to acquire and close these plants more than 30 years ago. The closure of the last package treatment plant in Louisville is an important milestone as MSD strives to attain our vision of safe, clean waterways for the community.”

As Louisville development and neighborhood growth expanded further out into Jefferson County in the 1950s and 1960s, developers installed these package treatment plants in these areas not served by MSD sewers. The package treatment plants had an average expected life of 20 to 30 years.

Wastewater flow that once went to the McNeely Lake WQTC is now treated at the Derek R. Guthrie WQTC, near the Ohio River on Lower River Road in southwest Louisville. Completion of this project will offer protection from sanitary sewer overflows to the Pond Creek watershed.

The elimination of the outdated packaged wastewater facilities not only reduces operational costs and maintenance issues related to these sites, but will enhance water quality in local streams and in the Ohio River.

The transfer and closure of these plants by MSD is all part of a push by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to clean up aging, leaky urban sewer systems nationwide. MSD has invested millions to modernize its sewer system over four decades, often eliminating sources of stream pollution by these sewage treatment plants that had been built by private developers.

MSD began 2016 with just three of these inefficient wastewater treatment facilities left in its system—Bancroft, McNeely Lake and Starview Estates WQTCs. In March, Bancroft and Starview Estates were taken off-line, providing sewer overflow protection to Goose Creek and Chenoweth Run, respectively.

[Attachments]

Map of five regional facilities

Map of eliminated facilities

[Available upon request]

Photos of McNeely Lake WQTC in operation

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About MSD

The Louisville/Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) works to achieve and maintain clean, environmentally safe waterways for a healthy and vibrant community. The organization's more than 600 employees provide wastewater management, drainage and flood protection services across the 376 square miles of Louisville Metro. In addition to operating and maintaining Louisville Metro's sewer system, floodwall system, water quality treatment centers and flood pumping stations, MSD invests in hundreds of infrastructure improvement projects each year, plants more than 1,000 trees and other vegetation annually to enhance water filtration and reduce runoff, and provides numerous outreach programs to inform and educate the community about protecting our waterways.