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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

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DEP Issues Industrial Wastewater Discharge Permit to Williamsport's TerrAqua Resource Management
First New Permit for Treating Drilling Wastewater to Be Issued in West Branch Susquehanna River Watershed

WILLIAMSPORT -- The Department of Environmental Protection today issued a system industrial wastewater discharge permit to TerrAqua Resource Management LLC of Williamsport that allows the company to treat and discharge 400,000 gallons per day of gas well drilling wastewater.

"This is the first new permit issued in the West Branch Susquehanna River watershed for treating gas well drilling wastewater," said DEP Northcentral Regional Director Robert Yowell. "The monitoring requirements and stringent limits on total dissolved solids, chlorides and sulfates in this permit will protect the water quality of the West Branch Susquehanna River."

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination permit requires TerrAqua to meet the proposed new regulatory standards of 500 parts per million for total dissolved solids and 250 parts per million for chlorides and sulfates. These standards will be required statewide effective Jan. 1, 2011.

TerrAqua has indicated that it will pursue a thermal treatment process capable of reducing total dissolved solid levels to less than 500 parts per million at all times.

The discharge permit also requires TerrAqua to monitor for radioactivity, a large number of metals, including barium, strontium, iron, manganese and aluminum, as well as organics such as toluene, benzene, phenols, ethylene glycol and surfactants.

The company's application for the permit, which was submitted in August 2008, went through an extensive public participation process. More than 150 people attended a DEP public meeting held in July 2009 to discuss the permit and ask questions.

"The department received nearly 200 public comments regarding this permit application and have responded to and addressed all relevant questions and concerns raised in those comments," Yowell said.

TerrAqua now must submit a water quality management permit application to DEP for the treatment plant's design and technology. This permit is required to construct and operate the plant.

The company has also applied for a general permit from DEP's waste management program to process, recycle and reuse this wastewater for subsequent fracking operations.

The DEP Northcentral Regional Office has nine additional permit applications under review for proposed gas well drilling wastewater treatment plants in Bradford, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Lycoming, and Tioga counties. Proposed discharge points include the Susquehanna, Chemung, and Tioga rivers as well as several streams.

For more information, call 570-327-3659 or visit www.depweb.state.pa.us.

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