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Orchard Grass Hills Sewer problems studied

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The Oldham County Sewer District has hired engineers to explore the problems with the Orchard Grass Hills sewage-treatment plant.

The \$12,000 contract with GRW Engineers Inc. includes an evaluation of the plant, its operating data and its capacity, among other things.

The state Division of Water prohibited additional connections to the plant this year until there is a study addressing concerns with the plant when it rains, said Vincent Bowlin, the sewer district's chief engineer and executive director.

A permit from the Division of Water is required for a plant to operate.

Deborah Dowdy, who lives near the plant off Ky. 22, said she recently learned there had been several problems with the plant.

"They're finally making some plans to improve it and we're very, very happy about that," she said.

The plant, located in the rear of the Orchard Grass Hills subdivision, was built in 1983. It can handle 300,000 gallons a day; right now, it averages about 250,000 gallons.

Bowlin said the district plans to eventually eliminate the plant and build a pumping station so sewage in that area would be sent to a plant in Jefferson County. He said it also has asked the Division of Water for permission to add on a nearby tank that would boost the plant's capacity by 100,000 gallons.

For now, few new homes can hook onto the plant. The district has said it can serve a proposed 94-home development in the area, but it has turned down two other proposals. Developers working on those proposals will either have to wait until there is more capacity or pump their sewage to Jefferson County, Bowlin said.

The study will determine what, if any, operational changes are needed at the Orchard Grass Hills plant. It also will identify any areas that the district should keep an eye on or investigate further.

"We have had some operational problems in the past, and in some cases they were related to wet weather," Bowlin said.

He said the electricity went out once because of storms, but that problem has been fixed.

"The flow goes up during rain events and that sometimes -- not every time -- but sometimes, makes it difficult to meet some of our permit limits. We have occasional problems at this treatment plant, but all treatment plants have occasional problems."

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