

South Panorama Sanitary District

History/Description

February, 2011

This District was developed as a result of the discoveries of the Lake Panorama On-Site Wastewater Management District. The Management District was formed in the early 1980s to provide ongoing inspections of the septic systems around the Lake. As a result of those inspections, it was determined that the area of the Lake that is now the Sanitary District had special problems and couldn't be managed and grow under that concept.

By the mid-1980s it became obvious that many of the existing systems around the dam area on the west side were not functioning well and the soils and terrain of that area were not conducive to using on-site septic systems. A few isolated areas were but the area as a whole had poor soils and rugged terrain. As a result, the Sanitary District was formed under Chapter 358 of the Iowa Code.

The District is a separate, legal governmental entity with roughly the same operating mechanisms as any small town. There is a Board of Trustees that is elected on a staggered basis for six-year terms. The Board consists of three members. These three currently are: Kim Lubeck (President), Scott Kemble (Vice-President), and Chris Webner (Clerk). Trustees would always be happy to visit with you about any questions you have. A Trustee is elected during each general election in even-numbered years so that in 2012 there will be an opening with nomination papers due in August for anyone interested.

This Board currently meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The meetings are open to the public and the public is always welcome. During the summer months, the Board meets at the Par 3 Clubhouse and the months when that facility is closed the meetings are held in the members' homes on a rotating basis.

The notices for the meetings are always posted at five official posting points. These sites are as follows: (1) Old Guardhouse entrance site, (2) intersection of Andrews Ter/Panorama Rd/Panorama Dr, (3) intersection of Andrews Ter/Donahey Dr, (4) intersection of Hansen Hill/Miller Ln, and (5) at High View Pt along Panorama Rd. Normally, there will be a notice of the meeting there on a special 4x4 wooden post approximately one week prior to the meeting. Anyone interested can also call the Environmental Health office at anytime to find out about meetings or activities of the Board.

The day to day functions of the District are managed by this office as the District is too small to hire employees and it is too much to expect of volunteer Trustees. This office handles all the agendas, minutes, plans budgets, does the inspections, writes reports, etc. for the District and the Trustees. The District is billed by this office for time, mileage, etc. for this work.

The system collects sewage from the homes and ultimately transports this sewage to the City of Panora. The system is called a grey water collection system because each home has a septic tank to collect the solids before the "grey water" is passed on to the central piping system. The District operates two pumping stations that pump this grey water to the City. The system was built this way because it is much cheaper to install, is cheaper to operate, and was all that was affordable back in the mid-1980s when it was financed and built.

Your utility fees are figured as follows: (1) there is a base charge of \$5.00/month. (2) There is a fee collected to cover the operation of the system such as repairing pumps, paying maintenance bills, etc. This fee is \$1.50 for every 1000 gallons of water the LPA meters to your home. (3) There is a fee that the District has to pay to the City of Panora to treat the wastewater. This fee is \$5.95 for every 1000 gallons of water metered to your home. If you are one of the 15 homes still

on your own on-site system, you do not pay this fee. (4) There is a property tax levy of \$.54/1000 taxable valuation of all property in the District. This money goes to pay the administrative costs of postage, phone bills, reimbursing the County for inspections, etc.

The bonds were paid off in June of 2006. As a result, the Board lowered the \$28.00 (\$21.00) per month charge to the \$17.00 and \$10.00 figures stated above. For the 2008-2009 fiscal year this was again reduced to \$8.00 for all homes. The Board is also considering using some of this fee to do other improvements to the system. The last section of unsewered road was completed in the summer of 2006. This was a section of Panorama Road from Lake View Point around to where the line already existed along Panorama Road at about 6900 Panorama Rd. Now the fee has been lowered to \$5.00 per month and will likely remain there.

In 2009 the Trustees committed to two major repairs. The old, badly worn fiberglass lift station covers were replaced with new fiberglass covers. Also, new LED warning lights replaced the existing, difficult to see, incandescent bulbs. The Trustees have purchased two generators to operate the lift stations should power be lost for any length of time. All of these repairs cost approximately \$10,000 for materials and labor and were paid out of the \$8.00/month basic fee in effect in 2009.

There is a brochure that has been produced by the Environmental Health Dept. that gives a good summary of this District and how it operates. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of this brochure can contact this office and one will be provided to you.

Anyone interested in building a new home within the District needs to contact the Environmental Health office. Plans must be reviewed to determine the size of the septic tank needed, to go over placement of tanks and piping as well as installation of a brine pit for the water softener. Currently, the Board has established a \$1,200.00 hook on fee. Also, this office will inspect the installation work as it is being completed to see that all regulations are adhered to.

In 2011 the Trustees have hired the original engineering firm to re-evaluate the whole system. After 20 years it was decided it made good sense to review the system for updates and things that might be improved. The problem of rain water infiltration will be examined as part of this. Suggestions and improvements may be worked on as the year progresses.

Also, the District has the same inspection program that the Management District has. Annually or biennially your system will be inspected, the tank opened on a regular schedule, and repairs or pumping required if needed. The County has a \$35.00 inspection fee for the year the septic tank is opened.

Other sites of interest on this topic: Lake Panorama On-Site Wastewater Management District