



**NEWS RELEASE**

**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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**Health Department to require annual permits for the installation of sewage holding tanks**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Cherokee County Health Department will require dwellings and establishments located within the Alabama Power Company flood easement around Weiss Lake to obtain a permit for the installation and use of a sewage holding tank. The permit must be renewed annually. This permit requirement, which will become effective July 9, 2012, applies to dwellings and establishments for as long as they do not have access to a sanitary sewer system.

The purpose of the requirement is to protect the public's health by minimizing the adverse health effects of improper sewage disposal into and around Weiss Lake. Sewage contamination poses both a health and an environmental threat. Sewage holding tanks must comply with structural, placement, and pumping requirements in local rules.

A dwelling or establishment located on a lot within the Alabama Power Company's flood easement which does not have access to a public or private sewerage system must have a holding tank permitted by the Cherokee County Health Department. If a public or private sewerage system is available to a dwelling or establishment on a lot, the owner must connect to the public or private sewerage system.

A dwelling is defined as "a house, manufactured home or house trailer, shelter, structure, or building or portion thereof, that is or could reasonably be expected to be occupied in whole or in part as the home, residence, or sleeping place of one or more persons." An establishment is a facility, other than a dwelling that generates sewage, including offices, work places, or food service establishments.

If a dwelling or establishment has been built or located on a recreational lot within the flood easement, regardless of how often it is used, it must have an approved means of sewage disposal. Applicants for permits must contract with a pumper licensed by the Alabama Onsite Wastewater Board to pump the holding tank on a regular basis. The pumping schedule will depend upon the frequency of use of the dwelling or establishment and water usage.

For more information, including permit requirements and fees, please contact Regina Majors at the Cherokee County Health Department (256) 927-3132 or visit the Cherokee County Health Department Website: <http://www.adph.org/cherokee/>.