



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Weiss Lake property owners urged to act; fines of \$150 per day to be assessed

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Cherokee County, Ala., Sewage Disposal Ordinance for the Alabama Power Co. Flood Easement of Weiss Lake within the county became effective July 9, 2012. The ordinance was adopted to protect the public health by minimizing the adverse health effects of improper sewage disposal into the lake. Sewage contamination poses both health and environmental threats.

A dwelling or establishment located on a lot within the 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 system. Sewage holding tanks must comply with structural, placement and pumping requirements in local rules.

Fred Vengrouskie, onsite survey officer with the Bureau of Environmental Services, Alabama Department of Public Health, said the Cherokee County Health Department has issued approximately 1,000 Notices of Violation to the persons of record that have dwellings or other structures within the flood easement.

"Many of those notices have been ignored; the response to the notices has been low," Vengrouskie said. "Currently, only about 100 applications have been filed and permits issued."

Around March 1, the Cherokee County Health Department will begin following up on Notices of Violation and issuing citations for violators of Cherokee County Ordinance Number 2012-02. This citation carries both a fine of \$150 per day, not to exceed a total of \$5,000, and further legal action as needed to correct the violation.

Under the ordinance, 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.

The fee for the initial holding tank permit is \$150, and the permit must be renewed annually for a fee of \$100. Applications for permits may be obtained from the Cherokee County Health Department, 833 Cedar Bluff Road, Centre, Ala. 35960.

All applicants must present a contract with a licensed septic tank pumper at the time they make application for a permit.

All holding tanks will be inspected and only those that are designed and manufactured specifically for the purpose of holding sewage will be permitted. Holding tanks cannot be shared between multiple dwellings/RV's. The discharge of any sewage or graywater onto the surface of the ground or into the lake is a violation of this ordinance.

For more information, including permit requirements and fees, please contact the Cherokee County Health Department, (256) 927-3132, or visit the Cherokee County Health Department Website: <http://www.adph.org/chokeee/>. The application for a permit can be downloaded from this site.