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# Pipeline absorption pillows discussed in Vernon

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 6, 2012, 12:10 PM  
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 AIM VERNON

The environmental commission (EC) gave a presentation at the Aug. 27 town council meeting of a video some 10 or 15 minutes long. The group showed a series of videos taken in the wetlands of Wawayanda State Park of sludgy, slimy blobs called absorption pillows, products used to absorb and remove industrial or commercial waste - such as petroleum - from their surroundings.

As has been previously reported in AIM Vernon, the environmental commission has been up to Wawayanda, trudging through swamps and forests to find out and document the environmental impact of the installation of the Tennessee Gas Pipeline.

All the videos and images shown by the commission were taken within two weeks of the meeting.

"To my best guess these are absorption products for petroleum products," stated Craig Williams, chairman of the commission.

The commission claimed to have found 20 of the pillows on the Newark's **Pequannock** Watershed property, which adjoins Wawayanda State Park.

"What they are giving off or are made up of I don't know," stated Williams. "They are not at all easy to handle."

He added that a person has to "get lost to find them."

The chairman added that Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company should have a map of wherever they dropped off absorption pillows. Several members of the commission noted that the pillows, once the size of a loaf of bread, had swelled to many times that size.

Williams stated he and the commission had marked the location of each of the pillows they found, and that they were "all located adjacent to the pipeline on the Newark Watershed property." According to Williams, after the pipeline was installed, the cleanup for the "backwater stuff" was never handled properly.

In the **Highland Lakes** area, the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company also deployed the absorption pillows, and the company claimed to pick up all of those, stated Williams.

It was Councilman Patrick Rizzuto who finally recommended that the commission contact the authorities in charge of the Newark **Pequannock** Watershed.

Williams noted that communication with El Paso Corporation - the company that owns the pipeline - has been patchy. As of the Aug. 27 meeting, he had been waiting two months or more for word from the company on some testing done in the state park.



PHOTO/JESSICA LOPEZ  
 Councilman Dan Kadish requests more funding for the commission next year.

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The town council asked the members of the commission a number of questions, but member Beverly Budz was unhappy with the response received.

"It sounds to me you are not assuming responsibility," she stated.

"We don't own that area," replied Rizzuto.

Budz asked if someone from the council would come and look at the site, to which the council President Brian Lynch responded that he would.

Councilman Dan Kadish asked the council to increase funding for the commission next year for the purpose of doing tests.

"They should have the full support of the council. They should have money for testing," Kadish stated.

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