

Officials resuscitate Clean-Flo plans for Hammonton Lake

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HAMMONTON -- It's been called the crown jewel of the town.

And town officials here don't want the jewel to lose any more of its luster.

Water quality at the Hammonton Lake has steadily deteriorated in recent years. Now, the town has revived plans to hire a Pennsylvania-based firm to help clean up the lake.

"It's gotten to the point where this has to be done," Town Council member Jeanne Sparacino Lewis said recently of the decision to hire Clean-Flo, a water-treatment firm based in West Chester, Pa.

The firm would install its inversion oxygenation system in the lake, which comes with a price tag of \$117,940.

The lake has been plagued with noxious weed growth and high fecal coliform counts, which resulted in the lake being closed to swimmers all but 13 days this past summer. Stormwater runoff has also contributed to the contamination problems, town officials had said, as most of the town's storm drains empty into the lake.

"We've also had problems with the fertilizer runoff during storms," councilman Russell Clark added.

But those problems should be solved with the Clean-Flo program, which was outlined at a recent Parks Commission meeting.

"Unlike ordinary diffused air systems, surface aeration, paddlewheels, hypolimnetic aerators, or propeller-aspirator aerators, Clean-Flo oxygenates an entire body of water from surface to bottom without creating turbulence," said Brian Kling, president of Clean-Flo. "Clean-Flo oxygenates and rids the entire bottom of gases including ammonia and carbon dioxide that aquatic weeds and algae need for food."

The town originally explored the Clean-Flo process back in 2000 but eventually shelved the proposal due to cost concerns.

But problems have persisted and town officials made the lake restoration a priority recently.

Town officials this week were scheduled to tour a lake in Pennsylvania where the Clean-Flo system has been in place.

The system, if installed at the Hammonton Lake, would include eight generators, which are responsible for the oxygenation process.

"Along with the system we will add beneficial microorganisms and enzymes to reduce the nutrient level and

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organic sediment," Kling said.

In addition, the town recently purchased two pairs of swans which should help scare off any resident geese at the lake, Hammonton Recreation Director Lou Rodio said.

"They don't get along," Rodio said of geese and swans. "That should help reduce the number of geese at the lake."

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