

York Water District looks to replace water main on Route 103 bridge

Water District has applied for shoreland permit to drill



A town water pipe which serves the Harris Island area of York is seen wrapped in protective metal insulation affixed to the Route 103 bridge over the York River on Thursday, July 23, 2009. York Water District's supervisor Don Neumann, not pictured, says the water pipe will be permanently relocated about 60 feet under the river and several feet to the left of the bridge while Maine DOT replaces the entire bridge.

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YORK, Maine — The York Water District wants to replace a pipe running along the Route 103 bridge before the state removes the York River overpass in late fall.

Don Neumann, superintendent of the York Water District, wants to bury the pipe by drilling at the outer edge of the Wheeler Marsh.

Neumann has applied for a shoreland permit to drill. The town's code enforcement office will make the final decision on the application. Shoreland resource officer Ben McDougal was scheduled to hold a public site on Thursday.

"I went to pre-construction meeting a couple of weeks ago," said McDougal. "I was concerned about the boring coming up right near Wheeler Marsh. I was thinking they would need to stage a construction area in Wheeler Marsh. But they have a pretty sophisticated machine, able to keep everything up on the shoulder. It's a significant, low impact system. Boring is being done completely under the river, 25 feet below the river. I don't see this being a hot button issue, the company is saying they can stay out of the marsh."

Local company CLD Engineering is overseeing the project, and Bore Tech is doing the drilling work.

"We don't feel there's going to be an adverse affect to what they're doing," said Carol Donnelly, a member of the York Rivers Association, a group of organizations interested in the health of the York River.

Neumann wants to begin drilling in September, before bridge work begins and the cold weather sets in.

The state Department of Transportation has received bids and plans to start work to replace the timber-framed bridge by December, according to project manager Jim Wentworth. Traffic will be re-routed.

Two other smaller bridges on Route 103 will also be repaired after the main bridge is finished.

Neumann said he was contacted several months ago about the project.

"The problem is," he said, "we have a water main that hangs off the side of the bridge."

Boring under the river will cost an estimated \$100,000 less than running another pipe across the new bridge and heating it in the winter, said Neumann. It costs an estimated \$3,000 annually to keep the current pipe from freezing.

Test borings show the bedrock is deep and that the area is a prime candidate for the work, called horizontal directional drilling, he said.

"The Maine DOT is driving this," said Neumann.



Don Neumann and Todd Hill show how the existing water line along the Route 103 bridge will be moved about 60 feet under the river.



Don Neumann, left, supervisor of the York Water District, and Todd Hill, right, the coordinator of the geographical information systems in York, show how the existing water line, shown in metal insulating cover and currently afixed to the Route 103 bridge over the York River, will be moved about 60 feet under the river as the bridge is being repaired by Maine DOT

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