



What is the purpose the plan?

The plan is designed to reduce overflows of untreated wastewater containing sewage and other contaminants into our rivers and streams. That will mean cleaner water for the region, an essential component in making Allegheny County a great place to live, work and play.

What are overflows?

When it rains or snow melts, excess water can overload the sewer system resulting in discharges of stormwater and untreated wastewater containing sewage into local rivers, streams and creeks. When that occurs, people are advised to avoid direct contact with river water.

Why do we need the Clean Water Plan?

The current system is not adequate to handle all of the water that enters the system, particularly during rainstorms and snowmelt. Making improvements is the right thing to do, and they are required under existing local, state and federal regulations. The federal Clean Water Act was enacted in 1972 to regulate discharges of pollutants into America's waterways and manage federal water quality standards. While our region's waterways are much cleaner than in the past, they still are polluted by discharges of untreated wastewater during overflows, which violate the Clean Water Act. If our region does not significantly reduce the number of overflows, it faces major fines and deterioration of our water quality.

What's in the Clean Water Plan?

There are projects that will keep stormwater out of the system, expand ALCOSAN's North Side treatment plant, assist municipalities with the operation and maintenance of large sewers and engage in long-term planning for the future.

What are the benefits of the plan?

First, and most importantly, its implementation will make our water cleaner and healthier, which is good for the environment, our economy and the health of our residents. Clean water will help attract new businesses and residents to the region. The plan will create jobs and bring new investments to our local communities.

What is a Consent Decree?

A Consent Decree is a legally binding document that outlines specific actions our region must take to reduce overflows of untreated wastewater. It contains deadlines for when the work must be completed. The consent decree is between the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Allegheny County Health Department.

How will this affect my bill?

Bills will have to increase. The goal is to adopt manageable increases and provide assistance to those families that cannot meet the burden of higher rates. ALCOSAN has created a Clean Water Assistance Fund that provides quarterly, \$30 credits to eligible homeowners.

What will I notice?

As work progresses, you will see some of the work going on. For example, although so-called green projects involve the use of plants and soil to keep stormwater out of a sewer, it is not simply a matter of seeding an area for growth. Under the plants there must be an engineered infrastructure to trap and hold excess water during cloudbursts so it can move for treatment later. These systems require ongoing maintenance. There are likely to be temporary road closings or restrictions while they are being installed. Residents will be informed before, during and after any work.

How can I learn more?

Our website, 3riversproud.com, will be updated regularly with the latest information. There will be public meetings, and you can join the conversation on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Our annual Open House includes hands-on demonstrations, tours of our plant and exhibits by other environmental and public health organizations. This year's event is set for Saturday, September 15. This summer you can pre-register online at www.alcosan.org. Hope to see you there!