**AYC Ecology North**

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**2.8 million gallons of partially treated sewage released during storm**
By Simon Husted, News-Herald.com

The six-hour storm on Saturday not only flooded many basements in Lake County, but also took a toll on Lake Erie and some of its tributaries as well.

Lake County Utilities Department and the city of Painesville reported the spillage of partially treated sewage from a few water treatment plants because of heavy stormwater.

Painesville's Water Pollution Control Plant on 1170 N. State St. released 2.79 million gallons of partially treated sewage Saturday.

"No raw wastewater reached the Grand River," said Randy Bruback, superintendent of the plant. The water that did end up in Grand River was given preliminary treatment, which includes a screening, grit and solid removal, chlorification and dechlorification. The difference between that and a complete treatment is a lack of filtration and secondary settling process, Bruback said.

He said the plant is designed to process 6 million gallons of wastewater at a time, but at one point during the storm the plant was processing as much as 37.1 million gallons.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency changed its rules in 2005 to allow plants to release partially treated sewage in conditions of overwhelming rainfall, to prevent the risk of damage to a plant.

Lake County Sanitary Engineer Al Saari said there was about 1 million gallons of overflow from the Gary L. Kron Reclamation Facility on Lake Shore Boulevard in Mentor.

During the weekend storm, the plant received about three times the normal flow and about two-thirds of it was because of rainwater, Saari said.

The overflow was partially treated, he said. Saari said some of the reason for the overflow is because of stormwater drains that are illegally tapped into sanitary sewer drains.

"When we get all the stormwater, it's highly diluted before it gets to the plant," Saari said.

"It's rainwater that mixed with the sewage we're treating at the plant."

Some of the tanks also overflowed at the Madison Wastewater Treatment Plant on Cashen Road, causing about 400,000 gallons to go into Arcola Creek, he said.

The average daily capacity at the plant is about 4.5 million gallons per day and the hydraulic capacity is about 10 million gallons.

The last time there were overflow incidents with the treatment plants served by the Utilities Department was seven years ago, during the July 2006 floods in Lake County.

"It's not what we like to see happen," Saari said. "But sewage plants aren't designed to handle stormwater."

There were no problems reported from the Heatherstone Wastewater Plant in Painesville Township, Saari said.

Some smaller treatment plants operated by the Utilities Department that individually serve 40 to 50 homes had no problems, he said.