

Plant started without permit

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by December and completed by next June.

Construction has progressed the past couple of weeks inside the guarded security gates of the 1,400 acre private community.

Jim Akrum, project manager for general contractor Bowen Engineering Corp., said the largest holding tank in the plant has been excavated and filled with concrete. He described the project as 20 percent complete after Thursday's concrete delivery by Meyer Material Co. of Rockford.

Asked about the EPA construction permit, Akrum said: "That's been approved. Consumers took care of that."

The permit actually has been delayed by months of debate on whether Consumers should be allowed to divert Candlewick wastewater outside the private lake communi-

ty. The Boone County Board rejected that proposal, but Candlewick residents are appealing to the EPA — forcing public hearings and risking another delay on the permit.

"There's too many hoops to jump through," Smith said.

He said Consumers notified EPA officials in Rockford that the company planned to start construction without a state permit. Those officials were not asked for their approval because, he said, "no one's going to put their job on the line."

EPA regional manager Harris Chien denied getting advanced notice. He said he assumed the company was limiting itself to earth-moving and other preliminary site preparation. Going beyond that, he said, would risk EPA fines as well as required alterations once the permit is issued.

"They could have to tear everything out," he said. "If they want to take a chance, it's

Candlewick chronology

June 1994: Illinois Environmental Protection Agency asks attorney general to file suit against Consumers Illinois Water Co. for alleged violations of state pollution standards at Candlewick Lake.

September 1994: Consumers petitions Boone County for approval to divert treated wastewater from proposed new sewage treatment plant away from Candlewick's private lake.

May 1995: Boone County Board votes against request.

June 1995: Candlewick appeals to EPA to overrule county, prompting plans for a public hearing and risking another delay in the construction permit.

Thursday: As Illinois Attorney General prepares lawsuit over pollution problem, Consumers begins construction of plant without state permit.