

# IEPA holds Prairie State hearing



Sentinel Photo/LAUREN P. DUNCAN

**WATER PERMIT CONCERNS** — Leslie Lowery, a permit engineer with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, references maps provided by the Prairie State Generating Company at a public hearing in Maitssa Thursday regarding the company's water permit. The company has applied for a re-issuance of a water permit in order to use its discharge sites.

## *Washington County residents voice concern over water permit*

**BY LAUREN P. DUNCAN**

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

**MARISSA** — Concerns over water and landfill use by a power company in Washington County were addressed by state environmental officials Thursday.

Area residents and environmental advocates were among those gathered at a public hearing in

Marissa held by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. The hearing regarded a water permit Prairie State Generating Company has applied for re-issuance of because its five-year limit on its previous permit will expire.

According to information from the hearing, the company has a new 750-acre, 290 foot tall coal ash landfill. Although the representatives from IEPA were at the hearing to speak in reference to concerns over water, some of the citizens said they worried whether the dust from the company would affect the water.

The permit Prairie State has

applied for involves the company's national pollutant discharge elimination system. The draft of the permit includes 16 discharge outfalls to different receiving waters, including unnamed tributaries to Mud Creek and one blowdown to the Kaskaskia River.

Concerns ranged from the process by which the facility will recycle its ground water for internal use to the stability of the company's newly built leaching pool in cases of heavy storms.

Larry Reuss of the Prairie State Generating Company said the com-

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pany aims to operate its campus in the most environmentally-friendly way possible.

He said the company has encountered a seepage path, but is wanting to route the water to another groundwater facility. He said the company's system is not impacting groundwater levels offsite though.

Traci Barkley of the Prairie Rivers Network, said she was concerned that mercury and other substances were being discharged into the receiving waters.

"Our concern is that you have much more concentration happening at the power plant and additional releases ultimately coming into the Kaskaskia River," she said.

Bob Mosher of IEPA said the water quality will not be affected and there are monitoring conditions set for the company in the permit. He said the company might have to seek a permit limit for the substance.

Cindy Skrukud of the Illinois Sierra Club expressed a

concern about how often the discharges are monitored in the Kaskaskia River and pollution concentrations in that water.

"With respect to mercury, the permit right now only requires monitoring of mercury from that outfall two times per year," she said. "That seems awfully infrequent to me."

Other residents requested that IEPA monitor the discharges more than twice yearly.

An area resident, Larry Wagner, said he was concerned about the control of water on the site and the impact of the recycling of the water when it vaporizes into the air.

"We're showing signs of spots on windshields of cars and trucks and there have been complaints of changing colors of roofs and we've just started a couple of months, where's it going to a couple of years from now?" he said.

A few members of the public who spoke expressed concerns of the dust from the facility, however the IEPA officials emphasized those concerns would have to be brought to the land bureau.

Mike Triefenbech, who said he is a close resident of the



Sentinel Photo/LAUREN P DUNCAN

**IEPA HOLDS HEARING IN MARISSA** — Illinois Environmental Protection Agency officials address concerns from Traci Barkley of the Prairie Rivers Network at a public hearing held in Marissa Thursday. The hearing was held to let the public make comment on a water permit applied for by the Prairie State Generating Company in Washington County.

company's Washington County location, said he has tried to get in touch with the land bureau over dust pollutants.

Mosher said it was inexcusable that he was not receiving returned phone calls from the land bureau.

Area resident Dennis Galley questioned the possibility of discharges in the case of a large storm. Leslie Lowery, permit engineer, said IEPA can go in and look into each basin at the campus and judge what size of storm event they are designed to withstand.

Thomas Sabo, area resident, said he was concerned about the impact of the facility's water usage on area farm-

ers and Washington County in future years.

"What happens to this project in 100, 200 years from now, what will be the outcome?" he said.

IEPA representatives said they were unable to provide the answer to that question at that time.

Dean Suder, agency hearing official, said the agency would accept written comments on the permit until Feb. 18. He said comments made at the meeting would be weighed and addressed the same as written comments. Following the closure of comments, he said a responsive summary would be issued.

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