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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Date: December 6, 2018

Skaneateles, New York – December 6, 2018:

After a period of the heavy rainfall and snow melt during the afternoon of December 2, 2018, the Overflow Retention Facility (ORF) at the Village of Skaneateles Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), located at 3831 Fennell Street, filled up with wastewater and began overflowing. The ORF was designed and installed in 1999 to properly manage sanitary sewer flows that exceeded the WWTP treatment capacity. Prior to the construction of the ORF, wastewater flows that exceeded the WWTP capacity backed up into the sewer collection system and cause backups into basements and unpermitted discharges from sewer manholes. The ORF wet weather system includes a pump station on West Elizabeth Street that pumps excess sewage into the ORF. The ORF, a membrane lined lagoon can store up to 1 million gallons of sewage. If the ORF reaches max capacity during a storm event, it overflows and discharges to the WWTP chlorine contact tank for disinfection prior to release to Skaneateles Creek. After storm events when influent flows subside, the ORF is drained back through the WWTP for full treatment prior to discharge.

Under the 2016 revised Sewage Pollution Right to Know (SPRTK) Law, the Village is required to and has been reporting discharges from the ORF through the NYAlert System. Earlier this year, NYSDEC implemented a new NY Alert system for sending out notifications under the SPRTK Law. The discharge report submitted to the new NYAlert system sent out text messages and emails to over 1,200 recipients. The NYAlert included information based on estimated data available at the time and indicated the discharge lasted for 11 hours and resulted in a volume of approximately 858,000 gallons discharged. A detailed review of computer monitoring data after the event was over determined the discharge lasted for 5.4 hours and resulted in 1.161 million gallons of water being pumped to the ORF with 161,630 gallons discharged to the chlorine contact tank. The Chief WWTP Operator was onsite Sunday evening preparing the plant to handle the situation and ensuring proper disinfection was provided for the duration of the discharge. Laboratory sampling indicates all water was fully disinfected prior to release to the Skaneateles Creek.

December 6, 2018
12-2-18 ORF Discharge Press Release

The Village operates separate sanitary and storm sewer systems so high flows in the sewer collection system are generally due to infiltration/inflow (I/I) during extreme storm events, high ground water levels, and high surface water levels in Skaneateles Creek. Sources of infiltration include groundwater infiltrating cracked and leaking sewer infrastructure including sewer mains, manholes and service laterals. Sources of inflow include ground water from sump pumps and footer drains and rooftop runoff from gutter downspouts that are connected to sanitary sewer laterals.

In response to inquiries about what is being done to eliminate this discharge, the Village has worked with the City of Syracuse in recent years as they replaced the aging sewer infrastructure on West Lake Street that was allowing significant quantities of infiltration into the collection system. The Village Operations Department is continuing with plans to retain an engineer to develop a capital plan for improvements to the WWTP and is planning sewer televising of sections of the collection system in 2019 to find and eliminate inflow/infiltration (I/I).

Residents of the Village can help by making sure sump pump discharges, down spouts and footer drains are routed to the Village storm sewer system (if available) or to an outside location. Village Code prohibits the connection of sump pumps to sewer laterals. If unsure where a sump pump is discharging or if storm sewers are available, please contact the Village Hall at 315.685.3340 to schedule a site visit with the Operations Department.
