

Kalahari Resorts makes agreement with Brodhead Watershed Association

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The Brodhead Watershed Association and the developers of Kalahari Resorts have reached an agreement that alleviates the association's hydrological concerns with the project.

The agreement, while not guaranteeing state approval for the sewer and water plan, is considered a large hurdle for the potential resort complex to overcome.

"Our two biggest concerns, I think, were making sure our water and sewer could, if you'll excuse me, flow," said Steve Pine, Kalahari's director of development. "It was all one collective concern. And I think that's out of the way now."

Association President Rob Sedwin said the productive negotiations between the two sides have been the way he hopes all developer negotiations would go.

"This is the type of attitude that should be modeled and immortalized for other developers when they come into this area," he said.

Instead of using ground water for the complex and shipping it 20 miles away to be treated, the resort will now build a pipe to bring in water from provider Brodhead Creek Regional Authority.

That way, the water will be taken out of and put back into the same source — Brodhead Creek.

\$3.5 million alternative

The first plan would have cost about \$3 million, according to Pine and Jim Cahill, managing partner of Pocono Manor Investors, the current owner of the Tobyhanna Township land Kalahari intends to build on.

The new cost with the association-approved alternative will cost \$3.5 million.

"They stepped up to the plate and decided to spend the extra money," Sedwin said.

Kalahari's original plan was to use ground-water wells on the property to supply water to the 150-acre resort. Pocono Manor Investors, which plans on developing an adjacent 230 acres for a retail complex along Route 940, planned on using the wells for that development as well.

The wastewater would then have been piped into Pocono Township's new sewer system and treated at Stroudsburg's treatment plant off Lower Main Avenue.

Officials from the watershed association were concerned that taking ground water out of the area and piping it

that far away could degrade the water quality of the surrounding creeks.

"There were downstream fishing clubs that were worried," association Executive Director Theresa Merli said.

Kalahari was prepared to take that plan to both the Department of Environmental Protection and the Delaware River Basin Commission, both of which would have had to approve it.

One more pipe

But as the March meeting in front of the commission got closer, the plan was scrapped as the two sides negotiated.

Now the plan is not just to build a sewer pipe, but another one with water service. Both pipes will be built from the end of the regional authority's reach — Sanofi Pasteur on Route 611 in Swiftwater — along Route 314 to the Kalahari property.

That plan will service Kalahari and the planned retail park. The Inn at Pocono Manor and the surrounding homes will be serviced by the inn's on-site sewer system.

"What comes out of one source is going to be put back in that source," said association president Rob Sedwin. "That's what we were looking for."

The new sewer plan is expected to be in front of the Tobyhanna Township Board of Supervisors on Monday, and in front of Pocono Township's supervisors April 10.

The basin commission likely would consider the plan for approval in early May, Pine said.