

One More Thing About That



by Steve Grimm,
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This is the first time I've attempted to include pictures in my article. I'm no photographer, so please bear with me. Does anyone know what the outlined "thing" is? Oh, I should tell you this is a picture of a manhole. So, guesses anyone? I won't make you suffer and read the entire article. That is a ROOT! OK, now you can turn the page. For those of you that are still here, that is a root growing in a lateral that discharges directly into the manhole. You need a chainsaw to cut this root. Jack wished his bean stalk was this big. That root goes at least 10 feet down to the bottom of the manhole, and then, as any good root would do, looks for places it can continue to grow and flourish. Breaking the manhole bottom, snaking down another line. Get the picture?

I know I said I was going to give this I&I subject a rest, but I realized I hadn't addressed manhole integrity adequately, if at all. I know I mentioned manhole inspections, but I don't think I stressed the importance of the inspections. You can turn the page now, but I'd listen to what I have to say. Eventually it's going to come down to this.

This past spring/summer has been a real eye-opener for me. Last year was a wet year, and it didn't surprise me (also a little hamlet in Greene County) to see so much I&I. This year, with the dry weather, I was surprised to see wastewater treatment plant flows still elevated. Not as bad as the year before, but still elevated. Going out in the collection system and popping manholes revealed so much. We (operators and myself) found pipe entrances and exits leaking a steady stream. Barrel sections showed evidence of leakage. You can always tell by the yellowish/brown build-up on the sidewalls, something I call calcification. In some instances there was actually a stream of water shooting into the manhole from the seam. The end result (another hamlet in Greene County) is the same. Excess water entering the system. Excess water entering the system equals excessive flows, which equals potential treatment problems, which equals potential permit violations, which equals non-compliance reports which equal.....get the picture? As stated in my article last quarter, you will never get rid of it all, but you can certainly reduce it.

If you haven't figured it out by now, I'm talking about the simple task of manhole inspections. So often we look for the "big" contributor, the storm drain or sump pumps. Smoke testing, televising and flow monitoring are all good tools, but until you know the integrity of your manholes, you might as well throw darts. I've told you before, get out there! I don't care if it's your job or the highways job or whoever. You, as an operator, certified by the State of New York, have a responsibility to protect the waters of this state and country.

Do me a favor. Do all of us a favor. Get out there. Look at your manholes. Fix 'em. You might be surprised. SA VAH. (it's not spelled correctly, but an old carpenter used to say that to me when he was trying to make sure "HIS" point was understood). I think it's French, or French Canadian. Anyway, get the point? SA VAH.



BONUS QUESTION:
What's the third hamlet? 📍