

# Falmouth eyes Otis for new wastewater plant

■ The base is one of three sites being considered for a treatment facility.

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FALMOUTH – Local officials know they need to expand the town's wastewater infrastructure.

But where to put a new treatment plant?

It could be at Otis Air Base, if Department of Public Works Director Raymond Jack's suggestions become reality.

Otis is one of three places being evaluated by Stearns and Wheler Environmental

Engineers as part of a \$496,000, two-year study of the town's wastewater needs.

The consultants will explore expanding the current main town treatment plant, or placing new facilities at the town-owned Falmouth Country Club or Otis Air Base. They have already begun a second big portion of the work – investigating possible places where they can put treated wastewater back into the ground.

The town's "vision" for dealing with its murky coastal ponds involves installing sewers in the south-facing peninsulas, where nitrogen from home septic systems has dramatically decreased the

water quality.

But first they'll have to find a place to put a new treatment plant.

It's the kind of thing few people want in their backyards. Jack first floated the idea of building a new plant at the base. "I certainly see it as the best, most cost-effective way for the town to move forward," Jack said.

The Air National Guard currently has a small treatment plant at Otis that services all the offices and homes at the Massachusetts Military Reservation.

The Guard has considered privatizing the facility, said base spokesman Cliff McDonald. But that plant

would be too small to serve Falmouth's needs.

Jack said Falmouth could treat the base wastewater and the town wastewater at one big facility. Conversations between Stearns and Wheler representatives and base officials are only preliminary. But the base is already the home of a regional water collaborative that provides drinking water to all four Upper Cape towns.

"That is a very preliminary consideration," said Amy Lowell, from the Falmouth Wastewater Department. "It's potentially advantageous enough that we want to seriously consider it."

Stearns and Wheler will

## In the works

■ Falmouth officials are studying three sites for new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities.

■ Engineers will explore expanding the main town treatment plant, or placing new facilities at the Falmouth Country Club or Otis.

wrap up their work by December 2008.

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