

PUBLIC WORKS
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Public Works

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HEMLOCK / US ROUTE 40 INTERSECTION UPDATE

- **Project began with the closing of the Hemlock Crossing in the middle of June.**
- **1st phase of project is complete. The crossing reopens today.**
- **Completion of the project is expected later this summer.**

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To be continued. . .

In May the Water Reclamation Facility highlighted a growing problem that they are facing, the “flushable” wipe. The article posed several questions about these wipes and concluded with to be continued. . . Thanks to Bill Zimmer for the following information.

Flushable wipes—they’re marketed as an alternative to toilet paper and they make lots of promises. Some say they’re “safe for sewers and septic” or “break down like toilet paper”. To see how those claims hold up, Consumer Reports put three brands of wipes, along with plain old toilet paper, through a disintegration test. It simulates what might happen when flushing.

The Consumer Reports top-rated toilet paper breaks down easily in about 8 seconds. But with the flushable wipes, testers stopped counting after 30 minutes! Although they say flushable, Consumer Reports' disintegration tests show they don't break down easily, which could pose problems with your plumbing or septic system.

Not only are these products a problem for residential plumbing but they are a growing concern for municipal sewer systems as well. Both individual and municipal wastewater treatment systems are designed to treat domestic sewage, flushing anything other than human waste or toilet tissue may result in equipment damage, process upsets, and possible sanitary sewer overflows. The pictures below demonstrate some of the problems associated with the use of flushable wipes. The picture on the left is of a partially clogged sanitary sewage lift station pump. The picture on the right is of the bar screen at the sewage treatment plant.



Flushable wipes cost a lot more than toilet paper. If they're a must-have for your family, Consumer Reports recommends bagging them and tossing them out with the trash rather than flushing. Consumer Reports says if you want to use flushable wipes, you might want to consider store-brand baby wipes. They shouldn't be flushed down the toilet either, but they cost a lot less.