

3. Respondent admits the jurisdictional allegations herein; however, Respondent neither admits nor denies the specific Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law contained in the CAFO. This CAFO states a claim(s) upon which relief may be granted.

4. Respondent expressly waives any right to contest the factual allegations or Conclusions of Law contained in this CAFO, and waives its right to appeal the Final Order set forth herein.

5. Before the taking of any testimony, and without adjudication of any issue of law or fact, the parties agree to the terms of this CAFO and to its issuance. Respondent consents to the assessment and payment of a civil penalty in the amount and by the method stated below.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

6. Meritage Homes of Texas, LLC (herein "Respondent") is a limited liability company, formed under the laws of the State of Arizona, and as such, Respondent is a "person," as that term is defined at Section 502(5) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(5), and 40 C.F.R. § 122.2. At all times relevant to the violations alleged herein ("relevant time period"), Respondent owned or operated 31 undeveloped lots in the Summit Parks Subdivision, a residential development operating under SIC 1521, located at Beltline Road and Newpark Blvd., Desoto, Texas 75115 (herein "the facility"), and was therefore an "owner or operator" within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 122.2.

7. During the relevant time period, the facility was a "point source" of a "discharge" of "pollutants" with its storm water discharges to the receiving waters of Heath Creek, which is a "water of the United States" within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 122.2.

8. Because Respondent owned or operated a facility that is a point source of discharges of pollutants to waters of the United States, Respondent and the facility were subject to the Act and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program.

9. Under Section 301 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311, it is unlawful for any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source to waters of the United States, except with the authorization of, and in compliance with, an NPDES permit issued pursuant to Section 402 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1342.

10. Section 402(a) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1342(a), provides that the Administrator of EPA may issue permits under the NPDES program for the discharge of pollutants from point sources to waters of the United States. Any such discharge is subject to the specific terms and conditions prescribed in the applicable permit.

11. Respondent made timely application for initial permit coverage for its activities at the facility, and was covered by NPDES permit number TXR15KS95. On August 27, 2008, the facility was inspected by EPA storm water inspectors. As a result of the inspection, it was determined that Respondent violated Section 301 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311, and permit number TXR15KS95 by failing to have a fully designed and implemented storm water pollution prevention plan on the site and failing to adequately maintain reports of weekly storm water inspections conducted from January 2008 to mid-March 2008.

12. The State of Texas was notified and given an opportunity to consult with EPA regarding the proposed assessment of an administrative penalty against Respondent.

13. EPA notified the public of the proposed CAFO and afforded the public reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed penalty. At the expiration of the notice period, EPA had received no comments from the public.

III. TERMS OF SETTLEMENT

A. PENALTY PROVISIONS

14. Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, EPA Region 6, considering the relevant criteria pursuant to Section 309(g)(3) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(3), and acting pursuant to the authority of Section 309(g) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g), hereby orders that Respondent shall pay to the United States a civil penalty in the amount of thirteen thousand, nine hundred fifty and 00/100ths (\$13,950) to settle the violations specified in this CAFO.

15. Payment shall be made by one of the following methods within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this CAFO to one of the following addresses:

- a. By mailing a cashier's check or certified check, payable to "Treasurer of the United States," to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Fines and Penalties
Cincinnati Finance Center
P.O. Box 979077
St. Louis, MO 63197-9000

- b. By wire transfer to:

Federal Reserve Bank of New York
ABA = 021030004
Account = 68010727
SWIFT address = FRNYUS33
33 Liberty Street
New York, NY 10045
Field Tag 4200 of the Fedwire message should read:
"D 68010727 Environmental Protection Agency"

c. By overnight mail (Express, FedEx, DHL, etc.) to:

U.S. Bank
1005 Convention Plaza
Mail Station SI.-MO-C2GL
St. Louis, MO 63101
Phone: 314-418-4087

d. By credit card payments to <https://www.pay.gov/paygov/>

(enter sfo 1.1 in the search field)

In the Matter of Meritage Homes of Texas, LLC, Docket No. CWA-06-2009-1742 should be clearly marked on the check or other remittance to ensure credit for payment.

16. Respondent shall send simultaneous notice of payment, including a copy of the check, to each of the following:

- (1) Regional Hearing Clerk (6RC-D)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733
- (2) Chief, NPDES Compliance Section (6EN-WC)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733
- (3) Chief, Water Legal Enforcement Branch (6RC-EW)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Respondent's adherence to these procedures will ensure proper credit when payment is received by EPA.

17. Respondent agrees not to claim or attempt to claim a federal income tax deduction or credit covering all or any part of the civil penalty paid to the United States Treasurer.

18. Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717 and 40 C.F.R. § 1311, unless otherwise prohibited by law, EPA will assess interest and late payment penalties on outstanding debts owed to the United

States and a charge to cover the costs of processing and handling a delinquent claim. Interest on the civil penalty assessed in this CAFO will begin to accrue thirty (30) days after the effective date of the CAFO and will be recovered by EPA on any amount of the civil penalty that is not paid by the respective due date. Interest will be assessed at the rate of the United States Treasury tax and loan rate in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 1311(a). Moreover, the costs of the Agency's administrative handling of overdue debts will be charged and assessed monthly throughout the period the debt is overdue. See 40 C.F.R. § 1311(b).

19. EPA will also assess a \$15.00 administrative handling charge for administrative costs on unpaid penalties for the first thirty (30) day period after the payment is due and an additional \$15.00 for each subsequent thirty (30) day period that the penalty remains unpaid. In addition, a penalty charge of up to six percent per year will be assessed monthly on any portion of the debt which remains delinquent more than ninety (90) days. See 40 C.F.R. § 1311(c). Should a penalty charge on the debt be required, it shall accrue from the first day payment is delinquent. See 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(d). Other penalties for failure to make a payment may also apply.

20. Pursuant to Section 309(g)(9) of the Act, 33 U. S.C. § 1319(g)(9), any person who fails to pay, on a timely basis, a civil penalty ordered or assessed under this section shall be required to pay, in addition to such penalty and interest, the United States' enforcement expenses including, but not limited to, attorneys' fees and costs incurred by the United States for collection proceedings, and a quarterly nonpayment penalty for each quarter during which such failure to pay persists. Such nonpayment penalty shall be 20 percent of the aggregate amount of such person's outstanding penalties and nonpayment penalties accrued as of the beginning of each

quarter. In such a collection action, the validity, amount, and appropriateness of the penalty assessed by this CAFO, and the terms of this CAFO shall not be subject to review.

B. GENERAL PROVISIONS

21. To execute this Agreement, Respondent shall forward this copy of the CAFO, with original signature, to:

Mr. Efren Ordonez (6RC-EW)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

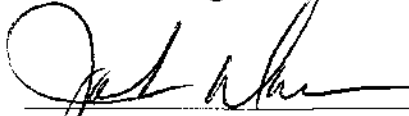
22. Issuance of this CAFO does not relieve Respondent from responsibility to comply with all requirements of the Act and the requirements of any permits issued thereunder, as described in Section 309(g)(7) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(7), nor does it constitute a waiver by EPA of its right to enforce compliance with the requirements of Respondent's permits or other requirements of the Act by actions pursuant to Section 309 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319.

23. In any action to enforce this CAFO, Respondent shall not assert as a defense any act or failure to act by any of its officers, directors, employees, agents, servants, contractors, subcontractors, successors or assigns.

24. Each party agrees to bear its own costs and attorneys' fees in this matter, except to the extent that Respondent may be responsible for reasonable costs and expenses of enforcement and collection proceedings for failure to comply with the terms of this CAFO. Furthermore, Respondent specifically waives its right to seek reimbursement of its costs and attorneys' fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act (5 U.S.C. § 504), as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (P.L.104-121), and any regulations promulgated pursuant to those Acts.


25. Each undersigned representative of the parties to this agreement certifies that he or she is fully authorized by the party represented to enter into the terms and conditions of this agreement and to execute and legally bind that party to it.

In recognition and acceptance of the foregoing:



For: Meritage Homes of Texas, LLC

6/22/09
Date



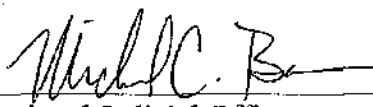
John Blevins
Director
Compliance Assurance and
Enforcement Division

8-28-09
Date

FINAL ORDER

Pursuant to the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties, 40 C.F.R. Part. 22, the foregoing Consent Agreement is hereby ratified. This Final Order shall not in any case, affect the right of EPA or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law. This Final Order shall resolve only those causes of action alleged in the CAFO. Nothing in this Final Order shall be construed to waive, extinguish or otherwise affect Respondent's (or its officers', agents', servants', employees', successors', or assigns') obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations, including the regulations that were the subject of this action. The Respondent is ordered to comply with the terms of settlement and the civil penalty payment instructions as set forth in the Consent Agreement. This CAFO shall become effective thirty (30) days after the issuance date specified below.

Issuance Date: September 2, 2009



Regional Judicial Officer
U.S. EPA, Region 6

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the 8th day of September, 2009, the original of the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order was hand delivered to the Regional Hearing Clerk, U.S. EPA, Region 6 (6RC-D), 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733, and that a true and correct copy was placed in the United States mail, by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the following:

Copy by certified mail,
return receipt
requested:

Mr. John Mann
Division President
Meritage Homes of Texas, LLC
909 Hidden Ridge, Suite 400
Irving, TX 75038.

Copy:

Ms. Susan Johnson, Manager
Enforcement Section, MC169
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, TX 78711-3087



Handwritten signature of Jackie Samuel in cursive script, positioned above a horizontal line.