



UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8

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IN THE MATTER OF:)	Proceeding under Section 1414(g)(3)
)	of the Safe Drinking Water Act,
Hitching Post, LLC.)	42 U.S.C. § 300g-3(g)(3)
The Hitching Post)	
Melrose, MT)	
PWS ID #MT0002143)	DOCKET NO.: SDWA-08-2009-0020
)	
Respondent.)	
_____)	

NOTICE AND ORDER

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the above action under Section 1414(g) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (“SDWA”), 42 U.S.C. § 3003-3(g), is docketed and the undersigned designated the Presiding Officer to conduct these proceedings. This action is subject to Subpart I of the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties, Issuance of Compliance or Corrective Action Orders, and the Revocation or Suspension of Permits (“Consolidated Rules” or “CROP”), 40 C.F.R. Part 22. The parties were previously advised of my designation by the Regional Hearing Clerk. Correspondence with, or service upon, the undersigned shall be directed to:

Elyana R. Sutin
Regional Judicial Officer
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8 (8RC)
1595 Wynkoop Street
Denver, CO 80202-1129
Telephone: 303.312.6765
Fax: 303.312.6859

Counsel for Complainant is directed to confer with Respondent and confirm a date and time on my calendar to schedule a telephone conference with my legal assistant (the Regional Hearing Clerk), Tina Artemis, **on or before January 9, 2009**. Ms. Artemis can be reached at 303.312.6765.

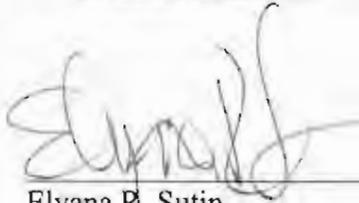
The purpose of the telephone conference is to establish a schedule for proceeding forward in this matter. Unless there are compelling reasons for a face-to-face conference, to minimize the costs in this proceeding, I plan to conduct all such conferences by telephone.

Each party shall advise me, prior to the conference of the telephone number at which they and others on their side participating in the conference call, wish to be contacted. For convenience, Complainant will normally participate on a conference phone located in the offices of the Presiding Officer. This is not considered an ex parte issue, since Respondent will be on the call at the same time. The parties shall have their calendars available for the telephone conference to schedule further proceedings in this matter. Furthermore, the parties shall be prepared to discuss the correct legal name of the Respondent given that there is a dispute.

Agency policy encourages settlement. 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b). The benefits of a negotiated settlement often outweigh the uncertainty, time and expense associated with litigating the matter. The parties are encouraged to have settlement discussions and any efforts needed to reach settlement in this matter. The parties shall take precautions in any settlement negotiations to insulate and shield the Presiding Officer and the Regional Hearing Clerk from any knowledge regarding the details of the settlement including monetary amounts discussed. This can be best accomplished by being certain that the Presiding Officer does not receive a copy of any communications reflecting settlement amounts.

The Regional Hearing Clerk maintains the administrative record for this proceeding under 40 C.F.R. §22.5 of the Consolidated Rules. Please make sure that the originals and one copy of all documents you wish included in the record are properly filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk. A copy of each document also needs to be provided to the opposing party and the Presiding Officer.

SO ORDERED THIS 17th day of December, 2008

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elyana R. Sutin', written over a horizontal line.

Elyana R. Sutin
Regional Judicial Officer

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned certifies that the original of the attached **NOTICE AND ORDER** in the matter of **HITCHING POST, LLC., DOCKET NO.: SDWA-08-2009-0020**, was filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk on December 17, 2008.

Further, the undersigned certifies that a true and correct copy of the document was delivered to Amy Swanson, Enforcement Attorney, U. S. EPA -- Region 8, 999 18th Street, Suite 300, Denver, CO 80202-2466. True and correct copies of the aforementioned document was placed in the United States mail certified/return receipt requested on December 17, 2008, to:

Debbie Kearns
Hitchin' Post LLC, Operation Member
P. O. Box 67
Melrose, MT 59743

Hand delivered to:

Honorable Elyana R. Sutin
Regional Judicial Officer
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
1595 Wynkoop Street (8RC)
Denver, CO 80202-1129

December 17, 2008


Tina Artemis
Paralegal/Regional Hearing Clerk