

UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6

FILED
2011 JUN 21 PM 2:11
REGIONAL HEARING CLERK
EPA REGION VI

In the Matter of § Docket No. CWA-06-2011-1832
§
Santa Fe County, New Mexico § Proceeding to Assess a Class I
§ Civil Penalty under Section 309(g)
Respondent § of the Clean Water Act
§
NPDES No. NM0028614 § ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT

I. Statutory Authority

This Complaint is issued under the authority vested in the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") by Section 309(g) of the Clean Water Act ("Act"), 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g). The Administrator of EPA delegated the authority to issue this Complaint to the Regional Administrator of EPA Region 6, who delegated this authority to the Director of the Compliance Assurance and Enforcement Division of EPA Region 6 ("Complainant"). This Class I Administrative Complaint is issued in accordance with the "Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits," 40 C.F.R. Part 22, including rules related to administrative proceedings not governed by Section 554 of the Administrative Procedures Act, 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.50 through 22.52.

Based on the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, Complainant finds that Santa Fe County ("Respondent") has violated the Act and the regulations promulgated under the Act and should be ordered to pay a civil penalty.

II. Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law

1. The Respondent is a political subdivision of the State of New Mexico, and as such, the 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.

2. At all relevant times, the Respondent owned or operated the Valle Vista Subdivision Wastewater Treatment Plant (“WWTP”) located at 102 Grand Avenue, approximately 0.7 miles southwest of the intersection of State Route 14 and State Route 599, in Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico (“facility”), and was, therefore, an “owner or operator” within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 122.2.

3. At all relevant times, the facility was a “point source” of a “discharge” of “pollutants” with its municipal wastewater to the receiving waters of Cienega Creek, thence to the Santa Fe River in Segment No. 20.6.4.113 of the Rio Grande Basin, which is considered a “water of the United States” within the meaning of Section 502 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362, and 40 C.F.R. § 122.2.

4. Because the Respondent owned or operated a facility that acted as 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. The Respondent applied for and was issued NPDES Permit No. NM0028614 ("permit") under Section 402 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1342, which became effective on August 1, 2006 and expired on August 31, 2010. The permit was re-issued on August 4, 2010 and became effective on September 1, 2010. At all relevant times, the Respondent was authorized to discharge pollutants from the facility to waters of the United States only in compliance with the specific terms and conditions of the permit.

8. Parts III.C and III.D of the permit require the Respondent to sample and test its effluent and monitor its compliance with permit conditions according to specific procedures, in order to determine the facility's compliance or non-compliance with the permit and applicable regulations. Part III.D of the permit requires the Respondent to file with EPA certified Discharge Monitoring Reports ("DMRs") of the results of monitoring, and Non-Compliance Reports when appropriate.

9. Part I.A of the permit places certain limitations on the quality and quantity of effluent discharged by the Respondent. The relevant discharge limitations for the permit effective on August 1, 2006 are listed in Attachment A. The relevant discharge limitations for the re-issued permit effective on September 1, 2010 are listed in Attachment B.

10. Certified DMRs filed by the Respondent with EPA in compliance with the permit show discharges of pollutants from the facility that exceed the permitted effluent limitations established in Part I.A of the permit. Exceedances for the August 1, 2006 permit are specified in Attachment C. Exceedances for the re-issued permit are specified in Attachment D.

11. Each instance in which the Respondent discharged pollutants to waters of the United States in amounts exceeding the effluent limitations contained in the permit was a violation of the permit and of Section 301 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311.

12. Under Section 309(g)(2)(A) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(2)(A), the Respondent is liable for a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed \$16,000 per day for each day during which a violation continues, up to a maximum of \$37,500.

13. EPA has notified the New Mexico Environmental Department of the issuance of this Complaint and has afforded the State an opportunity to consult with EPA regarding the assessment of an administrative penalty against the Respondent, as required by Section 309(g)(1) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(1).

14. EPA has notified the public of the filing of this Complaint and has afforded the public thirty (30) days in which to comment on the Complaint and on the proposed penalty as required by Section 309(g)(4)(A) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(4)(A). At the expiration of the notice period, EPA will consider any comments filed by the public.

III. Proposed Penalty

15. Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and pursuant to the authority of Sections 309(g)(1) and (g)(2)(A) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1319(g)(1) and (g)(2)(A), EPA Region 6 hereby proposes to assess against the Respondent a penalty of six thousand dollars (\$6,000.00).

16. The proposed penalty amount was determined based on the statutory factors specified in Section 309(g)(3), 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(3), which includes such factors as the nature, circumstances, extent and gravity of the violation(s), economic benefits, if any, prior history of such violations, if any, degree of culpability, and such matters as justice may require.

17. Complainant has specified that the administrative procedures specified in 40 C.F.R. Part 22, Subpart I, shall apply to this case, and the administrative proceedings shall not be governed by Section 554 of the Administrative Practice Act. However, pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.42(b), the Respondent has a right to elect a hearing on the record in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 554, and the Respondent waives this right unless the Respondent in its answer requests a hearing in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 554.

IV. Failure to File an Answer

18. If the Respondent wishes to deny or explain any material allegation listed in the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law or to contest the amount of the penalty proposed, the Respondent must file an Answer to this Complaint within thirty (30) days after service of this Complaint whether or not the Respondent requests a hearing as discussed below.

19. The requirements for such an Answer are set forth at 40 C.F.R. § 22.15 (copy enclosed). Failure to file an Answer to this Complaint within thirty (30) days of service of the Complaint shall constitute an admission of all facts alleged in the Complaint and a waiver of the right to hearing. Failure to deny or contest any individual material allegation contained in the Complaint will constitute an admission as to that finding or conclusion under 40 C.F.R. § 22.15(d).

20. If the Respondent does not file an Answer to this Complaint within thirty (30) days after service of this Complaint, a Default Order may be issued against the Respondent pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.17. A Default Order, if issued, would constitute a finding of liability, and could make the full amount of the penalty proposed in this Complaint due and payable by the Respondent without further proceedings thirty (30) days after a Final Default Order is issued.

21. The Respondent must send its Answer to this Complaint, including any request for hearing, and all other pleadings to:

Regional Hearing Clerk (6RC-D)

U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

The Respondent shall also send a copy of its Answer to this Complaint to the following EPA attorney assigned to this case:

Mr. Tucker Henson
Office of Regional Counsel (6RC-EW)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

22. The Answer must be signed by the Respondent, the Respondent's counsel, or other representative on behalf of the Respondent and must contain all information required by 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.05 and 22.15, including the name, address, and telephone number of the Respondent and the Respondent's counsel. All other pleadings must be similarly signed and filed.

V. Notice of Opportunity to Request a Hearing

23. The Respondent may request a hearing to contest any material allegation contained in this Complaint, or to contest the appropriateness of the amount of the proposed penalty, pursuant to Section 309(g) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g). The procedures for hearings are set out at 40 C.F.R. Part 22, with supplemental rules at 40 C.F.R. § 22.38.

24. Any request for hearing should be included in the Respondent's Answer to this Complaint; however, as discussed above, the Respondent must file an Answer meeting the

requirements of 40 C.F.R. § 22.15 in order to preserve the right to a hearing or to pursue other relief.

25. Should a hearing be requested, members of the public who commented on the issuance of the Complaint during the public comment period will have a right to be heard and to present evidence at such hearing under Section 309(g)(4)(B) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(4)(B).

VI. Settlement

26. EPA encourages all parties against whom civil penalties are proposed to pursue the possibility of settlement through informal meetings with EPA. Regardless of whether a formal hearing is requested, the Respondent may confer informally with EPA about the alleged violations or the amount of the proposed penalty. The Respondent may wish to appear at any informal conference or formal hearing personally, by counsel or other representative, or both. To request an informal conference on the matters described in this Complaint, please contact Ms. Hannah Branning at (214) 665-7489 or Ms. Mona Tate, of my staff, at (214) 665-7152.

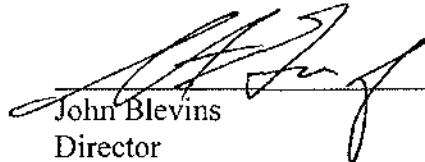
27. If this action is settled without a formal hearing and issuance of an opinion by the Presiding Officer pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.27, this action will be concluded by issuance of a Consent Agreement and Final Order (“CAFO”) pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b). The issuance of a CAFO would waive the Respondent’s right to a hearing on any matter stipulated to therein or alleged in the Complaint. Any person who commented on this Complaint would be notified and given an additional thirty (30) days to petition EPA to set aside any such CAFO and to hold

a hearing on the issues raised in the Complaint. Such a petition would be granted and a hearing held only if the evidence presented by the petitioner's comment was material and was not considered by EPA in the issuance of the CAFO.

28. Neither assessment nor payment of a penalty in resolution of this action will affect the Respondent's continuing obligation to comply with all requirements of the Act, the applicable regulations and permits, and any separate Compliance Order issued under Section 309(a) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(a), including one relating to the violations alleged herein.

JUN 21 2011

Date



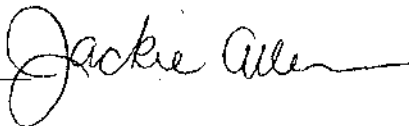
John Blevins
Director
Compliance Assurance and
Enforcement Division

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that the foregoing Class II Administrative Complaint was sent to the following persons, in the manner specified, on the date below:

Original hand-delivered:	Regional Hearing Clerk (6RC-D) U.S. EPA, Region 6 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200 Dallas, TX 75202-2733
Copy by certified mail, return receipt requested:	Ms. Katherine Miller County Manager Santa Fe County 205 Montezuma Santa Fe, NM 87501
Copy:	Mr. James Bearzi Bureau Chief Surface Water Quality Bureau New Mexico Environmental Department P.O. Box 5469 Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469
Copy hand-delivered:	Mr. Tucker Henson Office of Regional Counsel (6RC-EW) U.S. EPA, Region 6 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200 Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Dated: JUN 21 2011





UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region 6 • 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200 • Dallas, TX 75202-2733
FINDINGS OF VIOLATIONS and ORDER FOR COMPLIANCE
Docket Number: CWA-06-2011-1773, NPDES Permit Number: NM0028614

Statutory Authority

The following findings are made, and Order issued, under the authority vested in the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") by Section 309(a) of the Clean Water Act ("Act"), 33 U.S.C. § 1319(a). The Administrator of EPA delegated the authority to issue this Order to the Regional Administrator of EPA Region 6, who delegated this authority to the Director of the Compliance Assurance and Enforcement Division.

Findings

1. Santa Fe County ("Respondent") is a political subdivision of the State of New Mexico, and as such, 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.

2. At all times relevant to this Order ("all relevant times"), the Respondent owned or operated the Valle Vista Subdivision Wastewater Treatment Plant, located at 102 Grand Avenue, approximately 0.7 miles southwest of the intersection of State Route 14 and State Route 599, in Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico ("facility"), and was, therefore, an "owner or operator" within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 122.2.

3. At all times relevant, the facility was a "point source" of a "discharge" of "pollutants" with its municipal wastewater to the receiving waters of Cienega Creek, thence to the Santa Fe River in Waterbody Segment Code No. 20.6.4.113 of the Rio Grande Basin, which is considered a "water of the United States," within the meaning of Section 502 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362, and 40 C.F.R. § 122.2.

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

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. The Respondent applied for and was issued NPDES Permit No. NM0028614 ("permit") under Section 402 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1342, which became effective on August 1, 2006 and expired on August 31, 2010. The permit was re-issued on August 4, 2010, and became effective on September 1, 2010. At all relevant times, the Respondent was authorized to discharge pollutants from the facility to waters of the United States only in compliance with the specific terms and conditions of the permit.

8. Parts III.C and III.D of the permit require the Respondent to sample and test its effluent and monitor its compliance with permit conditions according to specific procedures, in order to determine the facility's compliance or noncompliance with the permit and applicable regulations. Part III.D of the permit requires the Respondent to file with EPA certified Discharge Monitoring Reports ("DMRs") of the results of monitoring, and Noncompliance Reports when appropriate.

9. Part I.A of the permit places certain limitations on the quality and quantity of effluent discharged by the Respondent. The relevant discharge limitations for the permit effective on August 1, 2006, are listed in Attachment A. The relevant discharge limitations for the re-issued permit effective on September 1, 2010, are listed in Attachment B.

10. Certified DMRs filed by the Respondent with EPA in compliance with the permit show discharges of pollutants from the facility that exceeded the permitted effluent limitations established in Part I.A of the permit. Exceedances for the August 1, 2006, permit are specified in Attachment C. Exceedances for the re-issued permit are specified in Attachment D.

11. Each instance in which the Respondent discharged pollutants to waters of the United States in amounts exceeding the effluent limitations contained in the permit was a violation of the permit and Section 301 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311. Each violation of the conditions of the permit or regulations described above is a violation of Section 301 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311.

ORDER

General Provisions

Based on the foregoing Findings and pursuant to the authority of Section 309 of the Act, EPA hereby orders the Respondent to take the following actions:

Issuance of this Order shall not be deemed an election by EPA to forego any administrative or judicial, civil or criminal action to seek penalties, fines, or any other relief appropriate under the Act for the violations cited herein, or other violations that become known. EPA reserves the right to seek any remedy available under the law that it deems appropriate.

A. Within thirty (30) days of the effective date of the Order, the Respondent shall certify compliance with permit effluent limitations for E. Coli (30 Day Average and Daily Maximum), Fecal Coliform Bacteria (30 Day Average and Daily Maximum), Total Suspended Solids (30 Day Average), and Total Chlorine (Instantaneous Maximum).

Failure to comply with this Order or the Act can result in further administrative action, or a civil judicial action initiated by the United States Department of Justice.

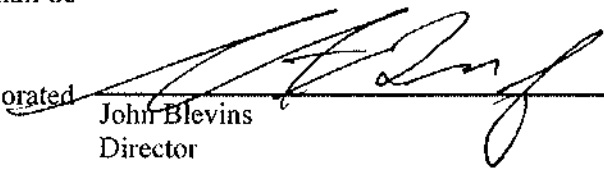
B. Within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Order, the Respondent shall also provide the EPA with a list of all mechanical and operational deficiencies and a narrative describing the specific actions taken to correct the violations for E. Coli (30 Day Average and Daily Maximum), Fecal Coliform Bacteria (30 Day Average and Daily Maximum), Total Suspended Solids (30 Day Average), and Total Residual Chlorine (Instantaneous Maximum).

This Order does not constitute a waiver or modification of the terms or conditions of the Respondent's NPDES permit, which remain in full force and effect. Compliance with the terms and conditions of this Order does not relieve the Respondent of its obligation to comply with any applicable federal, state, or local law or regulation.

C. In the event it will take the Respondent longer than thirty (30) days to provide an explanation as to what compliance is not possible, a listing of all non-compliance-related deficiencies and a schedule for repair/correction for each deficiency shall be submitted to the EPA for review and approval.

6/21/2011
Date

D. Any approved compliance schedule will be incorporated and reissued in a future administrative order.



John Blevins
Director
Compliance Assurance and
Enforcement Division

E. To ask questions or comment on this matter, please contact Ms. Hannah Branning at (214) 665-7489 or Ms. Mona Tate, of my staff, at (214) 665-7152.

F. Any information or correspondence submitted by the Respondent to EPA under this Order shall be addressed to:

Ms. Hannah Branning
Water Enforcement Branch (6EN-WC)
EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Ave., Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733