

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

**STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2004
Prepared on January 13, 2004**

ITEM: 26

**SUBJECT: Rescission of Waste Discharge Requirements, Elks Events Center,
Santa Barbara County, Order No. 98-80**

KEY INFORMATION

Location: Hwy 101 and Santa Maria Way, Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County
Discharge type: Domestic
Design flow rate: 4,000 gallons-per-day (gpd)
Current flow rate: None
Treatment: Septic tanks
Disposal: Leachfields
Reclamation: None
Existing Order: Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 98-80

SUMMARY

Elks Recreation, Inc. (Discharger) treats domestic wastewater in septic tanks and disposes of the effluent in leachfields. The leachfields' design and construction complies with this Region Board's *Water Quality Control Plan* (Basin Plan) design requirements, which result in larger, more reliable systems. The Discharger provides adequate oversight, and has never violated any of the Order's terms and provisions. Staff proposes the Board rescind the Order because Board oversight is no longer needed.

DISCUSSION

The Discharger operates an events center including a show ring capable of seating up to 8,000 people and a meeting center. The events center is on a 107-acre lot near the intersection of Highway 101 and Santa Maria Way in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County.

The Discharger intermittently treats up to 4,000 gpd of wastewater in adequately sized septic tanks. The treated wastewater is disposed of in underground leachfields designed in accordance with the design criteria specified in this

Region's Basin Plan. These criteria require dual leachfields, a set-aside area for future disposal needs (if any), and greater leachfield disposal areas than other design methods. Hence, systems designed according to Basin Plan criteria generally protect groundwater quality from chemical and biological pollutants. Also, such larger disposal systems operate more reliably than those designed by other methods. The design capacity of the leachfield disposal systems is 4,000 gpd.

The Order includes specifications typical of those included in waste discharge requirements for on-site disposal systems. The Prohibitions require discharge only to approved areas, prohibit discharge to drainageways or the ground surface, and prohibit bypass of the septic tanks. The Order's Discharge Specifications limit the flowrate to the peak design flow of 4,000 gpd, limit the discharges pH to a range between 6.5 and 8.4, and require the diversion of extraneous surface drainage from the disposal area. The Groundwater Limitations prohibit the discharge from causing nitrate concentrations to exceed 8 mg/L or a significant increase in mineral concentrations. The proposed Provisions require the

Discharger to comply with Monitoring and Reporting Program No. 98-80 and this Region's "Standard Provisions and Reporting Requirements." The Provisions also require system upgrades to be made in accordance with the Basin Plan.

The Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP No. 98-80) also specifies typical requirements for on-site disposal systems. These include requiring the daily average flowrate to be estimated each month. The MRP requires annual septic tank inspection or pumping, and monthly inspection of the disposal area for problems.

Staff's annual inspections conducted since 1998 have found no instances of surfacing effluent or other problems. Monitoring in accordance with Monitoring and Reporting Program No. 98-80 has shown the treatment/disposal system has operated well. Based on this, and since the system was designed to conservative Basin Plan criteria, staff concludes the discharge does not threaten groundwater quality or its beneficial uses. Reliable operations over the past five years indicate future reliability.

If a leachfield fails, surfacing effluent due to clogged leachlines is the most common cause. If this occurs, both the Elks Events, Inc. staff and Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services Department (EHS) staff will be available to ensure the leachfield is either rehabilitated or a new field is constructed in the area set aside for that purpose. EHS has the ongoing responsibility to protect the public's health. In staff's experience, EHS is usually contacted when a large system fails, whether it's regulated by waste discharge requirements adopted by the Board or not. Hence, there is no need for the Board to continue to regulate the discharge.

Staff proposes to rescind the Order instead of regulating the discharge under the general permit entitled *Discharges to Land from Small*

Domestic Wastewater Systems (Order No. 97-10DWQ because the system requires no oversight from the Board, as discussed above, to operate reliably and thereby protect the public's health and groundwater quality.

In both the cover letter for the Staff Report and the final notice of the adopted rescission (if adopted by the Board), staff proposes to notify the discharger of its responsibility to notify the Board of significant changes in treatment or disposal operations, or of significant increases in wastewater flowrates.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The wastewater treatment/disposal system will likely be reliable for the foreseeable future. In addition, staff inspections have found no system failures or detected any odors. The Discharger's staff will routinely continue to maintain the system. The Discharger's staff and County EHS staff are available to address surfacing effluent due to clogged leachlines (an unlikely event). Therefore, staff recommends the Board rescind Order No. 98-80.

COMMENTS

Elks Recreation, Inc. – No response
Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services – No response

RECOMMENDATION

Rescind Order No. 98-80, as proposed.

ATTACHMENT

1. Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. 98-80.

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