



North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Regional Water Quality Control Board North Coast Region Staff's Summary Report June 13-14, 2024

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: Public Hearing on Order No. R1-2024-0023 to consider adoption of proposed Waste Discharge Requirements and Water Recycling Requirements for the McKinleyville Community Services District Wastewater Treatment, Recycling, and Disposal Facility WDID No. 1B82084OHUM, NPDES Permit No. CA0024490 (Sabrina Cegielski).

BOARD ACTION: The Board will consider adoption of Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R1-2024-0023. The Order will serve as a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for a period of five years.

BACKGROUND: The McKinleyville Community Services District (Permittee) owns and operates the McKinleyville Community Service District Wastewater Treatment, Recycling, and Disposal Facility (Facility) and associated wastewater collection system that provides sewer service to approximately 16,900 residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and municipal users in the unincorporated town of McKinleyville. The Facility is located at 675 Hiller Road, McKinleyville, Humboldt County.

The Facility is currently regulated under Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R1-2018-0032, which serves as a NPDES permit for waste discharges to surface waters.

The Facility discharges tertiary treated wastewater and has an average dry weather design treatment capacity of 1.37 million gallons per day (mgd) and a peak daily wet weather treatment capacity of 3.08 mgd. The treatment system consists of a headworks, two aeration basins, two clarifiers, chlorine disinfection with sulfur dioxide dechlorination. Treated wastewater is discharged to five effluent storage ponds used for storage of treated wastewater prior to discharge to the Mad River or the recycled water system.

During the wet weather season (October 1 through May 14), the Permittee may discharge from the on-site effluent storage pond to the Mad River at Discharge Point 001 in the Blue Lake Hydrologic Area within the Mad River Hydrologic Unit.

During the dry weather season (May 15 through September 30), the Facility discharges recycled water to the lower Fisher Ranch at Discharge Point 003, upper Fisher Ranch at Discharge Point 004, Hiller storm water treatment wetland and forested area at Discharge Point 005, and the Pialorsi Ranch at Discharge Point 006.

DISCUSSION: Order No. R1-2024-0023 (Proposed Permit), replaces Order No. R1-2018-0032 (Previous Permit). While the Previous Permit expired on October 31, 2023, it was administratively extended pending issuance of a new permit pursuant to California Code of Regulation, title 23, section 2235.4.

The Proposed Permit continues to prescribe technology-based effluent limitations for biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and total suspended solids (TSS), and water quality-based effluent limitations for settleable solids, total residual chlorine, total coliform bacteria, pH, and ammonia. The Proposed Permit also retains discharge specifications for the discharge of tertiary recycled water at Discharge Point 003, 004, 005, and 006. The Proposed Permit further retains the special provisions which require studies and reports to ensure compliance with the operations, toxicity, source control, and biosolids disposal requirements.

Noteworthy changes to the Proposed Permit include the following:

1. **Toxicity Provisions.** Updated chronic toxicity requirements have been included in the Proposed Permit to implement the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California (Toxicity Provisions), adopted on December 1, 2021. (Order Section 4.1.2.)
2. **Chronic Toxicity Effluent Target.** Effluent Targets for chronic toxicity have been included as required by the new Toxicity Provisions. (Proposed Order Section 4.1.2.)
3. **Total Chromium Effluent Limitation.** WQBELs for Total Chromium were added based on the primary MCL for Total Chromium. Monitoring results from the current permit term showed that Total Chromium was present the effluent discharge, in levels that exceeded the primary MCL. (Proposed Order section 4.1.1.)
4. **Bis (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate Effluent Limitation.** WQBELs for Bis (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate were added based on the California Toxics Rule (CTR) water quality criteria for Bis (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate. Monitoring results from the current permit term showed that Bis (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate was present in the effluent discharge, in levels that exceeded the CTR water quality criteria. (Proposed Order section 4.1.1.)

5. **Revised Basin Plan Receiving Water Limitations.** To implement the 2016 amendments, approved by U.S. EPA in 2018, to the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan), updated dissolved oxygen and new specific conductance and total dissolved solids limitations have been added to the Proposed Permit. (Order Section 5.1.)
6. **Bacteria Provisions.** New receiving water limitations for *Enterococci* bacteria have been added to the Proposed Permit to implement the new bacteria provisions that were adopted by the State Water Board on August 7, 2018, and amended into the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California. (Order Section 5.1.21)
7. **Reasonable Potential.** WQBELs for dichlorobromomethane, acute toxicity, chronic toxicity, and carbon tetrachloride were removed and not included in the Proposed Order as the reasonable potential analysis (RPA) results indicate that reasonable potential no longer exists. (Section 4.3.3.3. of the Proposed Order Fact Sheet.)
8. **Monitoring and Reporting Requirements (MRP).** Changes to the monitoring and reporting requirements have been made as follows:
 - a. **Downstream Receiving Water Monitoring Location.** The previous downstream monitoring location was not representative of effluent discharge due to the changing hydraulic characteristics of the Mad River. The monitoring location was modified in the Proposed Order to allow the Permittee to select a receiving water sampling location that will be representative of downstream receiving water conditions. (Proposed MRP section 2)
 - b. **Disaster preparedness assessment report and action plan.** A requirement to prepare a disaster preparedness assessment report has been added that requires the Permittee to assess its vulnerability to natural disasters and extreme weather and other conditions that may be exacerbated by climate change. (Proposed MRP section 10.5.) (7.6.9. of Draft Order Fact Sheet.)
 - c. New effluent and receiving water monitoring requirements for *Enterococci* bacteria were added to demonstrate compliance with receiving water limitation for enterococci and Statewide Bacteria Standards. (Proposed MRP sections 4.1.1 and 4.3.3.1.7.)
 - d. The effluent monitoring frequency requirement for chronic aquatic toxicity has been increased from annually to semiannually to meet the minimum allowed monitoring frequency identified within the new Toxicity Provisions. (Proposed MRP section 4.1.1)

- e. The Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing Requirements included in the monitoring and reporting program have been updated significantly to reflect the new Toxicity Provisions. (Proposed MRP Section 5)
- f. Annual volumetric reporting requirements are included to implement requirements of the State Water Board Recycled Water Policy. (Proposed MRP section 10.9)

A copy of the Draft Permit was posted on the Regional Water Board website and was available for public comment from April 22, 2024, through May 23, 2024. A comment letter was received from the Permittee on May 23, 2024. No other comments were received. The attached Response to Comments document includes a full explanation of the Permittee's comments and Staff's response to the Permittee's comments; several permit modifications were made to the Proposed Permit in response to the Permittee's comments.

Staff notified the Permittee of the proposed changes to the Proposed Permit on June 3, 2024. Staff anticipates that the Proposed Permit will be uncontested.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Order No. R1-2024-0023 as proposed.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

- 1. Proposed Order No. R1-2024-0023
- 2. Response to Comments Document
- 3. Notice of Public Hearing
- 4. McKinleyville Community Services District Comment Letter available electronically upon request. To access this document please contact Sabrina Cegielski at sabrina.cegielski@waterboards.ca.gov or (707)543-7126.