

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 10**

**Response to Comments  
Ahsahka Water and Sewer District Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Permit No. ID-002522-4**

**Background**

On May 29, 2003, EPA proposed to reissue the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for the Ahsahka Water and Sewer District Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). The Public Notice of the draft permit initiated a 30-day public comment period which expired on June 27, 2003. The EPA received comments on the draft permit from Larry Kaufman, of the Ahsahka Water and Sewer District. No other comments were received.

This document summarizes the comments received on the draft permit, and EPA's responses to the comments. The document provides a record of the basis for changes to the draft permit to produce the final permit. The Fact Sheet that accompanied the draft permit was not revised because it is already a final document that provides a basis for the draft permit.

**Comments and Responses**

**Comment 1**

The District requested that the *E. coli* sampling frequency be changed from 5/month to 1/week to coincide with the weekly total chlorine sampling.

**Response 1**

The EPA disagrees. An NPDES permit must ensure that the discharge from the facility complies with the State/Tribe's water quality standards. The Ahsahka WWTP discharges to waters on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation. The Nez Perce Tribe has not yet adopted water quality standards. In such cases, EPA's practice is to apply adjacent or downstream standards to the water body for the purpose of developing permit limitations and conditions. Therefore, the State of Idaho water quality standards were applied.

The requirement that the permittee sample 5 times per month is a stipulation of the Idaho Water Quality Standards (58.01.02). Section 251 *Surface Water Quality Criteria For Recreation Use Designations* requires that waters designated for primary contact recreation not contain *E. coli* bacteria in concentrations exceeding "a geometric mean of 126/100 ml based on a minimum of five samples taken every 3-5 days over a 30 day period." The monitoring frequency of 5 samples

per month was incorporated directly into the permit.

Final Permit Modification: None

### Comment 2

The District requested that the compliance with the chlorine effluent limit be based on chlorine dosage and an assumed chlorine demand of 80 percent. Under current operations, treatment plant flow through the chlorinator is not constant. Whereas chlorine is injected at a constant rate, resulting in varying concentrations of chlorine in the effluent.

### Response 2

The EPA disagrees. The regulations at 40 CFR Part 122.44(i) require that the permit contain monitoring requirements to assure compliance with the permit limitations. The EPA does not believe that compliance with the chlorine limit can be assured under the facility's current operations. The existing operations may result in chlorine spikes in the effluent. Therefore, the permit requires effluent monitoring for chlorine. Because the treatment plant is not currently set up to meet the chlorine limit, the final permit contains a compliance schedule to allow the facility one year to come into compliance with the chlorine limit.

Final Permit Modification: Table 1 of the final permit has been modified to include a footnote that states that the chlorine effluent limits become effective after one year from the effective date of the permit. Section I.B "Chlorine Schedule of Compliance" and Section II.J "Compliance Schedules" have been added to the permit.

### Comment 3

The District requested that the Quality Assurance Plan requirements only include sample collection and transportation since all laboratory testing is performed by a contract facility.

### Response 3

The degree to which each of the QAP elements should be addressed will differ depending on whether the District is directly responsible for performing the task. QAP elements for which the District is directly responsible (such as sample handling and custody requirements) may have extensive detail. Whereas, tasks conducted exclusively by the laboratory, may be sufficiently addressed by stating in the QAP that the laboratory is responsible for that task. The QAP should include information on what the District is requesting of the laboratory (such as specifics on parameters to be tested, testing methods, detection limits, etc.).

Final Permit Modifications: None.



