

November 21, 2001

Response to Comments

Draft NPDES Permit for:  
Kootenai-Ponderay Sewer District  
Wastewater Treatment Facility  
NPDES No.: ID-002122-9

On May 2, 2001, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to the Kootenai-Ponderay Sewer District for the discharge from a wastewater treatment facility. The Kootenai-Ponderay Sewer District owns and operates the facility which treats domestic sewage from local residents and commercial establishments. Following treatment the effluent is discharged to Boyer Slough which flows approximately one-half mile from the discharge point into Pend Oreille Lake. The public comment period for the draft permit extended thirty days from May 2 to June 1, 2001. No comments were received on the draft permit.

On July 26, 2001, EPA received a final certification from the State of Idaho pursuant to the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The Section 401 certification finds that if the facility complies with the terms and conditions imposed by the permit, there is reasonable assurance that the discharge will comply with Idaho Water Quality Standards and Wastewater Treatment Requirements (Idaho standards). This certification was provided in a letter to Mr. Robert Robichaud, EPA, from Mr. Gwen P. Fransen, Regional Administrator, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Coeur d'Alene. The certification did include stipulations, discussed below, which resulted in two revisions to the draft permit.

The draft permit includes limitations for both E.coli and fecal coliform bacteria based upon the Idaho standards. As discussed further in the certification letter, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) believes that both limitations provide approximately equivalent levels of protection. Therefore, IDEQ will interpret the E.coli limitation as a surrogate for fecal coliform for the purposes of evaluating compliance with Idaho standards. As a result of this interpretation, the fecal coliform limitation in the permit is redundant and has been removed from the final permit. IDEQ request that E.coli limitations be retained in the final permit as proposed with a sampling frequency of five (5) samples taken every three (3) to five (5) days over a thirty (30) day period as required by the standards. EPA has included the E.coli limitation as proposed in the final permit.

The 401 certification also included a stipulation related to the outfall pipe. The existing outfall pipe is approximately five feet above the surface of the water. The drop of the discharge from this elevation is causing excessive turbidity and foaming in the receiving water. The following stipulation was included in the 401 certification in order to eliminate this problem and has been included in the final permit: "The Kootenai-Ponderay Sewer District shall reduce the elevation of the discharge pipe to no greater than twelve (12) inches above the surface of the

receiving water and install a spill pad approved by IDEQ within 60 days from the effective date of the permit.”