

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Environmental Assessment

WATER QUALITY DIVISION
Water Protection Bureau

Name of Project: Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) permit MT0000281 renewal for wastewater discharges from The Western Sugar Cooperative (WSC) - Billings Facility.

Type of Project: WSC is an existing sugar beet processing facility that holds a major industrial MPDES permit.

Location of Project: 3020 State Ave, Billings, MT

County: Yellowstone

Agency Action and Applicable Regulations: The proposed action is to renew the MPDES permit for a five-year cycle.

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30:

Subchapter 2 - Water Quality Permit Application and Annual Fees.

Subchapter 5 - Mixing Zones in Surface and Ground Water.

Subchapter 6 - Surface Water Quality Standards.

Subchapter 7 - Nondegradation of Water Quality.

Subchapter 11 – Storm Water Discharges

Subchapters 12 and 13 – MPDES Standards.

Montana Water Quality Act, MCA 75-5-101, *et seq.*

Summary of Issues:

This action is the proposed renewal of an MPDES permit for WSC for:

- Outfall 001: Surface water discharge to the Yegen Drain
- Outfall 002: Surface water discharge to Grey Eagle Ditch (to the Yegen Drain)
- Outfalls 004 - 007: Ground water discharge (connected to surface water)

All six outfalls at WSC are subject to the Technology-based Effluent Limits under 40 CFR 409 for Beet Sugar Processing (5-day Biochemical Oxygen Demand, Total Suspended Solids, Fecal Coliform, Temperature, and pH). In addition, WSC is subject to Water Quality-based Effluent Limits for ammonia, *E.coli* bacteria (summer), oil & grease, total residual chlorine, nitrate + nitrite, and summer nutrient standards. Monitoring, a compliance schedule, and special conditions apply.

Benefits and Purpose of Action: The permit will ensure compliance with the Montana Water Quality Act and protection of the beneficial uses of Grey Eagle Ditch, Yegen Drain, the Yellowstone River, and local ground water.

Affected Environment & Impacts of the Proposed Project:

Y = Impacts may occur.

N = Not present or No Impact will likely occur.

IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
1. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are soils present which are fragile, erosive, susceptible to compaction, or unstable? Are there unusual or unstable geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?	[N]
2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?	[Y] Discharges from WSC have produced undesirable aquatic life in the Yegen Drain. The WSC wastewater discharged from Outfall 001 is high strength organic wastewater that receives insufficient treatment. The wastewater continues to degrade in the Yegen Drain. The ground water mixing zones approved in past MPDES and Montana Ground Water Pollution Control System (MGWPCS) permits have not adequately protected its current and anticipated beneficial uses.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[N] The permittee maintains an air quality permit issued by DEQ, which has limits, monitoring, and reporting conditions.
4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be significantly impacted? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	[N] The WSC facility has been located at this site since 1906. No new impacts to life and/or habitats are anticipated.
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N] The WSC facility has been located at this site since 1906. No new impacts to life and/or habitats are anticipated.
6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?	[N] The WSC facility has been located at this site since 1906. No new impacts to life and/or habitats are anticipated.
7. SAGE GROUSE EXECUTIVE ORDER: Is the project proposed in core, general or connectivity sage grouse habitat, as designated by the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program (Program) at: http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/sage-grouse ? If yes, did the applicant attach documentation from the Program showing compliance with Executive Order 12-2015 and the Program's recommendations? If so, attach the documentation to the EA and address the Program's recommendations in the permit. If project is in core, general or connectivity habitat and the applicant did not document consultation with the Program, refer the applicant to the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program.	[N] DEQ has verified the facility is within exempt community boundaries and therefore is not located within core, general, or connectivity sage grouse habitat.
8. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] The WSC facility has been located at this site since 1906. No impacts to historical/ archaeological sites are anticipated.
9. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	[N]
10. LAND USE: (waste disposal, agricultural lands [grazing, cropland, forest lands, prime farmland], recreational lands [waterways, parks, playgrounds, open space, federal lands), access, commercial and industrial facilities [production & activity, growth or decline], growth, land-use change, development activity)	[N]
11. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	[N]

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
12. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[N] Existing and newly proposed limits and monitoring will allow DEQ to ensure public health is protected.
13. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] WSC is a cooperative owned by local beet growers. Installation of wastewater treatment will be expensive and effect the growers' income.
14. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N]
15. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N]
16. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed?	[N]
17. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N]
18. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	[N]
19. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N]
20. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N]
21. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N]
22. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	[N]
23. (a) PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Are we regulating the use of private property under a regulatory statute adopted pursuant to the police power of the state? (Property management, grants of financial assistance, and the exercise of the power of eminent domain are not within this category.) If not, no further analysis is required.	[N]
(b). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Is the agency proposing to deny the application or condition the approval in a way that restricts the use of the regulated person's private property? If not, no further analysis is required.	[N]
(c). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: If the answer to 23(b) is affirmative, does the agency have legal discretion to impose or not impose the proposed restriction or discretion as to how the restriction will be imposed? If not, no further analysis is required. If so, the agency must determine if there are alternatives that would reduce, minimize or eliminate the restriction on the use of private property, and analyze such alternatives. The agency must disclose the potential costs of identified restrictions.	[N]

