

# Water Enforcement: Missouri Department of Natural Resources and Drilling Contractor Enter into Abatement Order on Consent



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05/29/2018

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”) and Ridenhour Directional Drilling, Inc. (“RDDI”) entered into a May 3 Abatement Order on Consent (“Consent”) addressing alleged violations of the Missouri Clean Water Law (“MCWL”).

RDDI is described as specializing in directional boring involving utility construction.

The Consent states that RDDI was hired to conduct underground boring for fiber optic lines. RDDI was stated to have hired two subcontractors to complete the underground boring work. During the underground boring, the Consent states that a sewer main operated by the City of Columbia, Missouri (“City”) was struck causing the sewer line to collapse and back up. A sanitary sewer overflow (“SSO”) is stated to have discharged through a manhole in the City.

Missouri DNR staff conducted an investigation on June 20, 2016 in response to a report of an SSO from the City. A City employee is stated to have informed DNR staff that a contractor that had been hired by Socket Telecommunications to bore a line, causing the City’s sewer main to collapse. The sewer main’s collapse is stated to have caused the main to plug and backup. The manhole located upflow of the location the boring occurred is stated to have therefore overflowed.

DNR staff met with RDDI on February 22, 2017. During the meeting, RDDI is stated to have taken responsibility for the incident in its capacity as general contractor. Further, RDDI agreed to pay the civil penalty and the state of Missouri’s investigative costs to settle the matter. DNR is stated to have dispatched employees to investigate an environmental concern related to the incident and therefore incurred costs and expenses for a water sampling and analysis (including travel expenses) in the amount of \$1,922.04.

The Consent alleges that RDDI violated the MCWL and its implementing regulations as follows:

- Discharged a water contaminant, sediment, was observed in the Tributary to Mill Creek, waters of the state, which reduced the quality of such waters below the water quality standards established by the Missouri Clean Water Commission, in violation of Sections 644.051.1(2) and 644.076.1, RSMo and 10 CSR 20-7.031(4)(c), and
- Caused pollution of Tributary to Mill Creek, waters of the state, or placed or caused or permitted to be placed a water contaminant, in a location where it is reasonably certain to cause pollution of waters of the state in violation of Sections 644.051.1(1) and 644.076.1, RSMo.

The Consent assesses a civil penalty of \$1,500 and orders that RDDI pay the state of Missouri's investigative costs in the amount of \$1,922.04.

A copy of the [Abatement Order on Consent](#) can be downloaded below.