



Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

Wastewater Enforcement: Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment - Division of Environmental Quality and Green County College Enter into Consent Administrative Order

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The Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment - Division of Environmental Quality ("DEQ") and Crowley's Ridge College ("Crowley's Ridge") entered into a February 20th Consent Administrative Order ("CAO") addressing an alleged violation of the Clean Water Act National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ("NPDES") permit. See LIS NO. 24-028.

The CAO provides that Crowley's Ridge operates a college in Paragould Arkansas.

Crowley's Ridge is stated to operate a wastewater treatment facility ("facility") that includes an unpermitted single-cell lagoon wastewater treatment facility ("facility"). The discharge from the facility is stated to flow to an unnamed tributary of 8 Mile Creek, which eventually flows to the Saint Francis River. Such discharge is regulated pursuant to an NPDES permit.

Crowley's Ridge operation of a single-cell lagoon wastewater treatment system is stated to result in the discharge of sewage, industrial-waste, or other waste into waters of the state.

DEQ is stated to have notified Crowley's Ridge that its permit would expire on December 31, 2007 and a permit renewal application was needed to be submitted in order to discharge from the facility. A permit renewal application was not submitted.

DEQ conducted an inspection of the facility on January 3, 2023. The inspection is stated to have revealed the following:

- Operation of a single-cell lagoon wastewater treatment facility without a permit issued by DEQ.
- Lagoon's levees were overgrown with trees.

- Outfall structure had damaged weir plates resulting in multiple discharges.
- A discharge from the outfall pipe was observed at the time of inspection, but conditions suggested that an underground pipe was damaged, and its discharge was flowing subsurface into an adjacent unnamed tributary of 8 Mile Creek.

DEQ informed Crowleys Ridge that several manholes were covered only by plywood, which could lead to sanitary sewer overflows ("SSOs") and other inflow and infiltration ("I/I") issues. The facility is advised to replace the plywood coverings with traditional metal coverings.

Crowleys Ridge responded to a DEQ request for information stating that the proper manhole covers would be installed. Further, Crowleys Ridge subsequently stated the facility had repaired the holes found in the levee during the January 2023 inspection and found no further leaks.

Crowleys Ridge is stated to have met with engineers to discuss the design for installation of a lift station to connect the facility to the City of Paragould's wastewater collection system. This was estimated to commence in June 2023, with a completion date of October 2023. However, Crowleys Ridge notified DEQ that multiple design issues had impacted the installation of the lift station. The facility further stated that the City of Paragould had approved the plans for the facility to connect its wastewater system, but installation had not yet begun.

Crowleys Ridge submitted a Corrective Action Plan ("CAP") to DEQ, including a milestone schedule, and a final compliance date of September 30, 2025. The CAP was submitted on January 29th. DEQ subsequently notified Crowleys Ridge that the CAP was deemed adequate.

The CAO requires that Crowleys Ridge comply with the approved CAP, milestone schedule, and final completion date and that such activities will be fully enforceable as terms of the CAO. Quarterly progress reports are required.

A civil penalty of \$1,400 is assessed of which \$700 is conditionally suspended contingent upon full compliance with the CAO.

A copy of the CAO can be downloaded [here](#).