

STATE OF WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO REISSUE A WISCONSIN POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (WPDES) PERMIT No.WI-0045756-08-0

Permittee: Ecosystems Mission Area, UMESC, 2630 Fanta Reed Rd, La Crosse, WI, 54603-1223

Facility Where Discharge Occurs: United States Geological Survey, 2630 Fanta Reed Rd, La Crosse, WI

Receiving Water And Location: the backwaters (wetlands) of the Black River, located in the Lower Black River Watershed of the Black River Basin in La Crosse County

Brief Facility Description and Summary of Proposed Changes: United States Geological Survey, Ecosystems Mission Area, Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center conducts research on methods to control and manage aquatic and terrestrial organisms, on the effects of contaminants on aquatic ecosystems, on large river ecology, and on chemicals showing potential for use in fisheries as toxicants, anesthetics, and therapeutants as part of the chemical registration process. The Center includes facilities for rearing fish and other aquatic organisms, laboratories, mapping and geographical information systems data acquisition, and office space. The facility produces about 1200 pounds of cold-water fish and about 1450 pounds of warm-water fish per year. Most fish are raised to fingerling or bio-assay size before being used for research.

All sanitary wastewater is discharged to the City of La Crosse wastewater treatment plant. Nonchemical laden wastewater (fish rearing pond, fish holding tank, nonchemical laboratory and oil & water separator aquarium wastewater) containing suspended fish fecal matter & used food, flows by gravity to a lift station located adjacent to the settling ponds and is pumped into large (stabilization) pond where approximately five days of detention time is provided. The wastewater then flows through a control manhole to the small (quiescent) pond for one day of polishing and is discharged via sample point 001 to the backwaters (wetlands) of the Black River. The annual average discharge at sample point 001 in 2023 was 0.600 million gallons per day (MGD). Sample point 002 is located at a storm drain and discharges two sources of air conditioning cooling water, parking lot and roof top storm water, and occasionally when the hydraulic capacity of the treatment system is exceeded, overflows from the fish rearing ponds, and discharges to the backwaters of the Black River. The annual average discharge at sample point 002 in 2023 was 0.115 million gallons per day (MGD).

The wastewater system collects the process wastewater from the research lab that involves the use of various chemicals. This waste stream flows to a wet well in the treatment building where it is pumped through granular activated carbon filters. Samples are analyzed before and after activated carbon adsorption. The treated wastewater effluent then flows to the small pond where it combines with wastewater flow from the large pond before discharge via sample point 001. One day of retention time is provided before discharge via sample point 001 to the backwaters (wetlands) of the Black River. Sample point 005 is a 'virtual' sample point used to calculate composite values to determine compliance with total phosphorus discharges from 001 and 002. Operational changes since the last permit issuance is the installation of a temperature and flow measurement station at sample point 002.

Proposed changes for sample point 001 include: 1) new daily flow monitoring with a continuous sample type, 2) increased dissolved oxygen and pH monitoring to the 5/week minimum frequency for this type of facility, 3) increased ammonia nitrogen monitoring from quarterly to monthly sample frequency so sufficient data is available for analysis at the next permit reissuance, 4) total residual chlorine is now specified as total halogens as residual chlorine and a new monthly average limit, 5) new total recoverable arsenic monitoring, 6) monthly monitoring for PFOS and PFOA has been added in accordance with s. NR 106.98(2), Wis. Adm. Code, 7) increased temperature monitoring along with a temperature compliance schedule to determine site-specific limit criteria, and 8) a new Chronic WET testing limit.

Proposed changes for sample point 002 include: 1) increased daily flow monitoring from weekly to daily, 2) decreased BOD/TSS monitoring from weekly to monthly, 3) added dissolved oxygen monitoring, and 4) increased temperature monitoring along with a temperature compliance schedule to determine site-specific limit criteria for potential limits.

Proposed changes for combined sample point 005 (001+002) includes increased daily flow monitoring from weekly to daily.

In addition, new requirements include the submittal of an updated land application management plan, and to quantitate the risk, PFAS sludge sampling has been included in the permit pursuant to ss. NR 214.18(5)(b) and NR 204.06(2)(b)9., Wis. Adm. Code at sludge sample point 003 (stabilization pond).

Permit Drafter's Name, Address, Phone and Email: Angela Parkhurst, 1300 W Clairemont Ave, Eau Claire, WI, 54701, (715) 839-3836, Angela.Parkhurst@wisconsin.gov

Basin Engineer's Name, Address, Phone and Email: Katherine Jerzak, 1300 W Clairemont Avenue, Eau Claire, WI 54701, (715) 491-0207, katherine.jerzak@wisconsin.gov

The Department has tentatively decided that the above-specified WPDES permit should be reissued.

Persons wishing to comment on or object to the proposed permit action, or to request a public hearing, may write to the Department of Natural Resources at the above-named permit drafter's address. All comments or suggestions received no later than 30 days after the publication date of this public notice will be considered along with other information on file in making a final decision regarding the permit. Anyone providing comments in response to this public notice will receive a notification of the Department's final decision when the permit is issued. Where designated as a reviewable surface water discharge permit, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is allowed up to 90 days to submit comments or objections regarding this permit determination. If no comments are received on the proposed permit from anyone, including U.S. EPA, the permit will be issued as proposed.

The Department may schedule a public informational hearing if requested by any person and shall schedule a public informational hearing if a petition requesting a hearing is received from 5 or more persons or if response to this notice indicates significant public interest pursuant to s. 283.49, Wis. Stats. Requests for a public informational hearing shall state the following: the name and address of the person(s) requesting the hearing; the interest in the proposed permit of the person(s) requesting the hearing; the reasons for the request; and the issues proposed to be considered at the hearing.

Information on file for this permit action, including the draft permit, fact sheet and permit application, may be inspected and copied at either the above-named permit drafter's office or the above named basin engineer's office, Monday through Friday (except holidays), between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Please call the permit drafter or basin engineer for directions to their office location, if necessary. Information on this permit action may also be obtained by calling the permit drafter at (715) 839-3836 or by writing to the Department. Reasonable costs (15 cents per page for copies and 7 cents per page for scanning) will be charged for information in the file other than the public notice, permit and fact sheet. Permit information is also available on the internet at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wastewater/PublicNotices.html>. Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation, including the provision of informational material in an alternative format, will be made to qualified individuals upon request.

NAME OF PUBLISHING NEWSPAPER: La Crosse Tribune

ADDRESS OF PUBLISHING NEWSPAPER: 401 N. Third St., La Crosse, WI 54601-3281

Date Notice Issued: Thursday, November 21, 2024