



**ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY**

OFFICE OF WATER QUALITY INSPECTION REPORT

AFIN: 04-00052	PERMIT #: AR0022292	DATE: 3/16/2022
COUNTY: 04 Benton	PDS #: 123356	MEDIA: WN
GPS LAT: 36.34417 LONG: -94.47271 LOCATION: General Area		

FACILITY INFORMATION	INSPECTION INFORMATION
NAME: City of Decatur WWTP LOCATION: 985 Austin Avenue CITY: Decatur	FACILITY TYPE: 1 - Municipal INSPECTOR ID#: 104111 S - State FACILITY EVALUATION RATING: N INSPECTION TYPE: Reconnaissance DATE(S): 3/16/2022 ENTRY TIME: 11:50 EXIT TIME: 13:45 PERMIT EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/1/2020 PERMIT EXPIRATION DATE: 11/30/2025
RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL	FAYETTEVILLE SHALE RELATED: N FAYETTEVILLE SHALE VIOLATIONS: N
NAME / TITLE: Robert Tharp / Mayor COMPANY: City of Decatur MAILING ADDRESS: PO Box 247 CITY, STATE, ZIP: Decatur AR 72722 PHONE & EXT. / FAX: 479-752-3912 / EMAIL: james.boston@decaturarkansas.us	INSPECTION PARTICIPANTS
CONTACTED DURING INSPECTION: No	NAME/TITLE/PHONE/FAX/EMAIL/ETC.: James Boston, Public Works Director, City of Decatur; Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector, DEQ

AREA EVALUATIONS					
(S=Satisfactory, M=Marginal, U=Unsatisfactory, N=Not Applicable/Evaluated)					
U	PERMIT	N	FLOW MEASUREMENT	N	STORMWATER
U	RECORDS/REPORTS	N	LABORATORY	N	FACILITY SITE REVIEW
U	OPERATION & MAINTENANCE	N	EFFLUENT/RECEIVING WATER	N	SELF-MONITORING PROGRAM
N	SAMPLING	N	SLUDGE HANDLING/DISPOSAL	N	PRETREATMENT
N	OTHER:				

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following were noted during the inspection:

- Overflows are occurring at the plant from a lift station that pumps wastewater to the MBR unit for treatment. Residuals and wastewater were still on the ground at the time of the inspection with wastewater accumulating in a pond west of the unit (Photos #1 – #8). James Boston, Public Works Director, City of Decatur, stated that the overflows were caused by rags entering the lift station and clogging the pumps, and that the City had no plans to remediate the overflows due to the cost and the continual occurrence of overflows. Mr. Boston stated that the overflows initially began at the head of the plant following an upgrade to the plant’s screw screen. According to Mr. Boston, the new screen clogged with rags several hours after being put in use resulting in an overflow and the screen being removed from service (Photos #9 – #10). I asked what changes have occurred in the collection system or plant which resulted in the sudden clogging of the screen, Mr. Boston stated that the previous screen was damaged allowing some rags to pass through. At the time of the inspection, influent was being allowed to bypass the primary and secondary screens at the plant with solids accumulating in the secondary screen (Photo #11).

Overflows are not being remediated with wastewater residuals accumulating on the ground and wastewater accumulating in an unpermitted pond where possible groundwater infiltration can occur (Photos #1 – #8). Wastewater is bypassing initial solids screening resulting in clogging of lift station pumps and repeated overflows (Attachment 1). These are violations of Parts III.B.1.A and III.B.3 of the permit. Wastewater must be removed from the unpermitted pond and should be pumped into the head of the plant or MBR unit if appropriate. Solids must be removed from the ground and area remediated

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 with disinfection occurring in all affected areas including the pond. All possible measures must be in place to prevent overflows from occurring in the future. This should include cleaning and placing in use the secondary screen if possible.

2. Evidence of overflow with wastewater residuals on the ground were noted at the north side of the MBR unit (Photos #12 – #13). Mr. Boston stated he was unaware of this and believed it may have been from maintenance work conducted prior to the inspection. This is an additional violation of Parts III.B.1.A and III.B.3 of the permit. Residuals must be removed and the area remediated.

3. This follow-up inspection was conducted in response to a complaint alleging strong odors coming from the treatment plant. Mr. Boston stated he was aware of an instance where strong odors were coming from the equalization basin and believed it to be possibly caused by turnover. The equalization pond was inspected during the facility walkthrough. Strong odor was not present during this inspection, but concerns were raised of a damaged berm on the west side of the pond caused by a downed tree (Photo #14). In addition to this downed tree, large woody vegetation (trees) were observed growing along the berm slope facing away from the pond (Photos #14 – #16). Sloped areas within the pond were not stabilized at the time of the inspection (Photos #17 – #19). The City of Decatur has previously removed excessive vegetation within the pond as a result of observations from prior inspections. Damages to the structure of the pond must be repaired. This is a violation of Part III.B.1.A of the permit. Furthermore, the City of Decatur should come up with a management plan to address potentially damaging vegetation as well as stabilization following the guidelines for the wastewater treatment ponds noted in Chapter 93 of the Recommended Standards for Wastewater Treatment Facilities (10 States Standards).

GENERAL COMMENTS

- At the time of the inspection, Mr. Boston stated that he was in contact with a contractor to address the rags. Mr. Boston also stated that the City is planning on upgrading the plant in the near future.

INSPECTOR'S SIGNATURE:  Garrett Grimes

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE:  Brent L. Walker

DATE: 11/4/2022

Office of Water Quality Photographic Evidence Sheet

Location:	City of Decatur WWTP				
Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022	Time:	12:47
Witness:				Photo #:	1
Description:	Location of overflow south of the MBR unit.				



Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022	Time:	12:47
Witness:				Photo #:	2
Description:	Wastewater on the ground from overflows.				



Office of Water Quality Photographic Evidence Sheet

Location:	City of Decatur WWTP		
Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:			13:05
Witness:			Photo #: 3
Description:	Residuals and wastewater on the ground from overflows.		



Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:			13:05
Witness:			Photo #: 4
Description:	Continued from Photo #3.		



Office of Water Quality Photographic Evidence Sheet

Location:	City of Decatur WWTP				
Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022	Time:	13:05
Witness:				Photo #:	5
Description:	Continued from Photo #3.				



Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022	Time:	13:07
Witness:				Photo #:	6
Description:	Continued from Photo #3.				



Office of Water Quality Photographic Evidence Sheet

Location:	City of Decatur WWTP		
Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:	13:04	Witness:	
Photo #:	7	Description:	Wastewater accumulating in the pond.



Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:	12:48	Witness:	
Photo #:	8	Description:	Continued from Photo #7.



Office of Water Quality Photographic Evidence Sheet

Location:	City of Decatur WWTP		
Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:	13:23	Witness:	
Photo #:	9	Description:	Screw screen showing the screen is clogged and removed from service.



Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:	13:21	Witness:	
Photo #:	10	Description:	Continued from Photo #9. Influent was allowed to pass under the screen.



Office of Water Quality Photographic Evidence Sheet

Location:	City of Decatur WWTP				
Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022	Time:	13:22
Witness:				Photo #:	11
Description:	Secondary screen not in use with accumulated solids.				



Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022	Time:	13:09
Witness:				Photo #:	12
Description:	Residuals on ground on the north side of the MBR unit.				



Office of Water Quality Photographic Evidence Sheet

Location:	City of Decatur WWTP		
Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:	13:10	Witness:	
Photo #:	13	Description:	Continued from Photo #12.



Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:	12:56	Witness:	
Photo #:	14	Description:	Downed tree on the south berm of the equalization pond.



Office of Water Quality Photographic Evidence Sheet

Location:	City of Decatur WWTP		
Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:	12:55	Witness:	
Photo #:	15	Description:	Continued from Photo #14 facing south east showing large woody vegetation.



Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:	12:56	Witness:	
Photo #:	16	Description:	Continued from Photo #14 facing north west showing large woody vegetation.



Office of Water Quality Photographic Evidence Sheet

Location:	City of Decatur WWTP		
Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:	12:51		
Witness:		Photo #:	17
Description:	Equalization pond showing bare interior slopes.		



Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022
Time:	12:51		
Witness:		Photo #:	18
Description:	Continued from Photo #17.		



Office of Water Quality Photographic Evidence Sheet

Location:	City of Decatur WWTP				
Photographer:	Garrett Grimes, District 1 Inspector	Date:	3/16/2022	Time:	12:58
Witness:				Photo #:	19
Description:	Continued from Photo #17.				



Inspection Report: **City of Decatur WWTP**, AFIN: **04-00052**, Permit #: **AR0022292**

Attachment 1: SSO reports from the City of Decatur noting overflows in the treatment plant.

NPID	FacilityName	Location	DateSSOForm Received	DateOverflow Started	DateOverflow Stopped	TimeOverflow Started	TimeOverflow Stopped	Volume	Stream	IsSSO	IsBypass	Description	Comments
AR0022292	DECATUR, CITY OF	Lift station at 985 Austin Avenue or wastewater treatment plant. Overflow went into onsite detention pond just south of lift station.	2/28/2022 0:00	2/28/2022 0:00	2/28/2022 0:00	6:30 AM	7:45 AM	1500	SSO Occurred at Treatment Plant	TRUE	FALSE		Going to set up equipment to reverse pumps every 12 hours to remove any debris build up from pumps. Issue has been turned over to engineers for a long-term solution.
AR0022292	DECATUR, CITY OF	Influent left station at the Decatur WWTP influent location, located at 985 Austin Avenue. Water overflowed lift station an	2/15/2022 0:00	2/15/2022 0:00	2/15/2022 0:00	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	5000	SSO Occurred at Treatment Plant	FALSE	TRUE		We have now hired as of 2/14/2022, a Design Build team to begin working on solutions to the problems we are having with sanitary wipes getting past screens and into our pump station that moves water into the treatment plant.
AR0022292	DECATUR, CITY OF	985 Austin Avenue, Decatur Arkansas Overflow of influent Lift Station at the wastewater treatment plant.	1/6/2022 0:00	1/6/2022 0:00	1/6/2022 0:00	6:00 AM	10:30 AM	25000	SSO Occurred at Treatment Plant	TRUE	FALSE		This problem has occurred for a second time as of recently. We are heading into a plant upgrade very soon that will address this issue.

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		Overflowed to an onsite storage pond.											However because of the concerns and persistence of this problem, we have asked an engineering firm to provide us with a
AR0022292	DECATUR, CITY OF	985 Austin Avenue at the wastewater plant. Water overflowed screens went to the ground, flowed across gravel wastewater plant driveway into a pond we have used in the past. Water did not go off the property or to a receiving stream.	11/10/2021 0:00	11/10/2021 0:00	11/10/2021 0:00	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	2000	SSO Occurred at Treatment Plant	TRUE	FALSE	Fine Screen overflow	Screens lost non potable water that keeps them clean. Working on putting alarm into SCADA to notify us when water pressure is lost to the screens.
AR0022292	DECATUR, CITY OF	985 Austin Avenue, Decatur AR 72722 Overflowed walls of WWTP and went past permitted outfall 001	9/21/2021 0:00	9/21/2021 0:00	9/21/2021 0:00	6:30 AM	8:30 AM	20000	SSO Occurred at Treatment Plant	FALSE	FALSE	Partially Treated wastewater overflowed walls of WWTP	Lightning strike caused brief outage of power. 2/3 of plant restarted. One third did not, causing one tank to fill and overflow wall of plant. SCADA improvement being made



ARKANSAS

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

December 29, 2022

Robert Tharp, Mayor
City of Decatur
PO Box 247
Decatur, AR 72722

Via email to: bobtharp@decatuarkansas.us & james.boston@decatuarkansas.us.

Re: City of Decatur - Response to Inspection (Benton Co)
AFIN: 04-00052 **NPDES Permit No.: AR0022292**

Honorable Mayor Tharp:

I have reviewed your response pertaining to my March 16, 2022 Reconnaissance Inspection of the city's POTW. Please review the following.

Report Items 1 & 2: Your response states that several improvements have been made to the plant to address clogging from wipes entering the plant. You state that these have been effective in addressing instances of clogs occurring in the facility's lift station. Please state if overflows are still occurring and if these overflows are being reported. The most recent overflow reported in the plant is dated May 3, 2022. Please state if previous overflows have been remediated and submit photographs of the remediated areas.

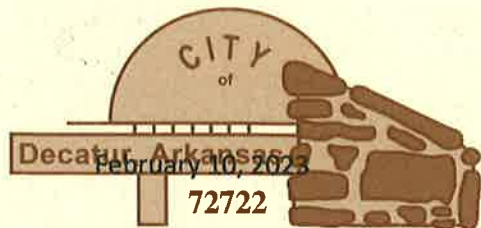
Report Item 3: Your response states that vegetation has been removed from the EQ pond bank and completed work in the area noted in the report. The photograph shows bare earth along the outward side of the berm and inward slopes. Please state if the city will stabilize the bare areas with grass or other short rooted vegetation. Please state when this will occur.

This work/documentation should be completed/submitted as soon as possible. Please provide the information no later than **January 19, 2023**. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (501) 837-2067 or email me at garrett.grimes@adeq.state.ar.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Garrett Grimes".

Garrett Grimes
Inspector, Office of Water Quality
5301 Northshore Drive, North Little Rock, AR, 72118



310 Maple Avenue • Box 247
Phone: (479) 752-3912

Mr. Garrett Grimes
Inspector, Office of Water Quality
5301 Northshore Drive
North Little Rock AR 72118

RE: Compliance Inspection Follow Up, and Stormwater Inspection
AFIN: 04-00052 Permit No: AR0022292

Mr. Grimes,

Part one of this response is to your November 16th 2022 inspection for stormwater permitting. The area in the photos needs to and will get cleaned up. It does not run off to the creak but needs cleaned up just the same. I will have to get dumpsters for the landfill and a metal recycling dumpster.

I am asking respectfully asking to have until May 1st to have this work done, I believe it will be done sooner but it needs to be dry, and I need to get dumpsters from two different companies on site.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please let me know.

Part two of this response is about the follow you sent from the inspection report. This dealt with the grounds of the plant area and the fence and trees that were growing on the equalization ponds south bank. Since your visit it has been cleaned up, grass was immediately planted and even though it was winter, some grass is now established on the area of concern. I have enclosed a photo of the area and the new fence that has been installed to replace the old one that was overgrown. By placing the fence at the toe of the pond, maintenance should be much easier to do.

This week the week of February 6th 2023, we have been hit by excessive rainfall and melt from the winter weather last week. Clean up of the grounds by an outside professional clean up firm is scheduled as soon as weather permits. We have overflowed the lift station and walls of the plant. This has been reported online.

Again, any questions please let me know.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Boston".

James Boston
Public Works Manager
City of Decatur





Sent from my iPhone



ARKANSAS

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

March 13, 2023

Robert Tharp, Mayor
City of Decatur WWTP
P.O. Box 247
Decatur, AR 72722
Via email to: james.boston@decaturarkansas.us

RE: City of Decatur WWTP - Response to Inspection (Benton Co)
AFIN: 04-00052 **NPDES Permit No.: AR0022292**

Honorable Mayor Tharp:

I have reviewed the response pertaining to my March 16, 2022 inspection of the City of Decatur Wastewater Treatment Facility. The information provided sufficiently addresses the items referenced in my inspection report.

However, please be aware that all overflows of sanitary sewage from the plant or associated collection system must be reported to DEQ – OWQ – Enforcement Branch.

Acceptance of this response by the Division does not preclude any future enforcement action deemed necessary at this site or any other site.

If I require further information concerning this matter, I will contact you. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (501) 837-2067 or you may email me at garrett.grimes@adeq.state.ar.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Garrett Grimes".

Garrett Grimes
Inspector, Office of Water Quality
5301 Northshore Drive, North Little Rock, AR, 72118