



March 23, 2020

Ms. Danielle Harbin, Enforcement Analyst
Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality
5301 Northshore Drive
North Little Rock, AR 72118-5317

Re: Mena Water Utilities
NPDES Permit Number: AR0036692, AFIN-57-00423, CAO LIS 18-046
Report of Unanticipated Bypass from WWTP and
Explanation of Permit Exceedances

Dear Ms. Harbin:

An unanticipated bypass occurred at the Mena Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) beginning at 8:30 A.M. on March 20, 2020 and concluding at 8:30 A.M. on March 22, 2020. Approximately 10,000,000 gallons of partly treated wastewater were discharged during this event. Permit exceedances for Total Residual Chlorine (TRC) were also recorded at the WWTP during the month of March 2020.

As described by the Modified Corrective Action Plan (CAP - CAO LIS 18-046) submitted on February 28, 2019, the equalization capacity of Mena's wastewater treatment lagoons can be exhausted by the unusually high volume of I/I conveyed by their collection system during and immediately following wet weather events. The Interim Operations Plan in the CAP describes steps that Mena must take to protect their WWTP until a long-term solution to this problem can be identified and implemented. To prevent damage from lagoon overflow, a bypass valve that directs partly treated wastewater from Lagoon #2 to a point near Outfall #1 must be opened. During these events, Mena records the volume bypassed and collects samples from the bypass stream for analysis. Copies of the laboratory results related to this unanticipated bypass will be provided separate from this notification.

Hawkins-Weir Engineers, Inc. (HWEI) submitted a Wastewater Treatment Master Plan to DEQ on behalf of the City of Mena per the terms of their CAO (CAO LIS 18-046). The City is in the process of identifying funding sources and performing a Site Selection Study for the construction of a new wastewater treatment facility. The existing facility's peak flow capacity limitations will be addressed through the proposed treatment facility improvements recommended in the Master Plan and/or through collection system improvements identified in the City's SSES report prepared by others. Unanticipated bypasses could continue at Mena's existing WWTP until construction of the proposed improvements are completed. As identified in the Master Plan, construction of the new wastewater treatment facility is scheduled to be complete in November 2023.

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Mena's treatment process currently does not include a means of dechlorinating to control TRC. As referenced in the City of Mena's Quarterly Progress Report #1 submitted to DEQ on March 3, 2020, the City is currently taking steps toward achieving compliance with TRC limits. HWEI is currently preparing a construction permit application and designing improvements to the disinfection system at the existing WWTP that will allow Mena to achieve consistent compliance with TRC limits. Construction of these interim TRC improvements is scheduled to be complete by August 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,

HAWKINS-WEIR ENGINEERS, INC.


Adrian J. Kaufman, P.E.

AJK/oab

cc: Mr. Charles Pitman, Mena Water Utilities General Manager
Mr. Mike Spencer, Mena Water Utilities Wastewater Superintendent