

WWTP Hurricane Debby Pollution Notice

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Type of Notice: Initial Report

Date of Notice: 08/10/2024

Incident Information

Name of Incident: City of Sarasota Hurricane Debby WWTP Spill

State Watch Office Case Number: 20246772

Start of Incident: 08/05/2024 04:00 AM

End of Incident: 08/08/2024 11:55 PM

Incident Description

The City of Sarasota Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant was severely impacted by excessive flow from Hurricane Debby. Operations staff did everything in their power to control the flow coming into the facility. The collection system had all lift stations at high well status and all pumps running to push the flow to the plant to avoid numerous catastrophic spills in the field. Plant staff had also opened the bypass valves at the headworks to reduce the pressure on the collection system. Due to the incredible flow volume coming to the plant, up to 44.29 MGD in a single day, plant staff were unable to prevent spills from the headworks at the treatment plant. The flow coming to the plant was so high and unrelenting the plant began to spill from the headworks structure at approximately 4:00 AM Monday morning, August 5th. Staff made every effort to contain and control the spill, but the volume was too significant to avoid the mixture of rainwater and untreated sewage entering the storm water collection system. Staff operated the collection system and treatment plant processes and were able to stop the headworks from overflowing at approximately 6:00 PM Tuesday evening, August 6th. Staff continued to manage the plant and collection system throughout the night, and everything seemed to be operating normally albeit at considerably higher than normal flow levels. At approximately 9:00 Wednesday morning, August 7th the number 3 and 4 clarifiers began to overflow. Flow in the collection system and the treatment plant were still at extreme levels but should be manageable. Operations staff used every possible option to divert flow, clear pipelines between tanks and adjust tank levels within the minimal margins available to them. Despite all their efforts the clarifier levels did not change. Further

investigation revealed an obstruction in the discharge line from the clarifiers was preventing the proper volume of flow to exit the clarifiers. Staff made the decision to contact a pump vendor and bring large pumps to the treatment plant site to bypass the clogged clarifier discharge lines and pump the flow from the clarifiers directly to the flash floc. A total of ten pumps were delivered to the site by Wednesday evening/early Thursday morning. In the meantime, City owned pumping equipment was set up in the clarifiers to attempt to control the overflow while awaiting the arrival of the vendor owned pumps. City staff erected berms at the site in to control the flow of the overflow on the ground. Once the vendor pumps were set up in the clarifiers the overflows stopped at 11:55 PM Thursday night, August 8th. Staff remained on site to monitor the situation and adjust the flow rates based on incoming flows and clarifier levels. On Friday morning, August 9th, staff began attempting to clear the blockage in the clarifier discharge lines. It appears the incoming flow was so significant that the discharge pipe grating in clarifier 3 was dislodged and foreign material entered the pipe and became lodged at a Tee. Staff spent the entire day trying to clear the blockage but were unsuccessful. The bypass pumps remain in place while staff gather resources to continue the line clearing process. The treatment facility is operating properly despite the bypass pump situation. Staff continue to deal with excessive flow levels but are working to restore the plant to normal operations. During the event approximately 6.243 million gallons of raw wastewater was discharged to Sarasota Bay. In addition, approximately 11.483 million gallons of partially treated effluent was discharged to Sarasota Bay. Samples will be collected.

Incident Location**Facility/Installation Name:** City of Sarasota Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility**Address Line 1:** 1750 12th Street**Address Line 2:****Directions:****City:** Sarasota**State:** FL**Zip Code:** 34236**Coordinates (in decimal degrees):**

Lat: 27.34801982146301, Long: -82.53356552150098

[**Click to view Incident Location**](#)**Impacted Counties:** Sarasota**Updated Impact:****Incident Reported By****Name:** Verne Hall**Title:** Utility Director**Phone:** (941) 661-1347**Ext:****E-mail Address:** verne.hall@sarasotafl.gov**Relationship:** Owner of the Facility/Installation

On-Site Contact**Name:** Verne Hall**Phone:** (941) 661-1347**Ext:****E-mail Address:** verne.hall@sarasotafl.gov

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Florida Department of Environmental Protection