



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 8

1595 Wynkoop Street  
Denver, CO 80202-1129  
Phone 800-227-8917  
<http://www.epa.gov/region08>

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GRAND JUNCTION FIELD OFFICE  
DIVISION OF  
RECLAMATION MINING & SAFETY

Ref: 8ENF-W

**CERTIFIED MAIL:**  
**RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

**#7009-3410-0000-2591-9848**

**#7009-3410-0000-2591-9855**

Varca Ventures, Inc.  
c/o National Registered Agents, Inc.  
1000 East William Street, Suite 204  
Carson City, NV 89701

Wildcat Mining Corporation  
c/o National Registered Agents, Inc.  
1535 Grant Street  
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Administrative Order for Compliance.  
Docket No. **CWA-08-2012-0011**

Dear Madam or Sir:

Enclosed please find a document entitled "Administrative Order for Compliance" (Order). As described in the Order, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that Wildcat Mining Corporation and Varca Ventures, Inc. (Respondents) are in violation of section 301 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. § 1311.

Section 301(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a), prohibits the discharge of pollutants into waters of the United States except, among other things, as in compliance with section 404 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1344. Section 404 authorizes the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to issue permits allowing discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. Waters of the United States include both surface waters and wetlands. Please see 33 C.F.R. § 328.3.

The Order states that the Respondents, and/or persons acting on their behalf, discharged dredged or fill material into waters of the United States without authorization under the CWA. Furthermore, the Order states that Respondents are in noncompliance with the March 4, 2008, Nationwide Permit 14 verification issued by the Corps. These discharges of pollutants into Little Deadwood Gulch, the La Plata River, and their adjacent wetlands occurred on property owned, leased, and/or otherwise controlled by Respondents, located in Section 28, Township 36 North, Range 11 West, N.M.P.M., La Plata County, Colorado.



Printed on Recycled Paper

The Order describes actions necessary in order for the Respondents to achieve compliance with sections 301 and 404 of the CWA. Pursuant to this Order, within ten (10) days after your receipt of this Order, the Respondents must inform the EPA in writing of their intent to fully comply with the Order. The EPA's authority for such action is provided under section 309(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(a).

The CWA requires the EPA to take all appropriate enforcement actions necessary to secure prompt compliance with the CWA and any order issued thereunder. Section 309 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319, authorizes civil judicial penalties for violating an order issued under section 309(a) of the CWA. The CWA authorizes a variety of possible enforcement actions for noncompliance with the CWA, including civil or criminal actions, administrative penalty actions, and, in some cases following a criminal conviction, debarment from Federal contracts and/or loans. Additionally, the EPA may take an enforcement action if this Order is violated. Please also be advised that the issuance of this Order does not preclude any civil lawsuit, criminal prosecution, or administrative penalty assessment for the violations cited in the Order or for any other CWA violations.

If your organization is a small entity, you may find the enclosed Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act (SBREFA) information sheet useful. It contains information on compliance assistance resources and tools available to small entities. SBREFA does not eliminate the responsibility to comply with the Order or the CWA.

Please review the Order carefully. If you have any questions, the most knowledgeable people on my staff are Margaret J. (Peggy) Livingston, Enforcement Attorney, at 303-312-6858, and Kenneth Champagne, Section 404 Enforcement Officer, at 303-312-6608.

Sincerely,



for Andrew M. Gaydosh  
Assistant Regional Administrator  
Office of Enforcement, Compliance and  
Environmental Justice

Enclosures

1. Administrative Order for Compliance
2. SBREFA Information Sheet

cc: Kara Hellige, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, w/enclosures  
Steve Gunderson, Director, CDPHE, w/enclosures  
Steve S. Shuey, CDRMS, w/enclosures  
Dustin Czaplak, CDRMS, w/enclosures  
Wally Erickson, CDRMS, w/enclosures  
Tina Artemis, EPA, 8RC, w/enclosures



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3. Respondent Varca Ventures, Inc. (Varca) is a Nevada corporation having a principal office address of 1630 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236. Varca's registered agent is National Registered Agents, Inc., 1000 East William Street, Suite 204, Carson City, Nevada 89701.

4. On October 7, 2011, Varca acquired the assets of Wildcat, including the May Day Idaho Mine Complex near Hesperus, Colorado. As of this date, Wildcat became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Varca.

5. At all relevant times, Respondents owned, leased, controlled and/or operated the approximately 275-acre May Day Idaho Mine Complex property located in Section 28, Township 36 North, Range 11 West, N.M.P.M., La Plata County, Colorado (the Site). Little Deadwood Gulch, the La Plata River, and their adjacent wetlands are located at the Site.

6. Little Deadwood Gulch is a relatively permanent tributary of the La Plata River, which is a relatively permanent tributary of the San Juan River. Little Deadwood Gulch flows through the Site approximately 0.5 river miles to the La Plata River. The La Plata River is, and was at all relevant times, an interstate water. The San Juan River is, and was at all relevant times, a navigable, interstate water.

7. In a letter to the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) dated July 20, 2007, Basin Hydrology, Inc., on behalf of Wildcat, submitted a *Waters of the U.S. Delineation Report for a portion of Wildcat Mining Corporation Lands* and an application for a Nationwide Permit 14 for the construction of a mine access road crossing in wetlands adjacent to the La Plata River in the southwest portion of the Site.

8. In a letter to Wildcat dated August 21, 2007, the Corps verified Wildcat's July 20, 2007, delineation report, which identified approximately 0.4 acres of jurisdictional wetlands within the surveyed area adjacent to the La Plata River at the Site.

9. In a letter to Wildcat dated March 4, 2008, the Corps verified that Wildcat's mine access road crossing project adjacent to the La Plata River was authorized under Nationwide Permit 14. This

verification required compensatory wetland mitigation adjacent to the La Plata River to offset the loss of wetlands associated with construction of the access road crossing.

10. Sometime between March and September 2008, Respondents and/or persons acting on their behalf commenced construction of the mine access road crossing project adjacent to the La Plata River at the Site.

11. On September 25, 2008, the Corps conducted a compliance inspection of the ongoing mine access road crossing project adjacent to the La Plata River at the Site. The Corps found, and the EPA through issuance of this Order finds, that Respondents and/or persons acting on their behalf were constructing a mine access road crossing project that was not consistent with the design approved under the March 4, 2008, Nationwide Permit 14 verification. Furthermore, the Corps found, and the EPA through issuance of this Order finds, that Respondents' mine access road crossing project adjacent to the La Plata River at the Site lacked storm water management controls as required by General Condition 12 of the permit.

12. In a letter dated September 25, 2008, the Corps found, and the EPA through issuance of this Order finds, that Respondents were in noncompliance with the March 4, 2008, Nationwide Permit 14 verification for the reasons described in paragraph 11 of this Order.

13. In letters dated October 14, 2008, and October 24, 2008, Bikis Water Consultants and Sakura Engineering submitted, on behalf of Wildcat, a revised mitigation plan and a storm water management plan in response to the Corps' September 25, 2008, non-compliance letter.

14. On May 20, 2009, the Corps conducted a compliance inspection of the ongoing mine access road crossing project adjacent to the La Plata River at the Site. The Corps found, and the EPA through issuance of this Order finds, that the Respondents' mine access road was failing and eroding into the wetland adjacent to the La Plata River at the Site. Furthermore, the Corps found, and the EPA

through issuance of this Order finds, that Respondents stockpiled spoil materials within the compensatory wetland mitigation area required by the March 4, 2008, Nationwide Permit 14 verification.

15. In a letter dated May 20, 2009, the Corps found, and the EPA through issuance of this Order finds, that Respondents were in noncompliance with the March 4, 2008, Nationwide Permit 14 verification for the reasons described in paragraph 14 of this Order.

16. In a letter dated January 14, 2010, the Corps found, and the EPA through issuance of this Order finds, that Respondents were in noncompliance with the March 4, 2008, Nationwide Permit 14 verification due to Wildcat's submittal of an incomplete mitigation monitoring report, dated December 30, 2009.

17. Sometime in the spring of 2010, Respondents and/or persons acting on their behalf commenced construction of a second mine access road crossing within the drainage channel of Little Deadwood Gulch to access a newly constructed mining portal, called the Chief Portal, at the Site.

18. On June 3, 2010, the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety (DRMS) visited the Site and documented the construction of a second mine access road crossing within Little Deadwood Gulch at the Site. DRMS reported the construction of the second mine access road crossing to the La Plata County Planning Department, which then reported the violations to the Corps.

19. On August 5, 2010, the Corps conducted a compliance inspection of the mine access road crossing project adjacent to the La Plata River and an investigation of the second mine access road crossing within the drainage channel of Little Deadwood Gulch at the Site. The Corps found, and the EPA through issuance of this Order finds, that Respondents' mine access road adjacent to the La Plata River continued to be failing and eroding into adjacent wetlands. Furthermore, the Corps found, and the EPA through issuance of this Order finds, that Respondents and/or a person or persons acting on Respondents' behalf discharged dredged or fill material into Little Deadwood Gulch during the construction of a second mine access road crossing at the Site.

20. In a letter to Respondent Wildcat dated August 5, 2010, the Corps found, and EPA through issuance of this Order finds, that Respondents were in noncompliance with the March 4, 2008, Nationwide Permit 14 verification for the reasons described in paragraph 19 of this Order, that Respondents' construction of a second mine access road crossing within Little Deadwood Gulch, as described in paragraphs 17, 18, and 19 of this Order, required prior authorization from the Corps and that the required authorization had not been sought or granted.

21. On December 1, 2010, the Corps referred this case to the EPA for enforcement in accordance with the "*Memorandum of Agreement Between the Department of the Army and the Environmental Protection Agency Concerning Federal Enforcement of the Section 404 Program of the Clean Water Act*," dated January 19, 1989.

22. The activities described in paragraphs 10 and 17 of this Order were performed using common earthmoving vehicles and equipment, all of which were operated by Respondents and/or by persons acting on their behalf.

23. Respondents are "persons" as defined in section 502(5) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(5).

24. The discharged dredged or fill material referenced above is and was at all relevant times "dredged material" or "fill material" as defined in 33 C.F.R. § 323.2(c) or 33 C.F.R. § 323.2(e), respectively, and "pollutants" as defined in section 502(6) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(6).

25. Little Deadwood Gulch, the La Plata River, and their adjacent wetlands filled and disturbed by Respondents' unauthorized activities provided various functions and values, including: wildlife habitat for birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians; water quality enhancement; flood attenuation; and/or aesthetics.

26. The vehicles and equipment described in paragraph 22, above, are and were at all relevant times each a "point source" as defined in section 502(14) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(14).

27. Little Deadwood Gulch, the La Plata River, and their adjacent wetlands referenced above are and were at all relevant times “waters of the United States” as defined in 33 C.F.R. § 328.3(a) and therefore “navigable waters” as defined in section 502(7) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(7).

28. The placement of dredged or fill material into Little Deadwood Gulch, the La Plata River, and their adjacent wetlands constitutes the “discharge of pollutants” as defined in section 502(12) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(12).

29. Section 301(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a), prohibits, among other things, the discharge of pollutants by any person into waters of the United States except as in compliance with section 404 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1344(a).

30. Section 404 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1344, sets forth a permitting system authorizing the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers of the Corps, to issue permits for the discharge of dredged or fill material into navigable waters which are defined as waters of the United States.

31. According to 33 C.F.R. § 323.3(a), a permit issued by the Corps is required for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, unless an exemption pursuant to 33 C.F.R. § 323.4 applies.

32. Respondents are not and never have been authorized by a permit issued pursuant to section 404 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1344, to conduct any of the activities described in paragraphs 14, 17, 18, and 19 of this Order.

33. The activities conducted by Respondents and/or by persons acting on their behalf as described in paragraphs 14, 17, 18, and 19 of this Order violate section 301(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a). Each discharge of pollutants from a point source by Respondents into waters of the United States without the required permits issued pursuant to section 404 of the CWA,

33 U.S.C. § 1344, constitutes a violation of section 301(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a). Each day the discharges remain in place without the required permits constitutes an additional day of violation of section 301(a) of the CWA.

34. Actions to return to compliance with the March 4, 2008, Nationwide Permit 14 verification and the removal of the dredged or fill material illegally discharged into waters of the United States at the Site and restoration of the impacted waters, including Little Deadwood Gulch, the La Plata River, and their adjacent wetlands, to a condition that closely approximates their condition and function prior to the unauthorized discharges of the dredged or fill material, can be achieved as a practical matter through commonly used methods of construction, digging, revegetation, and best management practices.

35. Activities to be carried out under this Order are remedial, not punitive, and are necessary to achieve the CWA's objective "to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters," as specified in section 101(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1251(a). The compliance, removal, and restoration described in paragraph 34 of this Order are appropriate to alleviate actual and potential harm to water quality, aquatic habitat, and wildlife habitat caused by Respondents' unauthorized activities and permit violations.

36. This Order was issued after consultation and coordination with the Corps' Sacramento District, Durango Regulatory Office.

### **III. ORDER FOR COMPLIANCE**

Based upon the foregoing FINDINGS OF VIOLATION, and pursuant to the authority vested in the Administrator of the EPA pursuant to sections 308 and 309(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1318 and 1319(a), as properly delegated to the Assistant Regional Administrator of the Office of Enforcement, Compliance and Environmental Justice, EPA Region 8, it is hereby ORDERED:

37. Respondents shall immediately terminate all unauthorized discharges of dredged or fill material, now and in the future, into waters of the United States, unless specifically authorized by the Corps under a valid permit issued pursuant to section 404 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1344. This

prohibition includes all mechanical land clearing, dredging, filling, grading, leveling, installation of utilities, construction, and any other activities that result in a discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States.

38. Within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of this Order, Respondents shall inform the EPA in writing of their intent to fully comply with this Order. If Respondents have concerns or questions about the requirements of this Order, the EPA requests that Respondents schedule a meeting and/or conference call with the EPA within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of this Order to discuss these concerns or questions. The scheduling of such a meeting and/or conference call shall not alter Respondents' responsibility to meet any of the deadlines specified in this Order unless otherwise clearly stated in a written communication to Respondents by the EPA.

39. Upon the EPA approval of the Restoration and Compliance Plan required by paragraph 41 of this Order, Respondents shall remove all dredged or fill material that was discharged as a result of the violations identified in this Order and restore the impacted waters and wetlands at the Site to their pre-impact condition and grade, unless otherwise approved by the EPA in the Restoration and Compliance Plan.

40. All dredged or fill material removal and restoration activities shall be conducted in accordance with an EPA-approved Restoration and Compliance Plan prepared by a consultant experienced in stream and wetland restoration. The consultant also shall directly supervise all work performed pursuant to the EPA-approved Restoration and Compliance Plan. A statement of the consultant's qualifications, including professional resume and business references, shall be submitted to the EPA within twenty-one (21) calendar days of receipt of this Order.

41. Within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of this Order, Respondents shall submit to the EPA for review, comment, and approval a Restoration and Compliance Plan, prepared by the consultant referenced in paragraph 40 of this Order, providing for the: (1) removal of all dredged or fill material that was discharged into the waters and wetlands at the Site; and (2) restoration, to their pre-impact

configuration and/or grade, of the waters and wetlands that were impacted as a result of Respondents' unauthorized discharges of dredged or fill material at the Site.

42. The Restoration and Compliance Plan shall be prepared in accordance with "U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8 - Clean Water Act § 404 Enforcement: Removal/Restoration Plans and Habitat Mitigation/Monitoring Proposals," attached hereto as Exhibit A, and with the guidelines referenced in section 404(b)(1) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1344(b)(1), and set forth in 40 C.F.R. part 230. In addition, the Restoration and Compliance Plan shall include:

- a. A detailed work plan for each of the areas at the Site where restoration and compliance work is to be performed, including the application for any required permits;
- b. A detailed schedule providing for completion of all restoration and compliance work no later than six (6) months after the EPA approves the Restoration and Compliance Plan;
- c. Locations and delineations of all wetlands and waters of the United States included in the broader boundaries of the Site, whether activities will be conducted in these wetlands and waters, or not. The delineations shall be performed in accordance with the procedures in the *Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual, January 1987 - Final Report*, the *Interim Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Region, April 2008*, and subsequent interpretive guidance published by the Corps;
- d. A thorough description of the location of existing natural features and man-made improvements within the Site, including all surface disturbance, fills, channel excavations, road crossings, culverts, structures, and any other work, including a corresponding map (scale 1":100") of these locations;
- e. Grading, planting, and monitoring plans;
- f. Measurable criteria for success of restoration or mitigation;

- g. Provisions for proper disposal of any excess soils or other materials generated during construction and/or restoration;
- h. Detailed professional drawings of all of the work to be accomplished by the Restoration and Compliance Plan, including plan and profile drawings with contour elevations; and
- i. A description of all costs to prepare and implement the Restoration and Compliance Plan, including the costs of all consultations, permits, construction, monitoring, land acquisition, etc.

43. The EPA will review the Restoration and Compliance Plan and approve it, approve it with modifications, or reject it with comments. If the EPA rejects the Restoration and Compliance Plan, Respondents shall, within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the EPA's rejection letter, submit a revised plan that corrects the deficiencies identified by the EPA.

44. Upon receiving the EPA's written approval of the Restoration and Compliance Plan, Respondents shall obtain all necessary permits to implement the EPA-approved Plan and then commence all restoration and compliance activities in accordance with the approved plan, including the time frames specified therein, and all granted permits. Respondents shall demonstrate that all necessary permits have been granted by providing complete copies of all such permits, and any amendments thereto, to the EPA within seven (7) calendar days of issuance of each permit.

45. This Order is not a permit or an authorization to place or discharge dredged or fill material in waters of the United States. Respondents shall consult with the Corps at the address and telephone number below to determine if any work to be performed pursuant to this Order requires a permit from the Corps under section 404 of the CWA. If any such permit is required, Respondents shall obtain such permit(s) and provide a copy or copies to the EPA pursuant to paragraph 44 of this Order prior to initiating any work that is to be performed pursuant to this Order.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Durango Regulatory Office  
1970 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Suite #109  
Durango, CO 81301  
Telephone: 970- 259-1604  
Facsimile: 970-259-1658

46. Respondents shall submit two (2) hard copies of the Restoration and Compliance Plan, one (1) electronic copy of the Restoration Plan, all notifications, and related correspondence to:

Kenneth M. Champagne, 8ENF-W  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8  
1595 Wynkoop Street  
Denver, CO 80202-1129  
Telephone: 303-312-6608  
Facsimile: 303-312-7518

Respondents shall also provide a hard copy and electronic copy of the Restoration and Compliance Plan to the Corps at the address noted in paragraph 45 of this Order.

47. In addition to the notification requirements set forth in paragraph 46 of this Order, after issuance of any Corps authorization for the restoration work, Respondents shall submit all notifications and correspondence to the Corps in accordance with the terms and conditions in the Corps permit(s).

48. All plans (including, but not limited to, the Restoration and Compliance Plan), deliverables, reports, specifications, schedules, and attachments required by this Order are, upon approval by the EPA, incorporated into this Order. Any non-compliance with such EPA-approved Plans, deliverables, reports, specifications, schedules, permits, or attachments shall be deemed a failure to comply with this Order and subject to the EPA enforcement.

49. If Respondents lease, sublease, or transfer control and/or ownership of any property, in whole or in part, where work is to be performed pursuant to the Restoration and Compliance Plan before they have fulfilled their obligations under this Order, Respondents shall provide a copy of this Order and the EPA-approved Plan to the lessee, sublessee, or transferee not less than thirty (30) calendar days prior to the lease, sublease, or transfer. A lease, sublease, or transfer of such property interest shall not relieve Respondents of any responsibility in this Order unless the EPA, Respondents, and the lessee, sublessee,

or transferee agree in writing to allow the lessee, sublessee, or transferee to assume such responsibility. Additionally, at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to such lease, sublease, or transfer, Respondents shall notify the EPA regarding the details of the lease, sublease, or transfer at the address specified in paragraph 46 of this Order.

50. Respondents shall allow, or use their best efforts to allow, access by any authorized representatives of the EPA, the Corps, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the DRMS, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, or any of the agencies' contractors, upon proper presentation of credentials, to sites and records relevant to this Order for any of the following purposes:

- a. To inspect and monitor progress of the activities required by this Order;
- b. To inspect and monitor compliance with this Order; and
- c. To verify and evaluate data and other information submitted to the EPA.

51. This Order shall in no way limit or otherwise affect the EPA's authority, or the authority of any other governmental agency, to enter the Site, conduct inspections, have access to records, issue notices and orders for enforcement, compliance, or abatement purposes, or monitor compliance pursuant to any statute, regulation, permit, or court order.

52. This Order shall be effective upon receipt by Respondents.

53. Respondents' compliance with the terms of this Order shall not relieve Respondents of their obligation to comply with all applicable provisions of the CWA, including but not limited to all permits issued pursuant to sections 402 and/or 404 of the CWA, and any other Federal, State or local law or regulation. The EPA reserves the right to seek any remedy available under the law that it deems appropriate to the violations described herein. Compliance with this Order shall not be a defense to any action commenced pursuant to such authorities.

54. Section 309(d) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(d), as adjusted by inflation by 40 C.F.R. part 19, authorizes civil penalties of up to \$32,500 per day for each violation occurring before

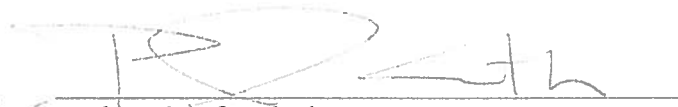
January 12, 2009, and \$37,500 per day for each violation thereafter, for any violation of section 301(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a), or any violation of an administrative order issued under section 309(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(a). Section 309(g) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g), authorizes the EPA to impose administrative penalties for violations of the CWA. Section 309(c) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(c), authorizes fines and imprisonment for willful or negligent violations of the CWA.

55. Issuance of this Order shall not be deemed to be an election by the United States to forego any civil or criminal action to seek penalties, fines, or other appropriate relief under the CWA for violations giving rise to this Order.

56. Compliance with the terms and conditions of this Order shall not be construed to relieve Respondents of their obligation to comply with any applicable Federal, state, or local law or regulation.

57. Failure by Respondents to complete the tasks described herein in the manner and time frame specified pursuant to this Order may subject Respondents to a civil action under section 309 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319, for violation of this Order.

DATED this 9th day of April, 2012.

  
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Andrew M. Gaydosh  
Assistant Regional Administrator  
Office of Enforcement, Compliance and  
Environmental Justice

# EXHIBIT A

**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, REGION 8**

**CLEAN WATER ACT § 404 ENFORCEMENT:  
REMOVAL/RESTORATION PLANS  
AND HABITAT MITIGATION/MONITORING PROPOSALS**

**INTRODUCTION**

These guidelines are designed to assist respondents in the preparation of (1) removal and restoration plans and (2) habitat mitigation and monitoring plans associated with projects required under EPA administrative orders. They have been developed from the experiences of many cases and are intended to be merely guidelines. In the event of a conflict between an administrative order and these guidelines, the administrative order controls.

For answers to questions regarding the interpretation of these guidelines or of acceptable restoration and mitigation for a specific project, please contact the person at EPA Region 8 in the Technical Enforcement Program who is handling the case.

**CLEAN WATER ACT § 404 ENFORCEMENT:**  
**GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF**  
**REMOVAL AND RESTORATION PLANS**

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The following guidelines serve as general specifications for preparing removal and restoration plans to remediate the unpermitted filling of wetlands. As environmental conditions vary from site to site, precise specifications will depend upon the environment conditions peculiar to the site in question. The size of the wetland area to be restored, its biological and physical characteristics, and the level of disturbance the wetland has experienced will further define the scope and complexity of the restoration plan. In most cases, the types of information listed below represent only the minimum required to formulate an acceptable removal and restoration plan.

**When these guidelines are incorporated into an EPA administrative order, the recipient of the order should obtain the approval of EPA's technical representative on the case before departing from the general specifications outlined below.**

**II. RECOMMENDED REMOVAL AND RESTORATION PLAN FORMAT**

The removal and restoration plan should be presented using the following six subsections when possible. An explanation of the kind of information that should be included in each subsection is provided.

**1. Existing Physical Conditions**

- A. A surveyed site plan depicting property boundaries, streets, buildings, waterbodies (with ordinary high water line indicated), wetlands, FEMA 100-year floodplain (if applicable), areas of unpermitted fill, elevation contours, and other ground surface features at a scale no greater than 1":40'. This plan shall include a cross-section view of the site which shows soil depths, fill depths, and average depth to groundwater across the site.
- B. A narrative description of existing physical conditions, including the area of the site; area of unpermitted fill; existing wetlands (including the types of vegetation); the soil types present (including the types of unpermitted fill present); the hydrologic regime of the site; and other relevant information.

## **2. Proposed Physical Conditions**

- A. Using the site plan described in Subsection 1.A. as a base, show the exact areas where remedial activities will occur (e.g., removal of fill, replacing dredged material into ditches, etc.). Indicate proposed finished grades, expected ordinary high water elevations, the location of proposed plantings/seedings, and the location of all sediment and erosion control structures (e.g., hay bales, silt screens, etc.). This plan shall include a cross-section view of the site which shows proposed soil depths and average depth to groundwater across the site.
- B. Provide a narrative description of the remedial work to occur, including the methods and equipment to be employed; how access to the site to perform the work will be obtained; how equipment will be brought to the site; the location of the ultimate disposal site for any removed fill; how the work will progress across the site; a listing of the plant species to be seeded/planted at the site; the sources of the plant material [*note*: as a rule, transplanting of plant stock will not be permitted]; the planting method(s) and scheme (i.e., physical layout of the how plant material will be installed); any methods to be used to minimize adverse impacts while remedial work is underway; the expected hydrologic regime of the site in its restored condition; and other relevant information.
- C. Delineate the area(s) on the site to be restored by installation of flagging, sedimentation and erosion control structures, or other appropriate method. This delineation shall represent the limit of construction activities such that no work shall occur beyond those boundaries.

## **3. Actual Restored Physical Conditions**

Using the site plan described in Subsection 1.A. as a base, show the actual physical conditions to exist at the site at the completion of grading activities (i.e., as “as-built” plan), including actual finished grades and all pertinent ground surface features. This plan shall include a cross-section view of the site which shows actual soil depths and average depth to groundwater across the site. This as-built plan shall be prepared and submitted prior to planting/seeding activities.

## **4. Monitoring/Measures of Success**

- A. Normally, monitoring shall be performed midway through and near the end of the first and second growing seasons, then annually near the end of each successive growing season for the duration of the required

monitoring period. Monitoring shall be performed for a period of at least five years due to the scope and complexity of the remedial efforts required.

- B. A monitoring plan shall incorporate a simple statistical approach to assessing relative success or failure of restoration efforts (e.g., transects with sampling stations for measuring parameters such as percent areal cover in each vegetative stratum). A permanent photographic record shall be included as part of the monitoring plan.
- C. Depending upon the scope and complexity of the remedial efforts, general criteria to measure success shall be determined by EPA. These criteria shall be directly related to reestablishing the structural components of the aquatic ecosystem being restored. A general provision shall be included to allow for corrective action to be taken, at the direction of EPA, should monitoring show that criteria for success are not being met.
- D. A report shall be prepared and submitted after each monitoring event which describes the environmental conditions at the site and assesses relative success or failure of restoration efforts. This report shall include photographic evidence as well. This report shall identify any problems discovered and recommend appropriate corrective action to ensure the success of restoration.

## **5. Inspections**

The plan shall provide for inspections by EPA personnel after installation of all sedimentation and erosion control structures, after completion of grading activities, after completion of initial planting/seeding activities, and after monitoring indicates that the criteria for success have been attained.

## **6. Schedule**

A comprehensive schedule integrating all removal, restoration, inspection, and monitoring activities as well as report/product submissions shall be included.

## **CLEAN WATER ACT § 404 ENFORCEMENT:**

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF HABITAT MITIGATION AND MONITORING PROPOSALS**

#### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Submission of a mitigation and monitoring proposal as described in these guidelines will not be a substitute for complete compliance with the Memorandum of Agreement Between the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Army Concerning the Mitigation under the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines dated November 7, 1989, which took effect on February 7, 1990. Therefore, mitigation proposals will only be considered if avoidance and minimization have been fully pursued.

Although all the individual components presented here may not be applicable to every project, a proposal should address each heading in the guidelines. Appendix A provides text and figure format guidelines.

#### **II. PLACE OF MITIGATION AND MONITORING PROPOSAL IN CLEAN WATER ACT § 404 PERMIT PROCEDURE**

##### **1. Individual Permit**

If a respondent is applying for an individual permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the "Corps") and proposes mitigation, it is preferable that a preliminary mitigation and monitoring plan be submitted along with application materials. A detailed preliminary mitigation plan should generally not be completed until a final jurisdictional map has been accepted by EPA, and the area of fill to be mitigated for has been identified. The final mitigation plan will usually be submitted following the public comment period and Corps review of the preliminary plan.

##### **2. Nationwide Permit**

If a respondent is requesting confirmation of a project's qualification for a Corps nationwide permit and proposes mitigation, a detailed mitigation and monitoring plan must be submitted with the request for confirmation.

##### **3. Final Submission**

The final submission of all mitigation and monitoring plans must be in a *single* document. It must contain up-to-date versions of all materials, even if other versions were submitted earlier in the application process.

### **III. EPA/CORPS POLICY**

In general, the goal of both EPA and the Corps is to permit no net loss of functions and values of wetland habitat. The replacement ratio of wetland acreage required to achieve this goal is typically *at least* 1:1, and is often higher. The attainment of replacement functions and values and an acreage replacement ratio are usually included in final success criteria associated with the completion of a respondent-permittee's mitigation responsibility.

### **V. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED MITIGATION AND MONITORING PROPOSAL FORMAT**

The mitigation and monitoring proposal should be presented using the following nine subsections when possible. Detailed explanations of the kind of information that should be included in each subsection is provided in Section VI below.

#### **1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

- A. Location of Project
- B. Brief Summary of Overall Project
- C. Responsible Parties
- D. Jurisdictional Areas to be Filled
- E. Type(s), Functions, and Values of the Jurisdictional Areas

#### **2. GOAL(S) OF MITIGATION**

- A. Type(s) of Habitat to be Created
- B. Functions and Values of Habitat to be Created
- C. Time Lapse

#### **3. FINAL SUCCESS CRITERIA**

- A. Target Functions and Values
- B. Target Hydrological Regime
- C. Target Jurisdictional Acreage to be Created

#### **4. PROPOSED MITIGATION SITE**

- A. Location and Size of Mitigation Area
- B. Ownership Status
- C. Existing Functions and Values of Mitigation Area
- D. Present and Proposed Uses of Mitigation Area
- E. Jurisdictional Delineation (if applicable)
- F. Present and Proposed Uses of All Adjacent Areas
- G. Zoning

**5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

- A. Rationale for Expecting Implementation Success
- B. Responsible Parties
- C. Site Preparation
- D. Planting Plan
- E. Schedule
- F. Irrigation Plan
- G. As-Built Conditions

**6. MAINTENANCE DURING MONITORING PERIOD**

- A. Maintenance Activities
- B. Responsible Parties
- C. Schedule

**7. MONITORING PLAN**

- A. Performance Criteria
- B. Monitoring Methods
- C. Annual Reports
- D. Schedule

**8. COMPLETION OF MITIGATION**

- A. Notification of Completion
- B. Corps Confirmation

**9. CONTINGENCY MEASURES**

- A. Initiating Procedures
- B. Alternative Locations for Contingency Mitigation
- C. Funding Mechanism
- D. Responsible Parties

**VI. DETAILED RECOMMENDED MITIGATION AND MONITORING PROPOSAL FORMAT**

Detailed information to be included in each subsection of the mitigation and monitoring proposal is presented below. The nine subsections should be preceded by a one-page summary of the report contents.

## 1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### A. Location of Project

1. Describe
2. Provide:
  - a. Road map with site location clearly indicated
  - b. USGS quad map with project site outlines (clear photocopy is acceptable)

### B. Brief Summary of Overall Project

In one or two paragraphs, describe the overall project (not just the jurisdictional area to be filled). Include type of development and project size.

### C. Responsible Parties

Provide the name(s), title(s), address(es), and phone number(s) of the applicant(s)<sup>1</sup>, including the contact person(s) if the applicant is a company, and of the preparer(s) of the mitigation plan.

### D. Jurisdictional Areas to be Filled

Provide a full-size topo base map with verified Corps/EPA jurisdictional area(s) and area(s) of proposed fill outlines. (See Appendix A for map format information.)

### E. Type(s), Functions, and Values of the Jurisdictional Areas

1. Type: e.g., seasonal wetland, vernal pool, freshwater marsh, playa, etc.

2. Functions and Values

Formal procedures to assess functions and values of wetlands have not yet been adopted. Therefore, to assist in evaluation of the project, a knowledgeable professional should provide a summary of the functions and values of the wetland to be filled. Any jurisdictional areas other than wetlands should also be assessed for functions and values. Examples of features to be addressed are:

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<sup>1</sup> The "applicant" refers to the permit applicant, who will in most instances be the respondent.

#### Water Quality

- ground water
- recharge/discharge
- flood storage
- other

#### Habitat

- rare/threatened/endangered species
- known or probable wildlife use
- plant communities
- complete species list
- known or probable fish, shellfish, and aquatic vertebrate use
- other

#### Recreational Use

- non-consumptive (e.g., birdwatching, walking)
- consumptive (e.g., fishing, hunting)

## **2. GOAL(S) OF MITIGATION**

This refers to the long-term goals, which may not be reached until some years after the applicant's mitigation responsibilities have been completed.

### **A. Type(s) of Habitat to be Created**

If out-of-kind, present rationale. (Refer to Subsection 1.E.1 above.)

### **B. Functions and Values of Habitat to be Created**

Identify, describe, and provide location of any local reference site if different from the wetland to be filled. (Refer to Subsection 1.E.2. above.)

### **C. Time Lapse**

Describe how many years it is likely to take for the long-term goal habitat to develop.

## **3. FINAL SUCCESS CRITERIA**

These are the criteria that are proposed by the applicant for Corps approval and are used to determine completion of permittee's mitigation responsibilities. Fulfillment of these criteria should indicate that the mitigation area is progressing well toward the habitat

type, functions, and values which constitute the long-term goal of this mitigation. For mitigation plantings, final success criteria will not be considered to have been met until a minimum of two years after all human support (e.g., irrigation, replanting, rodent control, and fertilization) has ceased. Major factors to be considered are:

A. Target Functions and Values

- wildlife species
- percentage vegetation cover and/or density
- approximate plant height criteria (shrubs and trees)
- plant and animal species diversity
- root development
- canopy stratification
- other quantifiable measures of success

B. Target Hydrological Regime

- source(s) of water
- discharge point(s)
- area(s) affected by seasonal flooding
- direction(s) of flow
- size (and map) of watershed

C. Target Jurisdictional Acreage To Be Created

Where applicable, a formal wetlands delineation must be submitted for Corps approval as a part of the final success criteria.

#### **4. PROPOSED MITIGATION SITE**

A. Location and Size of Mitigation Area

1. Describe location, including rationale for choice. If offsite, indicate distance from project site.
2. Provide the following maps:
  - a) full-size copy of USGS quad map with the mitigation location outlined
  - b) road map marked with the site location
  - c) base topo map with the proposed mitigation area outlined and acreage indicated. (See Appendix A for figure format information.)

B. Ownership Status

1. Indicate who presently owns the mitigation site. If any owner is different from the permit applicant(s), describe and explain the availability of the property. Describe and explain any easements or encroachments that the property carries. If any of the property is located on public land, describe and explain what arrangements, if any, have been discussed with the managing agency.
2. Indicate expected ownership of the mitigation area following completion of the mitigation project. Identify who will be responsible for long-term management and protection of the area. Describe and explain what if any long-term management plan has been prepared for the area. If an entity other than the applicant will assume management responsibilities following completion of the mitigation project, describe and explain any signed, written agreement that the manager will manage the area in conformance with goals of the mitigation. Include copies of any written plans or agreements.
3. Indicate what entity, if any, controls water flow to or from the site. Identify and describe the party who is to maintain water control structures. Describe and explain what arrangements have been made to guarantee appropriate water flow in the mitigation area during and after the establishment of the mitigation project.

C. Existing Functions and Values of Mitigation Area

(Refer to Section I.E. above.)

D. Present and Proposed Uses of Mitigation Area

Briefly describe all known present and proposed uses of the mitigation area. Discuss non-native landscape plantings, pipelines, powerlines, roads, distance and location of nearest structures, if any, etc., on the property containing the mitigation site.

E. Jurisdictional Delineation (if applicable)

Describe any jurisdictional areas that are already present on the mitigation site. Provide a topo base map of the site with jurisdictional areas (and any proposed fill) indicated. Describe the probable future of the mitigation area as habitat if left undisturbed.

F. Present and Proposed Uses of All Adjacent Areas

Briefly describe all known present and proposed uses of all property sharing a common border with the property containing the mitigation.

G. Zoning

Give all present and proposed zoning designations for the mitigation site and adjoining properties, including city, county, BCDC, etc.

**5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

A. Rationale for Expecting Implementation Success

May refer to previous relevant experience of applicant and/or implementation consultant or to other similar and successful mitigation projects. Include hydrology and soils information.

B. Responsible Parties

Provide the name(s), title(s), address(es), and phone numbers of the person(s) responsible for implementing the mitigation project.

C. Site Preparation

1. Describe plans for grading, hydrologic changes, water control structures, soil amendments, erosion control, bank stabilization, equipment and procedures to be used, site access control, etc., as applicable. Include a description of exotic vegetation control techniques, planting hole excavation methods (e.g., auguring, hand digging), and the size of the planting hole (e.g., twice size of container).
2. Provide base topo maps showing planned site preparation. (See Appendix A for figure format information.)
3. Provide representative cross-sections of the mitigation site with elevations and scale indicated.
4. Provide the name, title, address, and phone number of the person supervising or providing biological monitoring during grading activities.

D. Planting Plan

1. Briefly describe the planting plan and methods
2. Provide a table of species to be planted, including numbers, spacing, types of propagules, pot sizes, etc.
3. Indicate the source-locale of seeds, plant plugs, cuttings, etc.
4. Show planting and species locations on a base topo map. (See Appendix A for figure format information.)
5. If transplanting is to be done, describe the storage method and duration.
6. Describe any expected volunteer native revegetation that is included in mitigation planning.

E. Schedule

Provide a schedule in the form of a legible flow chart showing intended timing of site preparation and plantings.

F. Irrigation Plan

1. Describe irrigation method(s), estimated frequency, and amount during dry months.
2. Indicate water source(s) for the mitigation area.
3. Show the planned irrigation system and/or water flow on base topo (may be included on the planting plan map).

G. As-Built Conditions

The plan should specify that the applicant will:

1. Submit a report to EPA within 6 weeks of the completion of site preparation and planting, describing the as-built status of the mitigation project. If avoidance is incorporated into development project design, describe the as-built status of the development project, including any deviations from the original plan in the vicinity of, or that will affect, jurisdictional area(s). Submit separate reports for grading and planting work if not completed

within six weeks of each other.

2. Provide topo maps showing as-built contours of the mitigation area. Indicate the location of plantings and any other installations or structures.

## **6. MAINTENANCE DURING MONITORING PERIOD**

### **A. Maintenance Activities**

Describe planned maintenance activities, including irrigation system inspection, plant replacement, weeding, water structure inspection, fertilization, erosion control, herbivore protection, trash removal, and/or any other such activities.

### **B. Responsible Parties**

Identify the persons/entities responsible for financing and carrying out maintenance activities, including names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers.

### **C. Schedule**

Provide a table showing the schedule of maintenance inspections.

## **7. MONITORING PLAN**

### **A. Performance Criteria**

Provide yearly target criteria to be met, as appropriate, based on reasonably-paced progress toward final success criteria. (Refer to Section III.)

### **B. Monitoring Methods**

1. Describe the monitoring methods. If using sampling methods, include sample sizes, statistical justification for sampling regime, and data analyses to be performed. If appropriate, include assessment of natural population growth by target species.
2. Provide samples of all proposed data sheets.
3. Photos shall be taken during each monitoring period. They shall be

taken from the same vantage point and in the same direction every year, and shall reflect material discussed in the monitoring report. When percent cover estimates are made of herbaceous vegetation, photographs shall be taken of sampling quadrants.

C. Annual Reports

1. Annual reports shall be submitted which present monitoring results. They shall assess both attainment of yearly target criteria and progress toward final success criteria.
2. Annual reports shall include the following:
  - a. A list of names, titles, and companies of all persons who prepared the content of the annual report and participated in monitoring activities for that year.
  - b. A copy of any Corps permit attached. Special Conditions and any subsequent Letters of Modification shall be included as an appendix.
  - c. Analysis of all quantitative monitoring data.
  - d. Prints or good quality photocopies of all included monitoring photographs.
  - e. Maps identifying monitoring areas, transects, planting zones, etc., as appropriate. (See Appendix A for figure format information.)
3. Copies of all field data sheets shall be available for Corps review as needed.

D. Schedule

Since planting and/or site modification may not occur when planned, monitoring and performance criteria shall be tied to the actual implementation date rather than to predetermined years (e.g., the first annual report shall be delivered on (month, day) of the year following the first growing season after planting.)

8. COMPLETION OF MITIGATION

A. Notification of Completion

When the initial monitoring period is complete, and if the applicant believes that the final success criteria have been met, the applicant shall notify the Corps when the annual report that documents this completion is submitted. If it is appropriate here, a current jurisdictional delineation of the created wetland areas should be submitted with the report. (This delineation shall be accompanied by legible copies of all field data sheets.)

B. Corps Confirmation

Following receipt of the report, the Corps may require a site visit to confirm the completion of the mitigation effort and any jurisdictional delineation.

**9. CONTINGENCY MEASURES**

A. Initiating Procedures

If an annual performance criterion is not met for all or any portion of the mitigation project in any year, or if the final success criteria are not met, the permittee shall prepare an analysis of the cause(s) of failure and, if determined necessary by the Corps, propose remedial action for approval.

B. Alternative Locations for Contingency Mitigation

Indicate specific alternative mitigation locations that may be used in the event that mitigation cannot be successfully achieved at the intended mitigation site. Include current ownership information for any offsite alternative locations.

C. Funding Mechanism

Indicate what funds will be available to pay for planning, implementation, and monitoring of any contingency procedures that may be required to achieve mitigation goals.

D. Responsible Parties

List names, addresses, and phone numbers of persons/entities responsible for implementing and monitoring contingency procedures.

## APPENDIX A – FORMAT INFORMATION

### A. Text Format Notes for Mitigation/Monitoring Proposals, As-Built Reports, and Annual Reports.

1. The Corps file number and the date of the report should be included in title-page reading.
2. Include a distribution page listing names, titles, companies/agencies and addresses of all persons/agencies receiving a copy of the report.

### B. List of Figures to be Submitted

*(Page and section numbers in parentheses indicate location of figure request in annotated outline. For recommended figure formats, refer to Section (C) below.)*

1. Mitigation and Monitoring Proposal
  - a. Jurisdictional Areas and Proposed Fill on Project Site (*p. 8, I.D.*) (outlines and acreages indicated.).
  - b. Location and Size of Mitigation Area
    - U.S.G.S. quad map (*p. 10, 4.A.2*)
    - road map (*p. 10, 4.A.2*)
    - topo map (*p. 10, 4.A.2*)
  - c. Jurisdictional Areas and Any Proposed Fill on Mitigation Site (*p. 11, 4.E.*)
  - d. Mitigation Site Preparation (*p. 12, 5.C.2*)  
(base topo map showing preparation plans)
  - e. Planting Plan (*p. 13, 5.D.4*)
    - plan view of base topo
    - representative cross-sections
  - f. Irrigation Plan (*p. 13, 5.F.3*) (may be on planting plan topo)

2. As-Built Report (*p. 14, 5.G.2*)

- a. Final site contours
- b. Plantings as installed

**C. Figure Format Notes**

- All maps and plans submitted shall be legible and include title, date of preparation, and date of submission.
- A legend shall be provided if symbols, patterns, or screens are used on the map or plan.
- If colors are used to indicate areas on the original map, color copies shall be included in all copies of the report submitted to the Corps.
- Indicate North and provide a scale and datum (if appropriate, i.e., tidal data).
- Scale and orientation shall be the same for all maps, except for detail sections.
- Base topo maps (i.e., for jurisdictional areas, location and size of mitigation areas, mitigation site preparation plans, planting plans, irrigation plans, and as-built reports) shall be full-size (1 inch = 100 feet or less, 1 inch = 200 feet for very large projects).
- USGS quad maps shall be full-size and full scale (may be photocopies, if clearly legible).

NOTE: Reduced copies of maps shall be bound with all documents to facilitate review by advisory agencies. For Corps review, at least two sets of full-sized copies shall accompany mitigation and monitoring proposal, and one set shall accompany each annual report.

**D. Schedule**

When submitting the mitigation and monitoring plan, the applicant shall indicate the month and date on which the yearly report will be delivered. If plan involves planting, this date should be made between growing seasons for the primary plants so that timely decisions can be made about any modifications to the plan.

## U.S. EPA Small Business Resources Information Sheet

The United States Environmental Protection Agency provides an array of resources, including workshops, training sessions, hotlines, websites and guides, to help small businesses understand and comply with federal and state environmental laws. In addition to helping small businesses understand their environmental obligations and improve compliance, these resources will also help such businesses find cost-effective ways to comply through pollution prevention techniques and innovative technologies.

### EPA's Small Business Websites

Small Business Environmental Homepage - [www.smallbiz-enviroweb.org](http://www.smallbiz-enviroweb.org)

Small Business Gateway - [www.epa.gov/smallbusiness](http://www.epa.gov/smallbusiness)

EPA's Small Business Ombudsman - [www.epa.gov/sbo](http://www.epa.gov/sbo) or 1-800-368-5888

### EPA's Compliance Assistance Homepage

[www.epa.gov/compliance/assistance/  
business.html](http://www.epa.gov/compliance/assistance/business.html)

This page is a gateway to industry and small business environmental resources, from extensive web-based information to hotlines and compliance assistance specialists.

### EPA's Compliance Assistance Centers

[www.assistancecenters.net](http://www.assistancecenters.net)

EPA's Compliance Assistance Centers provide information targeted to industries with many small businesses. They were developed in partnership with industry, universities and other federal and state agencies.

#### Agriculture

[www.epa.gov/agriculture/](http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/)

#### Automotive Recycling

[www.eearcenter.org](http://www.eearcenter.org)

#### Automotive Service and Repair

[www.eear-greenlink.org](http://www.eear-greenlink.org) or 1-888-GRN-LINK

#### Chemical Manufacturing

[www.chemcenter.org](http://www.chemcenter.org)

#### Construction

[www.eaconstruction.org](http://www.eaconstruction.org) or 1-800-455-3511

#### Education

[www.eampusere.org](http://www.eampusere.org)

#### Food Processing

[www.fpeac.org](http://www.fpeac.org)

#### Healthcare

[www.hcercenter.org](http://www.hcercenter.org)

#### Local Government

[www.wlgeam.org](http://www.wlgeam.org)

#### Metal Finishing

[www.nmffc.org](http://www.nmffc.org)

#### Paints and Coatings

[www.paintcenter.org](http://www.paintcenter.org)

#### Printed Wiring Board Manufacturing

[www.pwbrc.org](http://www.pwbrc.org)

#### Printing

[www.pneac.org](http://www.pneac.org)

#### Ports

[www.portcompliance.org](http://www.portcompliance.org)

#### U.S. Border Compliance and Import/Export Issues

[www.borderecenter.org](http://www.borderecenter.org)

### Hotlines, Helplines and Clearinghouses

[www.epa.gov/compliance/hotlines](http://www.epa.gov/compliance/hotlines)

EPA operates many hotlines and clearinghouses that provide convenient assistance regarding environmental requirements. Some examples are:

#### Antimicrobial Information Hotline

[info-antimicrobial@epa.gov](mailto:info-antimicrobial@epa.gov) or  
1-703-308-6411

#### Clean Air Technology Center (CATC) Info-line

[www.epa.gov/atcc](http://www.epa.gov/atcc) or 1-919-541-0807

#### Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act

[www.epa.gov/superfund/resources/  
infocenter/epera.htm](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/resources/infocenter/epera.htm) or 1-800-424-9346

#### EPA Imported Vehicles and Engines Public Helpline

[www.epa.gov/otaq/imports](http://www.epa.gov/otaq/imports) or  
734-214-4100

#### National Pesticide Information Center

[www.npic.orst.edu/](http://www.npic.orst.edu/) or 1-800-858-7378

#### National Response Center Hotline -

to report oil and hazardous substance spills  
[www.nrc.uscg.mil](http://www.nrc.uscg.mil) or 1-800-424-8802

#### Pollution Prevention Information Clearinghouse (PPIC)

[www.epa.gov/opptintr/ppic](http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/ppic) or  
1-202-566-0799

#### Safe Drinking Water Hotline

for information on drinking water and  
health [www.epa.gov/sdw](http://www.epa.gov/sdw) or 1-800-426-4791

#### Stratospheric Ozone Protection Hotline

[www.epa.gov/ozone](http://www.epa.gov/ozone) or 1-800-458-5253

## Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) Hotline

tsc hotline@epa.gov or 1-202-554-1404

## Wetlands Information Helpline

www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/wetline.html or 1-800-832-7828

## State and Tribal Web-Based Resources

### State Resource Locators

www.epa.gov/statetools

The Locators provide state-specific contacts, regulations and resources covering the major environmental laws.

## State Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBEAPs)

www.smallbiz-enviroweb.org

State SBEAPs help small businesses and assistance providers understand environmental requirements and sustainable business practices through workshops, trainings and site visits. The website is a central point for sharing resources between EPA and states.

## EPA's Tribal Compliance Assistance Center

www.epa.gov/tribalcompliance/index.html

The Center provides material to Tribes on environmental stewardship and regulations that might apply to tribal government operations.

## EPA's Tribal Portal

www.epa.gov/tribalportal

The Portal helps users locate tribal-related information within EPA and other federal agencies.

## EPA Compliance Incentives

EPA provides incentives for environmental compliance. By participating in compliance assistance programs or voluntarily disclosing and promptly correcting violations before an enforcement action has been initiated, businesses may be eligible for penalty waivers or reductions. EPA has two such policies that may apply to small businesses:

### EPA's Small Business Compliance Policy

www.epa.gov/compliance/incentives/smallbusiness/index.html

This Policy offers small businesses special incentives to come into compliance voluntarily.

### EPA's Audit Policy

www.epa.gov/compliance/incentives/auditing/auditpolicy.html

The Policy provides incentives to all businesses that voluntarily discover, promptly disclose and expeditiously correct their noncompliance.

## Commenting on Federal Enforcement Actions and Compliance Activities

The Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA) established a SBREFA Ombudsman and 10 Regional Fairness Boards to receive comments from small businesses about federal agency enforcement actions. If you believe that you fall within the Small Business Administration's definition of a small business (based on your North American Industry Classification System designation, number of employees or annual receipts, as defined at 13 C.F.R. 121.201; in most cases, this means a business with 500 or fewer employees), and wish to comment on federal enforcement and compliance activities, call the SBREFA Ombudsman's toll-free number at 1-888-REG-FAIR (1-888-734-3247), or go to their website at [www.sba.gov/ombudsman](http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman).

Every small business that is the subject of an enforcement or compliance action is entitled to comment on the Agency's actions without fear of retaliation. EPA employees are prohibited from using enforcement or any other means of retaliation against any member of the regulated community in response to comments made under SBREFA.

## Your Duty to Comply

If you receive compliance assistance or submit a comment to the SBREFA Ombudsman or Regional Fairness Boards, you still have the duty to comply with the law, including providing timely responses to EPA information requests, administrative or civil complaints, other enforcement actions or communications. The assistance information and comment processes do not give you any new rights or defenses in any enforcement action. These processes also do not affect EPA's obligation to protect public health or the environment under any of the environmental statutes it enforces, including the right to take emergency remedial or emergency response actions when appropriate. These decisions will be based on the facts in each situation. The SBREFA Ombudsman and Fairness Boards do not participate in resolving EPA's enforcement actions. Also remember that to preserve your rights, you need to follow all rules governing the enforcement process.

*EPA is disseminating this information to you without making a determination that your business or organization is a small business as defined by Section 222 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act or related provisions.*