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DOCKET NO. D-2024-002-1

DELAWARE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

Discharge to a Tributary of Special Protection Waters

Rising Light Ridge, LLC

**Wastewater Treatment Plant, Spray Irrigation and At-Grade Disposal Bed Facilities
Bear Creek Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania**

PROCEEDINGS

This docket is issued in response to an application submitted to the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC or Commission) on November 25, 2024 (Application) supplemented with additional information on July 23, 2025, for review of the docket holder's proposed wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and its proposed peak season land discharge via spray irrigation fields and off-season discharge to at-grade septic beds. The docket holder has submitted a Water Quality Management (WQM or Part II) permit application for the WWTP construction and spray discharge to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP). Approval of the project by the PADEP is pending.

The application was reviewed for approval under Section 3.8 of the *Delaware River Basin Compact*. The Luzerne County Planning Commission has been notified of pending action. A public hearing on this project was held by the DRBC on November 5, 2025.

A. DESCRIPTION

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this docket is to approve a new 0.02725 million gallon per day (mgd) WWTP and its proposed discharge to spray irrigation fields and at-grade beds. The project consists of the construction of a new campus-wide sanitary sewer system including wastewater collection, conveyance, treatment and disposal system, a new WWTP, collection gravity sewer main, pump stations, spray irrigation fields for disposal during peak season flow and two (2) at - grade sewage disposal beds for disposal of treated wastewater during the off-season flow.

2. **Location.** The docket holder proposes to construct a ministry and recreational campus project on approximately 110 acres of an existing 3,000-acre predominately forested parcel. The

proposed WWTP, spray irrigation field and at-grade beds are located approximately 0.5 miles southwest of Bear Creek Lake and 0.75 miles east of Route 476 (Pennsylvania Northeast Extension) in Bear Creek Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. The WWTP will discharge treated effluent to a spray irrigation field during the summer peak season and to at-grade disposal beds in the off-season periods. The disposal areas are located in the Bear Creek Watershed, upstream of F.E. Walter Reservoir in the drainage area to the Lower Delaware Special Protection Waters (SPW).

The location of the WWTP, Spray Irrigation Field and at-grade sewage disposal beds are located in the Bear Creek Watershed as follows:

FACILITY	LATITUDE (N)	LONGITUDE (W)
WWTP	41° 10' 13"	75° 45' 32"
Spray Irrigation Field	41° 10' 19"	75° 45' 49"
At Grade Beds	41° 10' 21"	75° 45' 24"

3. **Area Served.** The docket holder's proposed WWTP will serve the proposed Rising Light Ridge Campus consisting of the Main Campus where most of the proposed development including camper and staff housing, equine center and dining facilities are located and the Respite Campus (also referred to as Stillwater Campus) consisting of additional housing facilities south of the Main Campus in Bear Creek Township. For the purpose of defining the Area Served, the Type of Discharge and the Service Area sections from the docket holder's Application are incorporated herein by reference, to the extent consistent with all other conditions contained in Section C. DECISION of this docket.

4. **Design Criteria.** The proposed 0.02725 mgd (peak season flow) WWTP will utilize a package sequencing batch reactor (SBR). The WWTP will include pre and post treatment storage/equalization, advanced filtration (as needed) and ultraviolet (UV) disinfection prior to discharge to land via spray irrigation or at-grade beds. The WWTP will result in effluent containing less than 10 mg/l total nitrogen and BOD and TSS concentrations less than 30 mg/l. The advanced filtration treatment system used only during off-season flows ahead of the at-grade system will provide effluent flow with BOD and TSS concentrations of less than 10 mg/l.

5. **Facilities.** The WWTP facility will consist of a 30,000-gallon pre-treatment surge tank, two SBR units and associated blower equipment, a post treatment 60,000-gallon effluent holding tank, 5,000-gallon sludge tank, a media filter (bypassed during peak season flows) and a UV disinfection system.

During peak season (May through July), treated effluent from the WWTP will be conveyed to two (2) 20,000-gallon dosing tanks and discharged to a 7.49-acre spray irrigation field. During off-season periods (August through April) the treated effluent will be conveyed to 3,000-gallon dosing tank and disposed via two at-grade beds.

The docket holder indicated in the Application that in the event of a power outage, backup generator(s) will be utilized to maintain operation of the WWTP and pumping stations.

The docket holder indicated in the application that the WWTP will have a remote alarm system that continuously monitors plant operations. The alarm system will operate under battery backup in the event of a power outage.

The project facilities are not located in the 100-year floodplain.

Wasted sludge will be hauled off-site for disposal in accordance with the WQM Permit.

6. **Water Withdrawals.** The potable water supply in the project service area will be provided by two (2) new groundwater wells owned and operated by the docket holder. The groundwater withdrawal will be operated at a withdrawal rate below the DRBC groundwater withdrawal review threshold and is not subject to Commission review and approval.

7. **WQM Permit / DRBC Docket.** The docket holder submitted a WQM (Part II) permit application to the PADEP for the project WWTP construction. Review of the permit application by the PADEP is pending. Upon issue of the Part II permit, PADEP's effluent limits and requirements included in the Part II permit shall apply.

B. FINDINGS

The docket holder applied to approve a new 0.02725 mgd WWTP and its discharge to spray irrigation fields and at-grade disposal beds.

1. Special Protection Waters

On July 16, 2008, the DRBC approved amendments to its *Water Quality Regulations (WQR)* that provide increased protection for waters that the Commission classifies as SPW. The portion of the Delaware River and its tributaries within the boundary of the Lower Delaware River Management Plan Area was approved for SPW designation. (Lower SPW)

Section 3.10.3.A.2.c.2) of the Commission's *WQR* requires that new wastewater treatment facilities "may be approved only after the applicant demonstrates that it has fully evaluated all natural wastewater treatment system alternatives and is unable to implement these alternatives because of technical and/or financial infeasibility." The docket holder proposes to construct a spray irrigation facility, which is not a discharge to a stream and thereby not subject to this requirement.

The docket holder's WWTP discharges to the drainage area to Lower Delaware SPW. The docket holder's WWTP discharge is required to comply with the SPW requirements, as outlined in Article 3.10.3A.2. of the *WQR*.

Article 3.10.3A.2.e.1). and 2). of the Commission's *WQR* states that projects subject to review under Section 3.8 of the Compact that are located in the drainage area of SPW must submit for approval a Non-Point Source Pollution Control Plan (NPSPCP) that controls the new or

increased non-point source loads generated within the portion of the docket holder's service area which is also located within the drainage area of SPW. The service area of the docket holder is located in the drainage area to the SPW. Since this project does entail additional construction and expansion of facilities and service area and there are new or increased non-point source loads associated with this approval, the NPSPCP requirement is applicable at this time. The docket holder submitted Erosion and Sediment Control Plans and a Post-Construction Stormwater Management Plan for the proposed project that meet the NPSPCP requirements. Accordingly, Section C. DECISION condition C.5 has been included in this docket.

2. Other

The project does not conflict with the Comprehensive Plan and is designed to prevent substantial adverse impact on the water resources related environment, while sustaining the current and future water uses and development of the water resources of the Basin.

The project is designed to produce a discharge that meets the effluent requirements as set forth in the Commission's *Water Quality Regulations (WQR)*.

C. DECISION

Effective on the approval date for Docket No. D-2024-002-1 below, the project and appurtenant facilities as described in Section A of this docket are approved pursuant to Section 3.8 of the *Compact*, subject to the following conditions:

Monitoring and Reporting

1. Within 10 days of the date that construction of the project has started, the docket holder shall notify the DRBC of the starting date and scheduled completion date. Within 30 days of the date of project completion, the docket holder shall notify the DRBC of the project completion date.
2. Within 30 days of completion of construction of the approved project, the docket holder is to submit to the attention of the Project Review Section of DRBC a Construction Completion Statement ("Statement") signed by the docket holder's professional engineer for the project. The Statement must (1) either confirm that construction has been completed in a manner consistent with any and all DRBC-approved plans or explain how the as-built project deviates from such plans; and (2) indicate the date on which the project was (or is to be) placed in operation.

Other Conditions

3. Sound practices of excavation, backfill and reseedling shall be followed to minimize erosion and deposition of sediment in streams.
4. Prior to allowing connections from any new service areas or any new developments, the docket holder shall either submit and have approved by the Executive Director of the DRBC a NPSPCP in accordance with Section 3.10.3.A.2.e or receive written confirmation from the

Executive Director of the DRBC that the new service area complies with a DRBC-approved NPSPCP.

5. This approval shall expire on the expiration date set forth below unless prior thereto the docket holder has applied to the Commission to renew or extend this approval.

6. The docket holder is responsible for timely submittal to the DRBC of a docket renewal application on the appropriate application form including the appropriate docket application filing fee (see 18 C.F.R. 401.43) at least 6 months in advance of the docket expiration date set forth below. The docket holder will be subject to late filed renewal surcharges in the event of untimely submittal of its renewal application, whether DRBC issues a reminder notice in advance of the deadline or the docket holder receives such notice. If a timely and complete application for renewal has been submitted and the DRBC is unable, through no fault of the docket holder, to reissue the docket before the expiration date below, the terms and conditions of the current docket will remain fully effective and enforceable pending the grant or denial of the application for docket approval.

7. The docket holder is permitted to treat and discharge wastewater as set forth in the Area Served Section of this docket, which incorporates by reference the Type of Discharge and Service Area sections of the docket holder's Application to the extent consistent with all other conditions of this section. Any expansion beyond that included in Section A.3. Area Served is subject to DRBC review and approval in accordance with Section 3.8 of the Compact.

8. In accordance with the Commission's regulations at 18 C.F.R. Part 440, the docket holder is prohibited from discharging wastewater from high volume hydraulic fracturing ("HVHF") or HVHF-related activities to waters or land within the Basin. The docket holder is further prohibited from discharging hydraulic fracturing wastewater, whether treated or untreated, from sources within or outside the Basin, without obtaining the Commission's prior review and express approval in the form of a revised docket. Violation of this or any condition of this docket approval may result in enforcement, including the risk of financial penalties, pursuant to Section 14.17 of the Delaware River Basin Compact and Section 2.7.8 (18 CFR 401.98) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure.

9. The facility and operational records shall be available at all times for inspection by the DRBC.

10. The facility shall be operated at all times to comply with the requirements of the Commission's *WQR*.

11. If at any time the receiving treatment plant proves unable to produce an effluent that is consistent with the requirements of this docket approval, no further connections shall be permitted until the deficiency is remedied.

12. Nothing herein shall be construed to exempt the docket holder from obtaining all necessary permits and/or approvals from other State, Federal or local government agencies having jurisdiction over this project.

13. The docket holder shall discharge wastewater in such a manner as to avoid injury or damage to fish or wildlife and shall avoid any injury to public or private property.
14. No sewer service connections shall be made to newly constructed premises with plumbing fixtures and fittings that do not comply with water conservation performance standards contained in Resolution No. 88-2 (Revision 2).
15. The issuance of this docket approval shall not create any private or proprietary rights in the waters of the Basin, and the Commission reserves the right to amend, suspend or rescind the docket for cause, to ensure proper control, use and management of the water resources of the Basin.
16. The docket holder shall be subject to applicable DRBC regulatory program fees, in accordance with duly adopted DRBC resolutions and/or regulations (see 18 C.F.R. 401.43).
17. This approval is transferable by request to the DRBC Executive Director provided that the project purpose and area served approved by the Commission in this docket will not be materially altered because of the change in project ownership. The request shall be submitted on the appropriate form and be accompanied by the appropriate fee (see 18 C.F.R. 401.43).
18. The docket holder shall request a name change of the entity to which this approval is issued if the name of the entity to which this approval is issued changes its name. The request for name change shall be submitted on the appropriate form and be accompanied by the appropriate fee (see 18 C.F.R. 401.43).
19. The Executive Director may modify or suspend this approval or any condition thereof, or require mitigating measures pending additional review, if in the Executive Director's judgment such modification or suspension is required to protect the water resources of the Basin.
20. Any person who objects to a docket decision by the Commission may request a hearing in accordance with Article 6 of the *Rules of Practice and Procedure (RPP)*. In accordance with Section 15.1(p) of the *Delaware River Basin Compact*, cases and controversies arising under the *Compact* are reviewable in the United States district courts.

BY THE COMMISSION

APPROVAL DATE:

EXPIRATION DATE: December 10, 2035