By/s/ Theresa White
Theresa White
City Clerk

Feb. 18, 23, 2014

No. 21618

PUBLIC NOTICE NO. MT-14-06
February 18, 2014

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE

The purpose of this notice is to state the Department's intention to issue a wastewater discharge permit to the facility listed in this notice. This permit is issued by the Department under the authority of 75-5-402, Montana Code Annotated (MCA); the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 17.30.1301 et seq., Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES); and Sections 402 and 303 of the Federal Clean Water Act. The Water Protection Bureau has prepared a draft permit for the facility listed below. Copies of the draft permit, fact sheet, and environmental assessment are available upon request from the Water Protection Bureau or on the Department's website www.deq.mt.gov.

APPLICANT: Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, LLC

FACILITY NAME: Columbia Falls Aluminum Company

FACILITY LOCATION: 2000 Aluminum Drive, Columbia Falls, MT
Flathead County

RECEIVING WATER: Ground water to Flathead River

PERMIT NUMBER: MT0030066

Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC) is an aluminum plant that began producing aluminum ingots in 1955. Although the facility has been in shutdown mode since October 2009, it is possible that operations will resume during this permit term.

There are eleven permitted outfalls. Two of the outfalls are internal monitoring locations for processes with federal Effluent Limitation Guidelines (ELGs): (1) anode paste plant briquette quenching water from the coke and coal tar pitch mixer; and (2) extruder and aluminum casting contact cooling water from direct chill casting of aluminum ingots.

These outfalls were retained from the previous permit, as were the outfalls for the sewage treatment plant and the ground water seep. Seven additional outfalls are proposed with this renewal, to encompass noncontact cooling water, boiler blowdown, storm water, and incidental process discharges.

All of the processes at CFAC were installed prior to 1993 and are considered existing discharges except for the sow casting line which was installed in 2006. Although the sow line has lower flow and pollutant loading than the existing casting lines, the addition of this line could be considered an increase -- therefore the facility discharge is restricted to the maximum production permitted in 1993 (a total of five casting lines).

CFAC discharges are first to the ground water prior to reaching the Flathead River. CFAC requested to continue the ground water and surface water mixing zones. With this renewal, DEQ granted specific ground water mixing zones, as well as appropriate surface water mixing zones. DEQ proposes to grant an acute surface water mixing zone for ammonia and chlorine. DEQ proposes to grant a chronic surface water mixing zone for cyanide, as well as for aluminum, ammonia, antimony, benzo(a)pyrene, chlorine, copper, fluoride, and nickel.

DEQ added pH, solids, and tiered production-based limits to the existing limits for the two ELG process discharges; added limits for the sow line; maintained the limits for the sewage treatment discharge; added aluminum and cyanide limits for the ground water seep; and added the following water quality-based effluent limits: aluminum and cyanide limits for Outfall 007 discharge to the North Ponds; aluminum, cyanide, and ammonia limits for Outfall 009 discharge to the South Ponds; and a chlorine limit for Outfall 013.

Monitoring requirements have increased, including monitoring of the ground water seep.

On September 21, 2000, a U.S. District Judge issued an order stating that until all necessary total maximum daily loads under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act are established for a particular water quality limited segment, the State is not to issue any new permits or increase permitted discharges under the MPDES program. The order was issued in the lawsuit Friends of the Wild Swan v. U.S. EPA, et al., CA 97-85-M-DWM, District of Montana, Missoula Division. The Department finds that the issuance of this proposed permit does not conflict with the order because it is a renewal of an existing permit, with additional effluent limits and monitoring requirements proposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments are invited ANYTIME PRIOR TO CLOSE OF BUSINESS April 4, 2014. Comments may be directed to the DEQ Permitting & Compliance Division, Water Protection Bureau, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620. All comments received or postmarked PRIOR TO CLOSE OF BUSINESS April 4, 2014 will be considered in the formulation of final determinations to be imposed on the permits. If you wish to comment electronically, you may e-mail David Dunbar or Barb Sharpe at WPBPublicNotices@mt.gov.

During the public comment period provided by the notice, the Department will accept requests for a public hearing. A request for a public hearing must be in writing and must state the nature of the issue proposed to be raised in the hearing (ARM 17.30.1373).

The Department will respond to all substantive comments and issue a final decision within sixty days of this notice or as soon as possible thereafter. Additional information may be obtained upon request by calling (406) 444-3080 or by writing to the aforementioned address. The complete administrative record, including permit application and other pertinent information, is maintained at the Water Protection Bureau office in Helena and is available for review during business hours.

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