

**MEETING AGENDA**

**CITY OF EAST HELENA**

**CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110**

**COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM**

**DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026**

**JOIN ZOOM MEETING: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3787705872>**

**CONFERENCE CALL-IN: 1-253-205-0468 MEETING ID: 378 770 5872**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** Mayor Harris

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Councilmember Dahl

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Note: This time is set aside for comments from the public on matters that are not on the meeting agenda. Public comments will be taken on agenda items prior to a motion. All public comments will be limited to a reasonable duration. Prior to your comments, please state your name and address in an audible tone of voice for the record.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** February 3, 2026

**CITY COURT REPORT:** City Judge Dennis Loveless

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

Administration – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren

Police Department – Police Chief Ed Royce

Public Works - Public Works Director Kevin Ore

Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Chief Roger Campbell

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Request for MBAC & MEDA East Helena Community Review Council Room Fee Waiver – Councilmember Feist  
Action: Approve/Deny/Table

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Harris

**COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS:**

Don Dahl

Judy Leland

Wesley Feist

Suzanne Ferguson

**LEGAL REPORT:** City Attorney Elverum

**PAYMENT OF BILLS:** Action: Approve/Deny/Table

**MEETING & EVENT SCHEDULE:**

1. East Helena Wastewater Treatment Plant Phase 2 Upgrades, Monday, February 23, 2026, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., East Helena City Hall Gymnasium Room 108
2. East Helena Wastewater Treatment Plant Phase 2 Upgrades, Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., East Helena City Hall Gymnasium Room 108
3. East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 6:30 p.m., East Helena City Hall Room 110
4. East Helena Wastewater Treatment Plant Phase 2 Upgrades, Monday, March 9, 2026, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., East Helena City Hall Gymnasium Room 108
5. East Helena Wastewater Treatment Plant Phase 2 Upgrades, Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., East Helena City Hall Gymnasium Room 108
6. East Helena City Council Meeting, Monday, March 16, 2026, 6:30 p.m., East Helena City Hall Room 110
7. CANCELLED - East Helena City Council Meeting, Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 6:30 p.m., East Helena City Hall Room 110 – RESCHEDULED TO MONDAY, MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup>
8. East Helena Planning Board Meeting, Thursday, March 19, 2026, 6:00 p.m., East Helena City Hall Room 110

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Harris

**ADA NOTICE**

The City of East Helena is committed to providing access to persons with disabilities for its meetings, in compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Montana Human Rights Act. The city will not exclude people with disabilities from participating in its meetings, or otherwise deny them the City's services, programs, or activities. Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the City's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact the City Clerk as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the requested accommodation, at any of the following:

(406) 227-5321 or TTY Relay Service 1-800-253-4091 or 711

[cyclerk@easthelenamt.us](mailto:cyclerk@easthelenamt.us) - 306 East Main Street, P.O. Box 1170, East Helena, MT 59635

## MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF EAST HELENA

CITY HALL – 306 EAST MAIN - ROOM 110

COUNCIL MEETING: 6:30 PM

DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026

JOIN ZOOM MEETING: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3787705872>

CONFERENCE CALL-IN: 1-253-205-0468 MEETING ID: 378 770 5872

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** Mayor Harris called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Councilmember Ferguson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CITY OFFICIALS & STAFF PRESENT:** Mayor Kelly Harris, Council President Don Dahl, Councilmember Judy Leland, Councilmember Suzanne Ferguson, Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren, Public Works Director Kevin Ore, Volunteer Fire Chief Roger Campbell, City Attorney Pete Elverum, Police Chief Ed Royce, and Patrol Officer Zach Butler

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Steve Garrison, Rhonda Vogl, Ron Whitmoyer, Bridget Williams, Jacob Wheeling, Cindy Brooks (via Zoom), Eliza Dubose (via Zoom), Brad Koenig, and Greg Wirth

**ABSENT/EXCUSED:** City Judge Dennis Loveless and Councilmember Wesley Feist

**(0:00:30) EAST HELENA SUPERFUND UPDATE:** EPA Remedial Project Manager Bridget Williams updated Council on the progress of the yard remediation project. This was an information-only item.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** A copy of an email in opposition to train horns and a thank-you note that contained a donation to the cemetery were on the council room table.

**(0:03:05) APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A copy of the draft minutes of the January 20<sup>th</sup> meeting was included in the council packet. A copy of an email from Councilmember Feist requesting an amendment to his report was on the council room table. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**CITY COURT REPORT:** City Judge Dennis Loveless was excused.

### **(0:03:50) DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

**Administration** – Clerk/Treasurer Amy Thorngren reported that the admin office had received a call in opposition to the beaver dam removal on Prickly Pear Creek and complaints about limited landfill hours.

**Police Department** – Police Chief Ed Royce reported that the department had received 503 calls-for-service in January, he was exploring new grants, he attended the MRDTF board

meeting, he attended the CJCC board meeting, he attended career day at St. Andrew's Catholic School, he met with the bureau chief of the narcotics and human trafficking division of the Department of Criminal Investigation, and that the department would be rejoining the DUI Task Force.

**Public Works** – A written report was included in the council packet. Public Works Director Kevin Ore reported that the dates had been set for the public hearings regarding the wastewater treatment plant upgrades, staff is working on a problem with the clarifier at the wastewater treatment plant, and that the beaver dam was removed from Prickly Pear Creek.

**Volunteer Fire Department** - A written report of the department's calls-for-service was included in the council packet. Fire Chief Roger Campbell reported that two new members had joined the department, repairs were being made to the fire station, the ISO inspection should be completed by the end of the month, the department was doing a comprehensive driving evaluation program, and that the department would be assisting with the Passion Plunge event.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** There was no unfinished business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **(0:15:55) General Contractor Construction Manager for the Rose Hills**

**Subdivision** – An explanation of the GCCM method and draft Resolution 638 were included in the council packet. Brad Koenig of Robert Peccia & Associates discussed MCA 18-2-503 which allows the city to use the GCCM method and requires a resolution. There was no public comment. Councilmember Ferguson made a motion to approve Resolution 638. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. **(0:19:05) Request to Apply for a New Treacy Foundation Grant for the East**

**Helena Rodeo Grounds** – A copy of the letter of intent to apply for the grant was included in the council packet. Ron Whitmoyer of the East Helena Valley Rodeo Association requested Council's approval to apply for the \$40,000 grant on behalf of the city as was done two years ago. There was no public comment. Councilmember Dahl made a motion to approve applying for the grant. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **(0:21:50) Request to Use and Fee Waiver of Kennedy Park for the Montana**

**Joining Community Forces BBQ August 6, 2026** – The use agreement was included in the council packet. Steve Garrison of Montana Joining Community Forces requested Council's approval to use Kennedy Park at no charge for this annual event. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the request and fee waiver. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **(0:00:00) Montana Environmental Trust Group Declaration of Easement and**

**Amended Plat for a Sewer Lift Station** – The draft easement agreement was included in the council packet. A copy of the notice of environmental conditions was on the council room table. Mayor Harris noted that it was a minor update to the

previously approved agreement. There was no public comment. Councilmember Leland made a motion to approve the easement agreement. Councilmember Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. **(0:23:50) Rescheduling of the March 17, 2026 Council Meeting** – Mayor Harris requested Council's approval for a one-time rescheduling of the regularly scheduled council meeting to the day before. There was no public comment. Councilmember Ferguson made a motion to reschedule the March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting to Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. Councilmember Leland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**(0:25:05) MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Harris reported that he met with METG, met with the Legislative Audit Division, and took a tour of the slag pile with Congressman Downing.

**(0:26:35) COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS:**

**Don Dahl** had nothing to report.

**Judy Leland** had nothing to report.

**Wesley Feist** was excused. A copy of an email from Councilmember Feist was on the council room table.

**Suzanne Ferguson** had nothing to report.

**(0:26:50) LEGAL REPORT:** City Attorney Elverum reported that court was going well and the police department was doing a great job.

**(0:27:00) PAYMENT OF BILLS:** Claims 299603 through 299654 were presented for Council's review. Councilmember Leland made a motion to pay the bills. Councilmember Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**MEETING & EVENT SCHEDULE:**

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2. East Helena Wastewater Treatment Plant Phase 2 Upgrades, Monday, February 23, 2026, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., East Helena City Hall Gymnasium Room 108
3. East Helena Wastewater Treatment Plant Phase 2 Upgrades, Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., East Helena City Hall Gymnasium Room 108

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Clerk/Treasurer

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Mayor



## CITY COURT REPORT FOR JANUARY, 2026

RECEIPTS \$8,123.78

## PAYMENTS

CITY TREASURER	\$6,289.00
COUNTY TREASURER	966.00
RESTITUTION & OVERPMT	868.78

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

  
Dennis Loveless

RECEIVED  
FEB 09 2026  
CITY CLERK/TREASURER  
EAST HELENA, MT





# Public Works Department

*Proud to be part of E.H. Team*

February 17th, 2026

## **1.) WWTP Report**

- We received the included DEQ report from our wastewater plant inspection. We will be working on a response and getting it submitted to DEQ.
- Reminder, Public meeting dates for sewer plant construction phases and related rates are set for Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> 10am-11am, Feb 24<sup>th</sup> 6pm-7pm, March 9<sup>th</sup> 10am-11am, and March 10<sup>th</sup> 6pm-7pm. Public meeting will be held at city hall in the gym.
- Still working on getting clarifier settling issues figured out. Thanks to Shane for all the work on this.
- No new update on Headworks construction.

## **2.) Metal Removal Building**

- No issues to report from Metals Removal Building.

## **3.) Source Water Report**

- We got the water tank mixer returned from warranty repairs. Crews will be reinstalling this in the M.C. Creek tank.
- Scott and Torrey both took the DEQ water test again, good luck to them.

## **4.) Solid Waste Report**

- Scott has gotten a few complaints from residents that the new garbage truck is too quiet, and they don't hear him coming to put out their trash. (Discuss)
- Still waiting on graphic design options for garbage truck.

## **5.) Parks**

- Crews have gotten most of the tree debris cleaned up at both parks.
- We will be starting to look at parks district creation in both Highland Meadows and Vigilante Subdivision.

## **6.) Pool**

- Summit Roofing is completing roof replacement of the main pool house.
- Have had some conversations with pool managers and upcoming 2026 season.

## **7.) Streets**

- After several meetings with Federal Highways, we need to wait to award the RFQ for Valley Drive until we have a signed agreement. We are currently in the accusation and grant review, then it will be forwarded to Federal Legal Review, then lastly Office of Security will review. Est of 2 weeks to 6 months still for approval. (Discuss)
- Crews are working on potholes and straitening street signs.

## **8.) Facilities**

- Tom Tennesson is continuing to work upstairs bathroom and wall repair at City Hall.
- Still working on getting new security locks installed by first part of February.

## **9.) Resident/City Information and Events**

- Lewis and Clark Brewing and Alive at 5 are planning a August 5<sup>th</sup> event at Main Street Park.
- FY-27 Budget ideas or thoughts come see me.
- Talking with developer who is looking at building 4 plex on vacant lot on Gail Street.

February 5, 2026

**VIOLATION LETTER**

The Honorable Kelly Harris, Mayor  
City of East Helena  
PO Box 1170  
East Helena, MT 59635

RE: Compliance Evaluation Inspection Report for City of East Helena, Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) Permit #MT0022560: East Helena WWTF

Dear Mayor Kelly Harris:

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) conducted a compliance evaluation inspection (CEI) for City of East Helena, MPDES Permit #MT0022560: East Helena WWTF, located in East Helena, Montana, on January 14, 2026. Please review the enclosed inspection report for detailed information about the inspection.

Based on the findings in the inspection report, DEQ is requiring the following information be submitted:

- 1.) Submit a written explanation detailing how the City of East Helena has corrected each of the lettered findings (A - F) in the Records Review section of the inspection report.
- 2.) Submit a written explanation detailing how the City of East Helena has corrected the numbered finding (1) in the Facility Site Evaluation section of the inspection report.

Please submit the written responses by **March 13, 2026**. The written responses can be submitted electronically through your **FACTS** account. If you do not have a **FACTS** account or need assistance with your **FACTS** account, please contact Wendy Simons with the MPDES Data Management Team at (406) 444-0574 or [wendy.simons@mt.gov](mailto:wendy.simons@mt.gov). Alternatively, the written responses can be mailed to: Montana Department of Environmental Quality, MPDES Data Management Team, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901, Attn: John O'Bannon.

The written explanations are required to address the following violations and return to compliance:

- Failure to meet numeric effluent limitations is a violation of section 75-5-605(1)(b) of Montana Code Annotated (MCA), section 17.30.1342(1) of the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM), and Part I.B of MPDES Permit MT0022560.
- Failure to properly operate and maintain all facilities and systems of treatment and control (related appurtenances) which are installed or used by the city to achieve compliance with permit conditions is a violation of 75-5-605(1)(b) of MCA, section 17.30.1342(1) of ARM, and Part III.E of MPDES Permit MT0022560.
- Failure to notify and properly report serious incidences of noncompliance affecting the environment and / or human health to Montana DEQ is a violation section 75-5-605(1)(b) of MCA, section 17.30.1342(1) of ARM, and Part II.I of MPDES Permit MT0020560.
- Failure to conduct monitoring in accordance with test procedures approved under Title 40 Part 136 of the Federal Code of Regulations (40CFR136) is a violation section 75-5-605(1)(b) of MCA, section 17.30.1342(1) of ARM, and Part II.B of MPDES Permit MT0020560.

- Failure to conduct proper reporting is a violation section 75-5-605(1)(b) of MCA, section 17.30.1342(1) of ARM, and Parts I.C and II.A of MPDES Permit MT0020560.

This letter is intended to inform City of East Helena of violations of the Montana Water Quality Act so appropriate steps can be taken to return to compliance. Montana DEQ is reviewing the compliance history of the City of East Helena and MPDES Permit #MT0022560 to determine the appropriate corrections ensure compliance with the WQA and may seek administrative penalties not to exceed the applicable amounts set forth in 75-5-611(9), MCA. Montana DEQ will provide written notification of the initiation of a formal enforcement action under separate correspondence, if necessary. Montana DEQ will consider the City of East Helena written responses in determining the necessary corrective actions and/or penalties included in Montana DEQ's administrative enforcement action, if taken. The City of East Helena written responses will not avoid further enforcement action to address the above-listed violations.

If the City of East Helena believes the facts stated in this letter are inaccurate, can provide any additional information to Montana DEQ regarding the violations, or believes the violations occurred differently than described within this inspection report package, the City of East Helena must submit the information to Montana DEQ by **March 13, 2026**. Montana DEQ will take into consideration any documentation that indicates the violations did not occur, or that they occurred differently than described herein.

If there are any questions, please contact me at (406) 437-8333.

Sincerely,



John O'Bannon  
Compliance Inspector  
Compliance, Training, and Technical Assistance  
Water Quality Division  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
[john.obannon@mt.gov](mailto:john.obannon@mt.gov)

Enclosures: 3560 Form, Inspection Report, Photo Report, Attachments A - D  
cc: Kevin Ore and Shane Pursley: [wwtp@easthelenamt.us](mailto:wwtp@easthelenamt.us)  
FACTS



## MPDES 3560 Compliance Inspection Report

### Section A: Facility and Contact Information

MPDES # / Programmatic ID: MT0022560 MPDES Permit Type: Minor  
Facility / Project Name: East Helena WWTF  
Address / Location: 3303 Plant Drive  
Latitude and Longitude: 46.60321839100004, -111.92112676099998  
Facility Site Contact (Permittee): The Honorable Kelly Harris, Mayor  
Mailing Address: PO Box 1170  
City, State, Zip Code: East Helena, MT 59635  
Phone / Email: 406-438-1031 / kharris@easthelenamt.us  
SIC Code: 4952 - Sewerage Systems

### Section B: Compliance Inspection Information

Compliance Monitoring Activity Name: East Helena WWTF Program: NPDES - Base Program (Limits, Reporting, Schedule), NPDES - Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO)  
Compliance Monitoring Type: Evaluation  
MPDES # / Programmatic ID: MT0022560

Compliance Monitoring Date(s):	Compliance Monitoring Reason:	Compliance Monitoring Agency Type / Name:
Actual Start: 01/14/2026	Core Program	State / MT DEQ
Actual End: 01/14/2026		

Compliance Monitoring Details:		Compliance Monitoring Information:	
Did EPA Assist?	No	Number of Days Conducting Activity?	1
State, Federal, or Joint Inspection?	State	Number of Hours Conducting the Activity?	3
Purpose of the Other Party?	State	Compliance Monitoring Action Outcome?	Not Immediately Corrected
Which Party was the Lead?	State	Compliance Monitoring Code?	Unsatisfactory
Government Contacts: John O'Bannon		Written Response Due Date: 3/13/2026	

### Section C: Compliance Inspection Outcome

MPDES # / Programmatic ID: MT0022560	Violations Identified: Yes
Violation Code: A0012 – Numeric Effluent Violation	
Single Event Violation Date: 01/14/2026	
Violation Code: E0012 – Improper / Incorrect Reporting	
Single Event Violation Date: 01/14/2026	
Violation Code: C0014 – Invalid / Unrepresentative Sample	
Single Event Violation Date: 01/14/2026	
Violation Code: B0020 – Improper Operation and Maintenance	
Single Event Violation Date: 01/14/2026	

### Section D: Signatory

Name and Signature of Inspector 	Date <b>2/2/2026</b>
Name and Signature of Inspector	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Name and Signature of QA Inspector / Manager 	Date <b>2/4/2026</b>

**Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
Water Quality Division  
Compliance, Training, and Technical Assistance  
Phone (406) 444-5546**

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**Entry/Introduction**

The Compliance Evaluation Inspection (CEI) was completed on January 14, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:36 p.m. The following personnel were in attendance during the CEI: Kevin Ore, Public Works Director, City of East Helena, Shane Pursley, Operator, City of East Helena, Luke Scannell, Environmental Compliance Inspector, Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and John O'Bannon, Environmental Compliance Inspector, Montana DEQ.

The City of East Helena (city) owns and operates an aerated, activated sludge, biolac wastewater treatment facility (WWTF). Treatment at the WWTF consists of the following: headworks with initial screening and grit removal; an equalization basin; an aeration basin (reactor basin); clarification; ultraviolet (UV) disinfection; and sand filters for metals removal. Solids are processed with an aerobic digester / sludge holding basin, a rotary drum thickener, and sludge drying beds. Aluminum sulfate is added for additional chemical treatment. Influent flow is measured using a Parshall flume and ultrasonic flow meter (post headworks) with influent sampling being collected with a composite autosampler (post initial screening). Effluent flow is measured using an inline magnetic flow meter (post metals removal) with effluent sampling being collected by a composite autosampler (post metals removal). The WWTF discharges continuously to Prickly Pear Creek (creek) at Outfall 001. Sample analysis is completed by Energy Laboratories with the exception of pH monitoring which is completed in-house.

The city is currently in the Phase 1 stage of upgrading the WWTF. Phase 1 includes the construction of a new influent screw pump lift station, a new headworks building with two (2) bar screens and vortex grit removal, and a new influent flume / flow meter. The upgrades were under construction during the CEI with anticipated completion date in the spring of 2026. The city is currently exploring funding options for the future phase 2 stage of the project. The projected phase 2 of the project includes the construction of oxidation ditches and two (2) secondary clarifiers. Phase 2 is currently in the design phase with a projected completion date of 2029.

The sanitary sewer collection system (SSCS) consists of around 800 connections that service the following: a k-12 school, local businesses / restaurants, a brewery, American Chemet, the East Clark sewer district, and around 2,239 residents. The SSCS is composed of clay tile and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) piping. The city owns / maintains five (5) lift stations. Routine maintenance of the SSCS is done a yearly and / or 2-years basis for the entire SSCS. Maintenance includes jetting and camera inspection of the SSCS. Infiltration and inflow (I/I) occurs along sections of the SSCS along the creek with sump pumping also present for residences along the creek. Sanitary sewer overflows are being reported to Montana DEQ. Several large housing developments are under construction and / or planned for the city, with the city anticipating the potential to service an additional eight to ten thousand (8,000 – 10,000) homes within the next twenty (20) years. The current and / or proposed future upgrades are in part to address this anticipated growth.

Part of the Phase 1 upgrades discussed above also includes the slip lining of clay tile sections of the SSCS located along the creek to reduce I/I.

The creek is listed as impaired for not fully supporting aquatic life and drinking water with approved Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, sedimentation / siltation, temperature, and zinc. Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) identifies the creek as supporting populations of salmonid fishes including Westslope Cutthroat Trout. Westslope Cutthroat Trout are listed as a Species of Concern by the State of Montana. Species of Concern are native taxa that are at-risk due to declining population trends, threats to their habitats, restricted distribution, and / or other factors.

### **Records Review**

The following records were requested for review:

- Copy of MPDES Permit #MT0022560
- Copy of Pollutant Minimization Program (PMP)
  - Annual reports
- Records of equipment calibration

Copies of the following records were reviewed off-site following the CEI:

- Monitoring Records for the Monthly Influent and Effluent Periods Ending: June 30, 2025; July 31, 2025; and August 31, 2025.
  - Records of Flow Measurement
  - In-house Bench Sheets and Calculation Records (Spreadsheets, etc.)
  - Chain of Custody Forms and Laboratory Analytical Reports
- Monitoring Records for the Quarterly Zinc and Lead monitoring periods ending: March 31, 2025, and June 30, 2025 (Q1 and Q2)
  - In-house Bench Sheets and Calculation Records (Spreadsheets, etc.)
  - Chain of Custody Forms and Laboratory Analytical Reports
- Monitoring Records for Quarterly Ambient Instream Monitoring (Prickly Pear) for the monitoring period ending: March 31, 2025 (Q1)
  - In-house Bench Sheets and Calculation Records (Spreadsheets, etc.)
  - Chain of Custody Forms and Laboratory Analytical Reports

The following findings were identified with the above requested records:

- A. The city is incorrectly reporting monitoring data. Specifically, influent flow values are being incorrectly used to completed loading (lbs. / day) calculations for Total Phosphorus (TP) and Total Nitrogen (TN). Loading calculations (lbs. / day) calculations need to be completed using the effluent daily discharge flow value from the date the sample was collected. The city needs to correct the excel spreadsheet being used to calculate / report monitoring data so effluent flow values are used in TN and TP calculations. Proper reporting is required per Part I.C of MPDES Permit #MT0022560. Note: the dates for a given sample did not always correspond to the appropriate sampling week in the spreadsheet. This did not appear to effect calculations in the spreadsheet.
- B. The city is incorrectly reporting monitoring data. Specifically, influent flow values are being incorrectly used to complete loading (lbs. / day) calculations for Total Suspended Solids (TSS).

Review of the excel spreadsheet being used by the city to calculate / report monitoring data indicated that the observed discrepancy was limited to the “sample 3” column on the “TSS Effluent” page. The “Sample 1” and “Sample 2” columns appeared to use the correct effluent flow values. The city needs to correct the excel spreadsheet being used to calculate / report monitoring data so effluent flow values are used in TSS calculations. Proper reporting is required per Part I.C of MPDES Permit #MT0022560.

C. The city is incorrectly reporting monitoring data. Specifically, the city is incorrectly including monitoring data collected on partial weeks in the corresponding month that the majority of days the partial week fall-in when calculating monthly averages. For example, influent and effluent sample values collected on June 30, 2025, were incorrectly applied to monthly calculations for the month of July and were excluded from monthly calculations for the month of June as shown:

	Date	Flow (Gallons)	Flow (MGD)	Nitrate + Nitrite as N		Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen		Total Nitrogen			
				mg/l	Average Monthly (mg/l)	mg/l	Average Monthly (mg/l)	mg/l	lb/day	Average Monthly (mg/l)	Average Monthly Permit Limit
May-25	Week 2	05/13/25	252722	0.253	6.34	20.30	27.24	57.41			
	Week 3	05/20/25	389323	0.389	7.90	8.70	16.60	53.90			
	Week 4	05/27/25	429153	0.429	7.00	4.60	11.60	41.52			
	Week 5	0			7.15		12.93			20.1	53.3
Jun-25	Week 1	06/03/25	501239	0.501	6.32	11.30	17.62	73.66			
	Week 2	06/10/25	386607	0.387	6.50	17.60	24.10	77.71			
	Week 3	06/17/25	413780	0.414	6.36	22.70	29.06	100.28			
	Week 4	06/24/25	358867	0.359	6.80	28.10	34.90	104.45			
	Week 5	0			6.50		19.93			26.4	53.3
Jul-25	Week 1	06/30/25	277332	0.277	6.50	29.10	35.60	82.34			
	Week 2	07/07/25	252707	0.253	7.00	48.10	55.10	116.13			
	Week 3	07/14/25	235138	0.235	8.11	55.30	63.41	124.35			
	Week 4	07/21/25	244573	0.245	8.90	56.80	65.70	134.01			
	Week 5	07/29/25	252348	0.252	10.40	8.18	28.30	43.52	38.70	81.45	51.7
											53.3
											107.7

Review of the excel spreadsheet being used by the city showed that calculations were being separated by sampling weeks for all individual monitoring parameters that have weekly reporting requirements. The observed calculations in the excel spreadsheet where partial weeks are applied to the month where the majority of days fall-in is specific to *weekly* average calculations. The city needs to correct the excel spreadsheet being used to calculate / report monitoring data so that monthly averages are calculated using all samples collected during a given monthly monitoring period. Please see the recommendations section of this report for completing / reporting weekly calculations for partial weeks. Proper reporting is required per Part I.C of MPDES Permit #MT0022560. Note: this was a finding in the March 30, 2021, Violation Letter and inspection report.

D. The city is incorrectly reporting monitoring data. Specifically, the city incorrectly reported a single ammonia sample collected on August 5, 2025, when additional ammonia monitoring was identified in Energy Laboratory reports from sampling conducted on August 12, 2025, and August 26, 2025. The city needs to include these additional samples in the monthly average ammonia calculations and reported in discharge monitoring reports (DMRs). Monitoring of any pollutants at a higher frequency than required by MPDES Permit #MT00200560, using approved analytic methods, must be included in any applicable calculations and reported in DMRs per Part II.F of MPDES Permit #MT0022560. Proper reporting is required per Part I.C of MPDES Permit #MT0022560.

The city needs to review the excel spreadsheet being used complete calculations and subsequent DMR reporting to ensure the proper formatting, formulas, etc. are present in the spreadsheet. The observed

discrepancies discussed may be automatically carrying over to monitoring periods not reviewed during the CEI. I am requiring the city to correct the applicable DMRs for findings (A -D) above in NetDMR from **December 1, 2024, to present**. Proper reporting is required per Part I.C of MPDES Permit #MT0022560.

- E. The city has not properly operated and maintained the WWTF. Specifically, discussions during the CEI indicated that proper wasting from the sludge holding basin (see photo 17) did not occur until 2024 / 2025 causing sludge to buildup in the basin. The issues were discovered by the city when 'turnovers' and / or 'upsets' in the basin began occurring where sludge / turbid wastewater began to overflow into the reactor basin through the supernatant return connecting the two basins (see photo 16). The city has provided written notification to Montana DEQ as the cause for the following effluent exceedances (excluding metals)(see Attachment D):
  - I. Monitoring Parameters Exceedance Letter dated May 10, 2024 – letter to Montana DEQ from the city states that during the month of March an operator observed a turnover event in the sludge holding basin that was believed to be the cause of the reported exceedance(s). The turnover event was believed to have been caused by increasing water temperature.
  - II. Monitoring Parameters Exceedance Letter dated June 10, 2024 – the letter to Montana DEQ from the city states that during the month of March an operator observed a turnover event in the sludge holding basin that was believed to be the cause of the reported exceedance. The turnover event was believed to have been caused by increasing water temperature.
  - III. 2024 Annual Report – the annual report submitted to Montana DEQ states that upsets in the reactor basin caused from excess solids in the sludge storage basin may have been the cause of exceedances with the upset lasting approximately three months. The annual report states that the previous operators at the WWTF only pumped and dewatered roughly 10 tons of biosolids to the drying beds annually from the sludge storage basin. Additionally, the annual report states that the upset event in the sludge holding basin would cause foaming and low oxygen conditions in the reactor basin as material from the sludge holding basin would enter the reactor basin form the supernatant return. The annual report states that 93 tons of solids was hauled to the landfill in 2024 as a result of efforts to reduce sludge levels in the sludge holding basin. Finally, the report states that WWTF staff were able to get the rotary drum thickener operation after years of sitting idle, indicating that the thickener was not in use and / or operational.
  - IV. Monitoring Parameters Exceedance Letter dated July 10, 2025 – the letter to Montana DEQ from the city states that during the month of May and June the WWTF clarifier had floc rake mechanical issues. A description of the issue and / or the cause of the issue was not provided. The letter did not state if the floc rake was operational.
  - V. Monitoring Parameters Exceedance Letter dated August 8, 2025 – the letter to Montana DEQ from the city states that during the month of May and June the WWTF clarifier had floc rake mechanical issues. A description of the issue and / or the cause of the issue was not provided. The letter did not state if the floc rake was operational.
  - VI. Monitoring Parameters Exceedance Letter dated September 10, 2025 – the letter to Montana DEQ from the city states that during the month of June the WWTF sludge holding basin had an upset.

Montana DEQ conducted a review of reported effluent nitrogen (ammonia, nitrate + nitrite, TKN, and TN) concentration (mg / L) from January 1, 2020, to present. The data supports the city's claim that the 'turnover' and / or 'upsets' in the solid's holding basin were a

contributing factor, if not the cause, of the reported effluent exceedances as spikes in ammonia, TKN, and TN were observed around the same time periods as the incidences described above (see Attachment B). In order for the city to claim an upset, the following needed to have occurred:

- I. An upset occurred and the city can identify the cause(s) of the upset.
- II. The WWTF was at the time of the upset being properly operated.
- III. The city submitted a notice of the upset / provided twenty-four-hour notice of serious noncompliance and written submission as described in Part II.I of MPDES Permit #MT0020494.
- IV. The city complied with any remedial measures (Duty to Mitigate) as required under Part III.D of MPDES Permit #MT0020560.

Montana DEQ does not have any records of the city properly reporting the incidences as described in Part II.I of MPDES Permit #MT0020494. Additionally, based on conversations during the CEI and information provided in the 2024 Annual Report / Monitoring Parameters Exceedance letters, the WWTF was not being properly operated at the time of the 'turnover' and / or 'upset' that resulted in numeric effluent exceedances. Based the above discussed information, the 'turnover' and / or 'upset' events do not meet the qualifications for affirmative defense to a department action for the noncompliance discussed in this finding. In order for the city to demonstrate an upset as an affirmative defense to a department action it must be properly reported and documented to Montana DEQ in accordance with Part III.H of MPDES Permit #MT0020560. Note: the city reported zero (0) TN numeric effluent exceedances prior to 2024 from the permit effective date of December 1, 2019, for MPDES Permit #MT0022560.

Based on the information discussed above, Montana DEQ is requiring the city to submit the following information:

- Provide a detailed description of the steps the city has taken to reduce sludge levels / waste sludge from the sludge holding basin to reduce and / or eliminate the conditions discussed above.
- Provide a detailed description of the suspected cause(s) of the clarifier flock rake issues discussed in the Monitoring Parameters Exceedance dated July 10, 2025, and August 8, 2025, (letters) above. Provide a detailed description of the steps taken by the city to repair and / or bring the clarifier back online.
- Provide a detailed description of any additional remedial measures implemented by the city during the discussed periods of noncompliance in accordance with III.D of MPDES Permit #MT0020560.

The city must at all times properly operate and maintain all facilities and systems of treatment and control (related appurtenances) which are installed or used by the city to achieve compliance with permit conditions per Part III.E of MPDES Permit #MT0022560.

F. The city has not properly reported non-compliance which may seriously endanger the environment and / or human health. Specifically, the conditions described in finding (E) above were not properly reported to Montana DEQ. The effluent numeric exceedances reported as a result of the 'turnover' and / or 'upset' conditions and / or floc rake mechanical issues is considered a serious threat to the environment and / or human health. The 2024 Annual Report states that upset conditions lasted approximately three (3) months. Additionally, the Monitoring Parameters Exceedance Letter dated September 10, 2025, stated that an additional upset

occurred in Jun of 2025. Discussions during the CEI indicated that the upset lasted approximately one (1) month. Both upsets were the result of the buildup of sludge / improper wasting of the sludge holding basin leading to sludge / increased turbidity entering the Reactor Basin through the supernatant return. These condition needs to be reported to Montana DEQ as follows:

- I. The city shall report any serious incident of noncompliance affecting the environment and / or human health as soon as possible, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours from the time the city became aware of the circumstances. The report shall be made to the Water Quality Division at (406) 444-05546 or the Office of Disaster and Emergency Services at (406) 841-3911.
- II. The city shall submit a written submission to Montana DEQ within five days of the time that the city becomes aware to the circumstances. The written submission shall contain:
  - i. A description of the non-compliance and its cause;
  - ii. The period of noncompliance, including exact dates and times;
  - iii. Steps taken or planned to reduce, eliminate, and prevent reoccurrence of the noncompliance

Noncompliance is to be reported to Montana DEQ utilizing the Noncompliance Reporting Form (see Attachment C). Montana DEQ could not locate any record of the city completing twenty-four (24) hour noncompliance reporting as required. Additionally, the Monitoring Parameters Exceedance Letters and the information provided in the 2024 Annual Report discussed in finding (E) above do not meet the written submission requirements of noncompliance reporting (see Attachment D). Serious incidence of noncompliance affecting the environment and / or human health must be properly reported to Montana DEQ in accordance with Part II.I of MPDES Permit #MT0022560.

G. The city has not met numeric effluent limitations. Specifically, the city has reported thirty-seven (37) numeric effluent exceedances from January 1, 2023, to present:

- I. See Attachment A\*\*\*

The city addressed the attributed cause(s) of the reported exceedances as discussed in finding (E) of the Records Review section of this report. The city has implemented metals treatment continues to assess sources of copper and zinc coming into the WWTF. Numeric effluent limits are required to be met per Part I.B of MPDES Permit MT0022560.

*\*DEQ considers these exceedances to be Significant Noncompliance (SNC). An exceedance is a SNC when the numeric effluent limit violation is more than 40% or greater for Group I Pollutants or an exceedance of 20% or greater for Group II Pollutants. Group I and II Pollutants are defined in 40 CFR 123.45. A list is provided after the conclusion in this inspection report. A SNC is considered the most serious level of violation because the violation or noncompliance event may pose a more severe level of concern for the environment or program integrity. SNCs can result in DEQ initiating a formal enforcement action.*

*\*\*DEQ considers these exceedances to be Reportable Noncompliance (RNC). An exceedance is a RNC when the numeric effluent violation is below the 40% threshold for Group I Pollutants or the exceedance is below the 20% threshold for Group II Pollutants. Group I and II Pollutants are defined in 40 CFR 123.45. A list is provided after the conclusion in this inspection report. Although the gravity of a RNC is not as severe as a SNC, RNC is considered a violation or noncompliance event that may represent operation and maintenance problems, design inadequacies, improper treatment, or other items that may impact the environment. A history of RNCs can result in DEQ initiating a formal enforcement action.*

### **Facility Site Evaluation**

The following areas were reviewed during the facility site evaluation:

- Headworks
- Influent Flow Measurement Device
- Influent Sampling Location
- Equilization Basin
- Reactor Basins
- Sludge Holding Basin
- Clarifiers
- UV Disinfection
- Metals Treatment (sand filters)
- Effluent Flow Measurement Device
- Effluent Sampling Location
- Rotary Sludge Thickener
- Sludge Drying Beds
- Outfall 001

The following findings were identified in the areas evaluated:

1. The city is not following approved test procedures under Title 40 Part 136 of the Federal Code of Regulations (40CFR136) when conducting required monitoring. Specifically, the influent composite autosampler was displaying an internal temperature of twenty-one point three degrees centigrade (21.3°C)(see photo 8). The autosampler was in the process of collecting a composite sample during the CEI. Sampling is required to be conducted according to test procedures approved under 40CFR136, which requires samples to be stored at or below six (6) degrees Celsius until analysis is initiated and completed. The city needs to determine if the refrigeration unit is functional and set the internal temperature to at or below six (6) degrees Celsius. If the unit is not functional, the city may need to pack samples in ice inside of the refrigeration unit so proper preservation occurs until the refrigeration unit can be repaired and / or replaced. Monitoring must be conducted in accordance with test procedures approved under 40CFR136 per Part II.B of MPDES Permit #MT0020560. Note: Energy Laboratory Chain of Custody forms consistently identified sample temperatures above (6°C) upon receipt of the laboratory, and that they were delivered from the field / not on ice; however, chain of custody forms also consistently identified samples being collected and delivered to the laboratory within one (1) to two (2) hours. Based on this information, I am not going to require the city to implement additional preservation methods to ensure samples reach the laboratory at acceptable temperatures *if* the city can demonstrate that samples are maintained at or below six (6°C) during the twenty-four (24) hour period that composite sampling occurs. Please see the recommendations section at the end of this report for additional information related to the influent and effluent composite autosamplers.
2. The city is not properly operating systems of treatment at the WWTF. Specifically, the initial bar screen is being clogged with grit causing wastewater to back up in the chamber and ultimately bypass (overtop) the screen (see photos 3 - 5). Discussion with the operator indicated grit has to be routinely cleaned out of the screen in order for it to function properly. Additionally, operators have had to utilize the bypass channel with the manual bar screen in an attempt to keep wastewater from backing up in the chamber (see photo 6). Previous correspondence

between Montana DEQ and the city indicated that rag buildup (specifically in the RAS tube in the clarifier) has been a previous issue. The city is currently in the process of upgrading the headworks / headworks building which will have two (2) bar screens and a cyclone grit removal system. The anticipated completion date for the new headworks in the spring of 2026. This upgrade should eliminate the observed conditions. The city must at all times properly operate and maintain all facilities and systems of treatment and control (related appurtenances) which are installed or used by the city to achieve compliance with permit conditions per Part III.E of MPDES Permit #MT0022560. **Note:** this finding did not result in the issuance of a violation.

### **Recommendations**

I am providing the following information for compliance assistance:

- Both the influent and effluent composite autosamplers were displaying the following warning during the CEI: "Warning: Change Pump Tube" (see photos 9 and 25). Montana DEQ researched the warning code and determined that this code is displayed after 500,000 pump counts. Per the ISCO Installation and Operation Guide, failure to properly maintain the pump tube may result in permanent damage to the sampler. The observed warning displayed by the samplers is not believed to be impacting the city's ability to comply with permit conditions; however, the city may want to further investigate the displayed warnings.
- Please see the following for completing *weekly* averages:
  - Sunday through Saturday is commonly used as the sampling week.
  - For situations where a sampling week falls on the beginning / end of a month, weekly averages calculations needs to be included in the month with the majority of sampling days ( $\geq 4$  days during the sampling week).
  - Any samples collected within the partial week ( $\leq 3$  days) that fall within a sampling week at the beginning / end of a month would be included in weekly calculation for the month were the majority of days falls on ( $\geq 4$ ) with the sample being include in all applicable monthly calculation for the month that the partial week falls on.

The city appeared to be properly calculating weekly averages; however, the above listed information does not apply to monthly average calculations and is only be used for *weekly* calculations.

### **Conclusion**

To return to compliance, DEQ is requiring the following corrective actions be completed:

- 1.) Submit a written explanation detailing how the City of East Helena has corrected each of the lettered findings (A - F) in the Records Review section of the inspection report.
- 2.) Submit a written explanation detailing how the City of East Helena has corrected the numbered finding (1) in the Facility Site Evaluation section of the inspection report.

February 2, 2026

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Inspector Signature

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Date

<b>*Group I Pollutants</b>	
<b>Oxygen Demand</b>	Potassium
Biochemical Oxygen Demand	Sulfur
Chemical Oxygen Demand	Sulfate
Total Oxygen Demands	Total Alkalinity
Total Organic Carbon	Total Hardness
Other	Other Minerals
<b>Solids</b>	<b>pH –</b>
Total Suspended Solids (Residues)	pH of 0.5 SU above or below permit limit is a Group I
Total Dissolved Solids (Residues)	Pollutant - SNC
Other	
<b>Nutrients</b>	<b>Metals</b>
Inorganic Phosphorus Compounds	Aluminum
Inorganic Nitrogen Compounds	Cobalt
Other	Iron
Detergents and Oils	Vanadium
<b>MBAS</b>	
NTA	
Oil and Grease	<b>**Group II Pollutants</b>
Other detergents or algicides	<b>Metals (all forms)</b>
<b>Minerals</b>	Other metals not specifically listed under Group I
Calcium	<b>Inorganic</b>
Chloride	Cyanide
Fluoride	Total Residual Chlorine
Magnesium	<b>Organics</b>
Sodium	All organics are Group II except those specifically listed under Group I.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality – Compliance, Training, and Technical Assistance Photo Form

Permit Number: MT0022560	Weather: Clear/43°F/Dry
Facility/Permittee: East Helena WWTF / City of East Helena	Photographer: John O'Bannon & Luke Scannell
Location: 3303 Plant Drive	Camera: Apple iPhone
County: Lewis and Clark County	Page 1

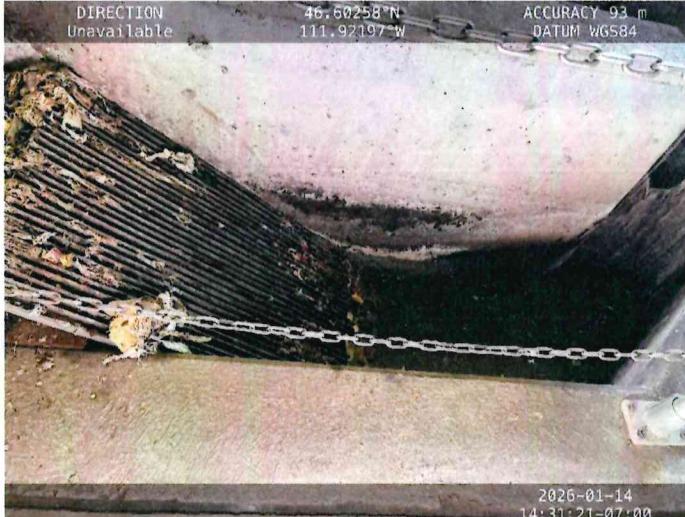
<b>Photo 1:</b>	<b>Photo 2:</b>
Looking at the influent screw pumps. This system is to be decommissioned / replaced as part of the new headworks project (phase 1).	Looking at the new influent screw pumps that are being installed (phase 1). The system is to go online in the spring of 2026.
<b>Photo 3:</b>	<b>Photo 4:</b>
Looking at the initial screen / auger and manual bar screen / bypass.	Looking at the initial screen filter / auger. The unit was plugged, and wastewater had built up in the chamber and was overflowing / bypassing the screen as shown by the blue arrow.

Signature: *John O'Bannon*

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Montana Department of Environmental Quality – Compliance, Training, and Technical Assistance Photo Form

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Facility/Permittee: East Helena WWTF / City of East Helena	Photographer: John O'Bannon & Luke Scannell
Location: 3303 Plant Drive	Camera: Apple iPhone
County: Lewis and Clark County	Page 2

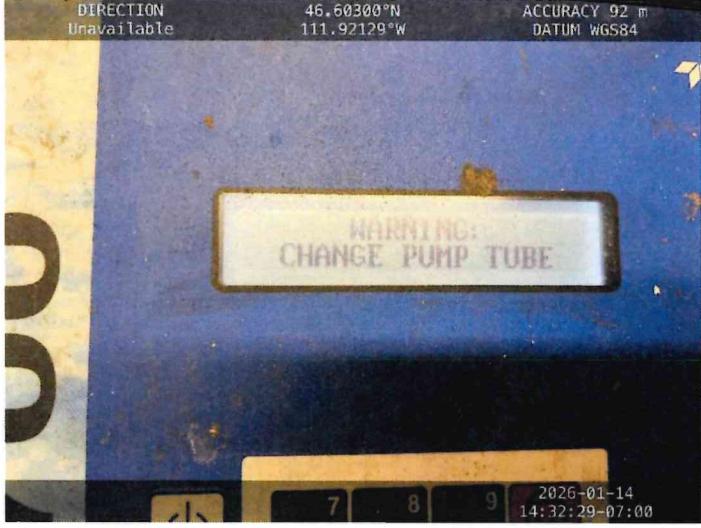
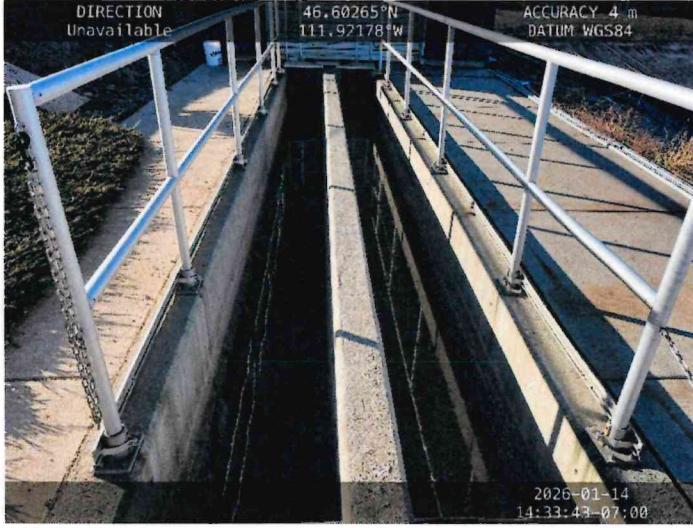
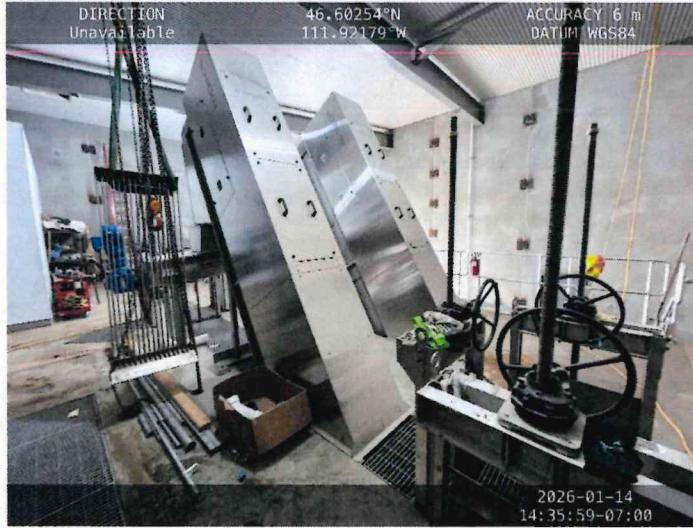
<b>Photo 5:</b>	<b>Photo 6:</b>
	
Grit build-up was observed in the screen which is believed to be the cause of the screen becoming plugged.	Looking at the manual bar screen.
<b>Photo 7:</b>	<b>Photo 8:</b>
	
Looking at the influent sampling location (located pre-initial screening).	Display on the influent flow meter identified the internal refrigeration temperature of (~21.3 °C). The autosampler was in the process of collecting a composite sampling during the CEI.

Signature:

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Montana Department of Environmental Quality – Compliance, Training, and Technical Assistance Photo Form

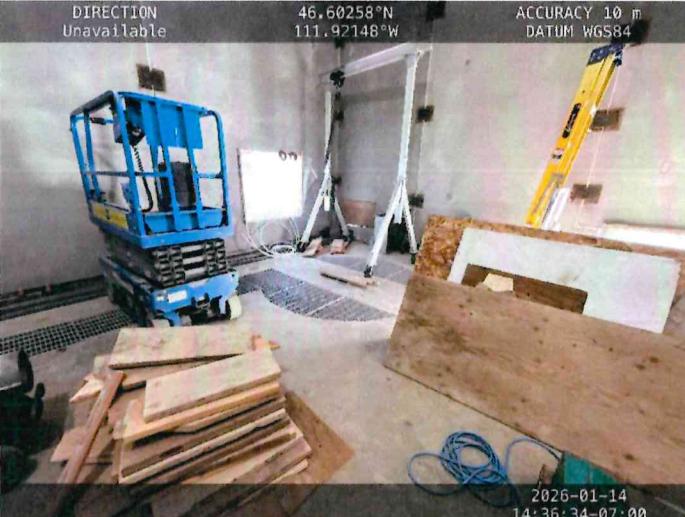
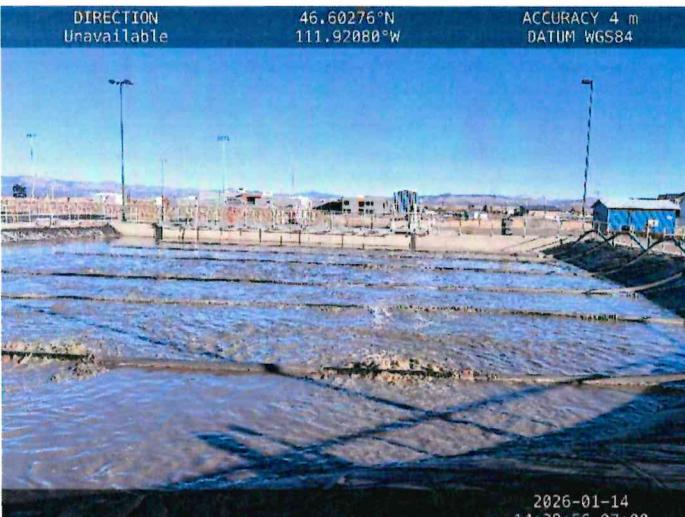
Permit Number: MT0022560	Weather: Clear/43°F/Dry
Facility/Permittee: East Helena WWTF / City of East Helena	Photographer: John O'Bannon & Luke Scannell
Location: 3303 Plant Drive	Camera: Apple iPhone
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<b>Photo 9:</b>	<b>Photo 10:</b>
 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60300°N 111.92129°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 92 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 14:32:29-07:00</p>	 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60265°N 111.92178°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 4 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 14:33:43-07:00</p>
The influent composite flow meter was displaying a warning code: change pump tube.	Looing at the grit settling chamber.
<b>Photo 11:</b>	<b>Photo 12:</b>
 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60264°N 111.92130°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 4 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 14:37:50-07:00</p>	 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60254°N 111.92179°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 6 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 14:35:59-07:00</p>
Influent Parshall flume and ultrasonic flow meter located post initial screening and grit removal. The influent screen, grit chamber, and influent flow measuring device is to be decommissioned / replaced as part of the new headworks project (phase 1).	Inside of the new headworks building: looking at the new bar screens. The system is to go online in the spring of 2026.

Signature: *John O'Bannon*

Montana Department of Environmental Quality – Compliance, Training, and Technical Assistance Photo Form

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Location: 3303 Plant Drive	Camera: Apple iPhone
County: Lewis and Clark County	Page 4

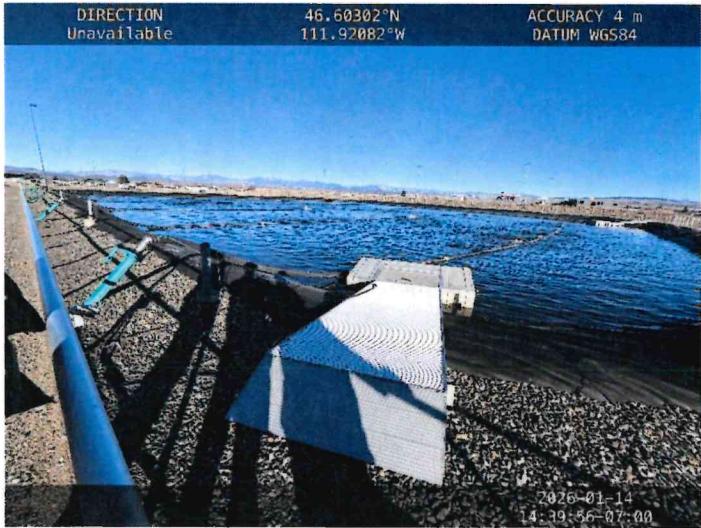
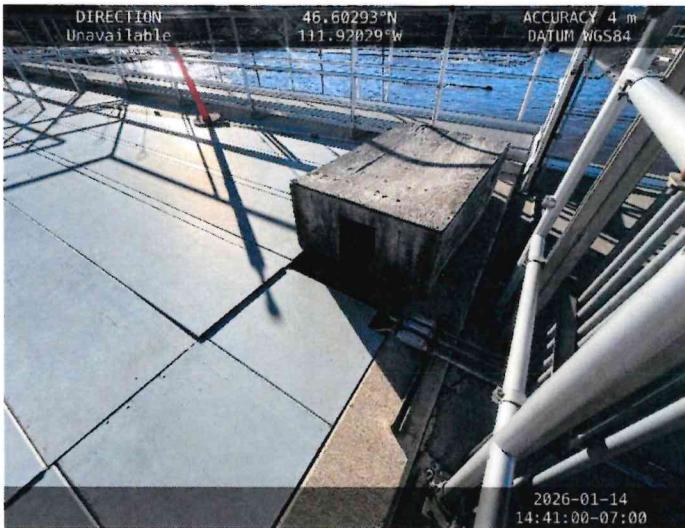
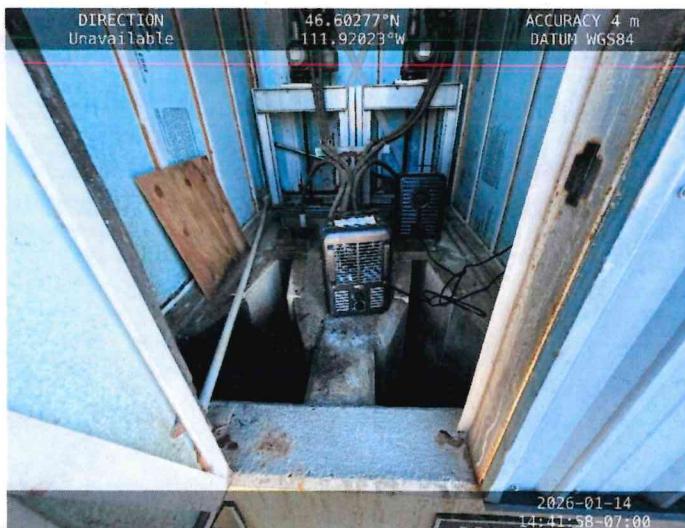
<b>Photo 13:</b>	<b>Photo 14:</b>
 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable 46.60258°N 111.92148°W ACCURACY 10 m DATUM WGS84 2026-01-14 14:36:34-07:00</p>	 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable 46.60265°N 111.92119°W ACCURACY 4 m DATUM WGS84 2026-01-14 14:38:06-07:00</p>
Inside of the new headworks building: looking at the new cyclone grit removal chamber. The system is to go online in the spring of 2026.	Looking at the splitter box to the equalization basin.
<b>Photo 15:</b>	<b>Photo 16:</b>
 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable 46.60276°N 111.92080°W ACCURACY 4 m DATUM WGS84 2026-01-14 14:38:56-07:00</p>	 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable 46.60287°N 111.92080°W ACCURACY 3 m DATUM WGS84 2026-01-14 14:39:09-07:00</p>
Looking at the reactor basin.	Looking at the overflow from the sludge holding basin to the reactor basin as identified from the blue arrow. Sludge was observed on top of the aeration piping.

Signature:

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Montana Department of Environmental Quality – Compliance, Training, and Technical Assistance Photo Form

Permit Number: MT0022560	Weather: Clear/43°F/Dry
Facility/Permittee: East Helena WWTF / City of East Helena	Photographer: John O'Bannon & Luke Scannell
Location: 3303 Plant Drive	Camera: Apple iPhone
County: Lewis and Clark County	Page 5

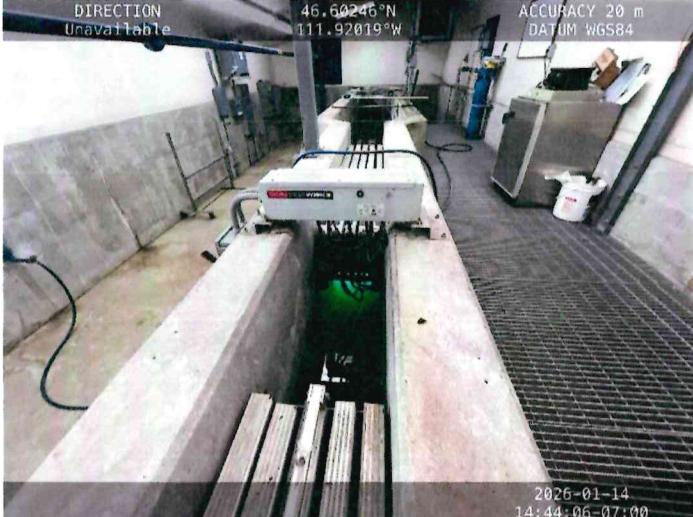
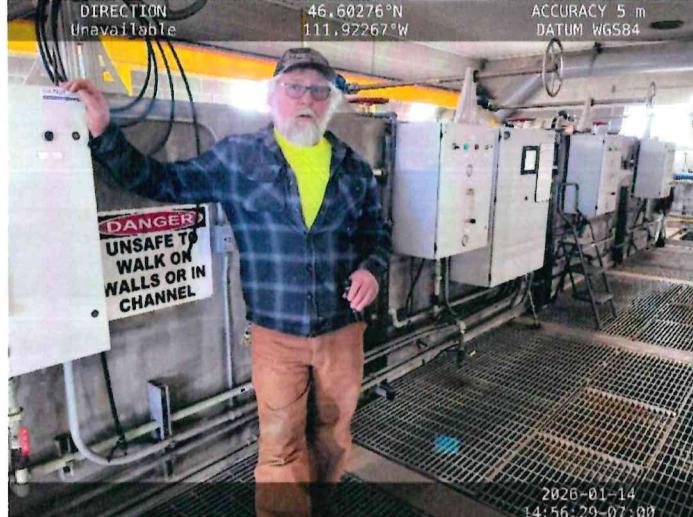
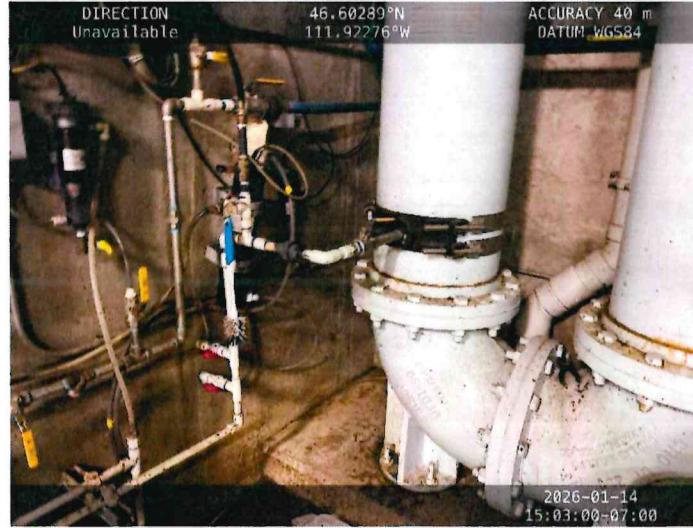
<b>Photo 17:</b>	<b>Photo 18:</b>
 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60302°N 111.92082°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 4 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 14:39:56-07:00</p>	 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60293°N 111.92029°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 4 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 14:41:00-07:00</p>
Overlooking the sludge holding basin.	Looking at the floc rake motor / chain for the clarifier.
<b>Photo 19:</b>	<b>Photo 20:</b>
 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60291°N 111.92029°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 4 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 14:41:02-07:00</p>	 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60277°N 111.92023°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 4 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 14:41:58-07:00</p>
Overlooking the clarifier.	RAS and WAS control gates.

Signature: 

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Montana Department of Environmental Quality – Compliance, Training, and Technical Assistance Photo Form

Permit Number: MT0022560	Weather: Clear/43°F/Dry
Facility/Permittee: East Helena WWTF / City of East Helena	Photographer: John O'Bannon & Luke Scannell
Location: 3303 Plant Drive	Camera: Apple iPhone
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<b>Photo 21:</b>	<b>Photo 22:</b>
 A photograph showing a long, rectangular concrete channel with a metal grating at the end. A white UV disinfection unit is positioned on the left side of the channel. The unit has a digital display and several control panels. The background shows concrete walls and some equipment. A "DIRECTION Unavailable" sign is visible in the top left corner. The photo includes coordinates (46.60246°N, 111.92019°W), accuracy (20 m), and date/time (2026-01-14 14:44:06-07:00).	 A photograph of a man with a beard and glasses standing in a industrial setting. He is wearing a blue plaid jacket over a yellow shirt and brown pants. He is standing next to a white metal structure with a "DANGER UNSAFE TO WALK ON WALLS OR IN CHANNEL" sign. The background shows various industrial equipment and pipes. A "DIRECTION Unavailable" sign is visible in the top left corner. The photo includes coordinates (46.60276°N, 111.92267°W), accuracy (5 m), and date/time (2026-01-14 14:56:29-07:00).
UV disinfection.	Metals treatment sand filters.
<b>Photo 23:</b>	<b>Photo 24:</b>
 A photograph of an effluent pH meter probe. The probe is a long, thin, cylindrical device with a probe tip and a handle. It is connected to a white control unit with various wires and valves. The background shows concrete walls and pipes. A "DIRECTION Unavailable" sign is visible in the top left corner. The photo includes coordinates (46.60292°N, 111.92254°W), accuracy (31 m), and date/time (2026-01-14 15:01:31-07:00).	 A photograph of an effluent sampling point. It shows a large white vertical pipe with various valves and fittings. The pipe is connected to a network of smaller pipes and hoses. The background is a concrete wall. A "DIRECTION Unavailable" sign is visible in the top left corner. The photo includes coordinates (46.60289°N, 111.92276°W), accuracy (40 m), and date/time (2026-01-14 15:03:00-07:00).
Effluent pH meter / probe.	Effluent sampling point.

Signature:

Montana Department of Environmental Quality – Compliance, Training, and Technical Assistance Photo Form

Permit Number: MT0022560	Weather: Clear/43°F/Dry
Facility/Permittee: East Helena WWTF / City of East Helena	Photographer: John O'Bannon & Luke Scannell
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County: Lewis and Clark County	Page 7

<b>Photo 25:</b>	<b>Photo 26:</b>
 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60279°N 111.92273°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 5 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 15:04:22-07:00</p>	 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60275°N 111.92273°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 47 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 15:05:22-07:00</p>
The effluent composite flow meter was displaying a warning code: change pump tube.	Effluent magnetic flow meter installed on the effluent line to Outfall 001.
<b>Photo 27:</b>	<b>Photo 28:</b>
 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60371°N 111.92068°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 7 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 15:10:40-07:00</p>	 <p>DIRECTION Unavailable</p> <p>46.60225°N 111.93542°W</p> <p>ACCURACY 4 m DATUM WGS84</p> <p>2026-01-14 15:25:46-07:00</p>
Volute solids screw press.	Looking at Outfall 001 to Prickly Pear Creek.

Signature: *[Signature]*

**RESPONDENT: EAST HELENA WWTF**

**ATTACHMENT A : Effluent Limitation Exceedance Violations**

**2025**

Outfall	Parameter Desc	Statistical Base Short Desc	Monitoring Period End Date	Permit Limits		DMR VALUE	Percent Exceedence	SNC*
001-A	Copper, total recoverable	MO AVG	02/28/2025	11.7	ug/L	14.	20	
001-A	Nitrogen, total [as N]	MO AVG	02/28/2025	53.3	lb/d	86.61	62	Yes
001-A	Phosphorus, total [as P]	MO AVG	02/28/2025	11.2	lb/d	13.09	17	
001-A	Copper, total recoverable	DAILY MX	03/31/2025	17.5	ug/L	(3)	3	
001-A	Copper, total recoverable	MO AVG	03/31/2025	11.7	ug/L	18.	54	Yes
001-A	Nitrogen, total [as N]	MO AVG	03/31/2025	53.3	lb/d	78.67	48	Yes
001-A	Nitrogen, total [as N]	MO AVG	05/31/2025	53.3	lb/d	57.39	8	
001-A	E. coli, MTEC-MF	MOAV GEO	06/30/2025	126	#/100mL	199.03	58	Yes
001-A	E. coli, MTEC-MF	MX 7D GM	06/30/2025	252	#/100mL	2419.6	860	Yes
001-A	Nitrogen, total [as N]	MO AVG	06/30/2025	53.3	lb/d	89.03	67	Yes
001-A	Phosphorus, total [as P]	MO AVG	06/30/2025	11.2	lb/d	21.85	95	Yes
001-A	BOD, 5-day, 20 deg. C	MO AVG	07/31/2025	30	mg/L	33.93	13	
001-A	BOD, 5-day, 20 deg. C	WKLY MAX	07/31/2025	45	mg/L	51.	13	
001-A	E. coli, MTEC-MF	MOAV GEO	07/31/2025	126	#/100mL	1161.44	822	Yes
001-A	E. coli, MTEC-MF	MX 7D GM	07/31/2025	252	#/100mL	2908.13	1054	Yes
001-A	Nitrogen, total [as N]	MO AVG	07/31/2025	53.3	lb/d	107.66	102	Yes
001-A	Phosphorus, total [as P]	MO AVG	07/31/2025	5.5	lb/d	32.93	499	Yes
001-A	BOD, 5-day, 20 deg. C	MO AVG	08/31/2025	30	mg/L	31.	3	
001-A	Phosphorus, total [as P]	MO AVG	08/31/2025	5.5	lb/d	18.17	230	Yes
001-A	Phosphorus, total [as P]	MO AVG	09/30/2025	5.5	lb/d	14.88	171	Yes
001-A	E. coli, MTEC-MF	MX 7D GM	10/31/2025	252	#/100mL	1620.59	543	Yes

**2024**

Outfall	Parameter Desc	Statistical Base Short Desc	Monitoring Period End Date	Permit Limits		DMR VALUE	Percent Exceedence	SNC*
001-A	Nitrogen, total [as N]	MO AVG	03/31/2024	53.3	lb/d	58.21	9	
001-A	Nitrogen, total [as N]	MO AVG	04/30/2024	53.3	lb/d	77.52	45	Yes
001-A	BOD, 5-day, 20 deg. C	MO AVG	05/31/2024	30	mg/L	39.33	31	
001-A	BOD, 5-day, 20 deg. C	WKLY MAX	05/31/2024	45	mg/L	55.33	23	
001-A	Copper, total recoverable	DAILY MX	05/31/2024	17.5	ug/L	(3)	27.	54

001-A	Copper, total recoverable	MO AVG	05/31/2024	11.7	ug/L	27.	131	Yes
001-A	E. coli, MTEC-MF	MX 7D GM	05/31/2024	252	#/100mL	2022.56	703	Yes
001-A	Nitrogen, total [as N]	MO AVG	05/31/2024	53.3	lb/d	79.37	49	Yes
001-A	Phosphorus, total [as P]	MO AVG	07/31/2024	5.5	lb/d	6.1	11	

### 2023

Outfall	Parameter Desc	Statistical Base Short Desc	Monitoring Period End Date	Permit Limits		DMR VALUE	Percent Exceedence	SNC*
				Max	Min			
001-A	Copper, total recoverable	DAILY MX	02/28/2023	17.5	ug/L	(3)	3	
001-A	Copper, total recoverable	MO AVG	02/28/2023	11.7	ug/L	18.	54	Yes
001-A	Copper, total recoverable	MO AVG	03/31/2023	11.7	ug/L	16.	37	
001-A	Copper, total recoverable	MO AVG	04/30/2023	11.7	ug/L	12.	3	
001-A	Copper, total recoverable	MO AVG	06/30/2023	11.7	ug/L	13.	11	
001-A	Phosphorus, total [as P]	MO AVG	07/31/2023	5.5	lb/d	6.54	19	
001-A	Phosphorus, total [as P]	MO AVG	08/31/2023	5.5	lb/d	6.79	23	

(1) Average Monthly Lim

(2) Average Weekly Limi

(3) Average Daily Limit

(4) Instantaneous

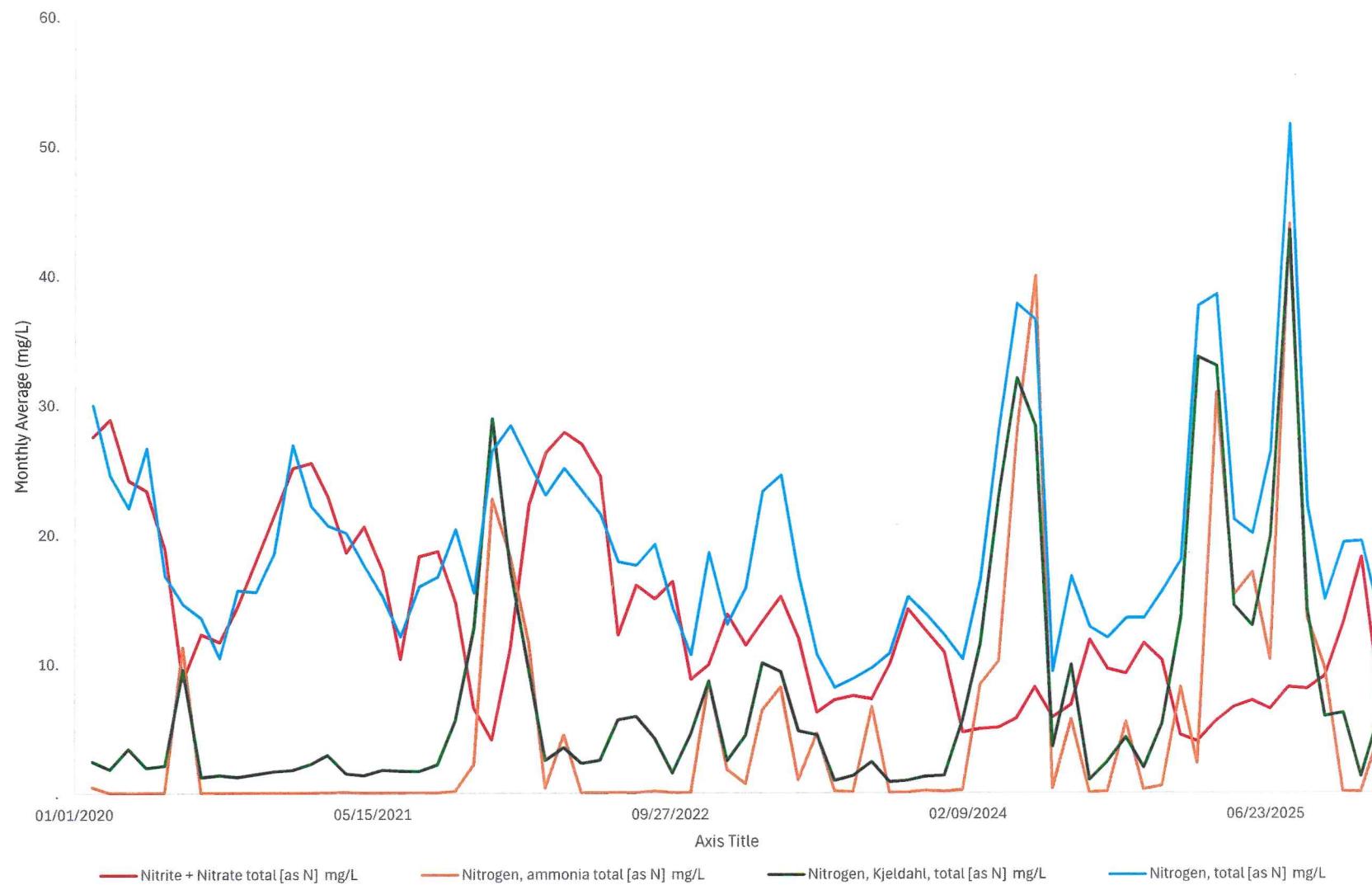
### Significant Non-compliance

(pH of 0.5 SU above or below permit limit is a Group I Pollutant SNC)

II - Group II Pollutant Exceeds Limit by 20% or more

**MT0022560**

## Attachment B: Review of Effluent Nitrogen Concentrations



Agency Use			
Permit No.:		Date Rec'd	Rec'd By
 <b>WATER PROTECTION BUREAU</b>			
<b>FORM NCR</b>	<b>Noncompliance Reporting Form</b>		
<p><i>This form is intended to fulfill the requirement for written submission of information related to any noncompliance which may endanger health or the environment, in accordance with the Twenty-four Hour Reporting requirement of MPDES permits.</i></p>			
<b>Section A - Facility or Site Information</b>			
Permit Number: MT _____			
Site Name _____			
Site Location _____			
Nearest City or Town _____		County _____	
Latitude _____		Longitude _____	
<b>Section B - Owner/Operator Information</b>			
Owner or Operator (Legal Entity) _____			
Mailing Address _____			
City, State, and Zip Code _____			
Phone Number _____ Email _____			
<b>Section C - Period of Noncompliance</b>			
Date Permittee became aware of noncompliance _____			
Has the noncompliance been reported orally to the department? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date _____			
Comments _____			
Date/Time noncompliance began _____ date _____ time _____			
Has the noncompliance ceased? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If yes, Date/Time noncompliance ceased _____ date _____ time _____			
If no, state the anticipated time the noncompliance is expected to continue			

## Section D - Description

Provide a description of the noncompliance and its cause.

Provide an explanation of the steps taken or planned to reduce, eliminate, and prevent reoccurrence of the noncompliance.

## Section E - CERTIFICATION

**Applicant Information:** This form must be completed, signed, and certified as follows:

- For a corporation, by a principal officer of at least the level of vice president;
- For a partnership or sole proprietorship, by a general partner or the proprietor, respectively; or
- For a municipality, state, federal, or other public facility, by either a principal executive officer or ranking elected official.

### All Applicants Must Complete the Following Certification:

I certify under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under my direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on my inquiry of the persons who manage the system, or those persons directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, accurate, and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information; including the possibility of a fine and imprisonment for knowing violations. [75-5-633, MCA]

A. Name (Type or Print)

B. Title (Type or Print)

C. Phone No.

D. Signature

E. Date Signed

Submit this form:

Electronically:

FACTS

<https://deq.mt.gov/Public/FACTS>

Mail:

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Water Protection Bureau

PO Box 200901

Helena, MT 59620-0901

## Attachment D

# City of East Helena

[www.easthelenamt.us](http://www.easthelenamt.us)



**Mayor**  
Kelly Harris

**Council Members**  
Don Dahl  
Wesley Feist  
Suzanne Ferguson  
Judy Leland

**City Attorney**  
Peter K. Elverum

**City Clerk/Treasurer**  
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**Deputy Clerk**  
Scott Ferguson

**Public Works Director**  
Kevin Ore

**Police Chief**  
Mike Sanders

**Fire Chief**  
Roger Campbell

**City Judge**  
Dennis Loveloss

P.O. Box 1170  
East Helena  
Montana 59635

**City Offices**  
406-227-5321

**City Fax**  
406-227-5456

**Police Admin.**  
406-227-8686

**Montana Department of Environmental Quality**

**Water Quality Division – Water Protection Bureau**

**Po Box 200901**

**Helena Mt. 59602**

**Re: Monitoring Parameters Exceedance dated May 10, 2024**

Dear Wendy,

We have checked our records and yes, the numbers reported for March 2024 DMR's were correct.

During the month of March, our operator observed that our sludge holding basin had a turnover with the increasing water temperatures. This turnover is the direct result of our high Nitrogen test result. Our Operator and City Engineers are working closely together to ensure that all functions of our plant are operating as designed.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Ore".

Kevin Ore

Public Works Director



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# City of East Helena

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**Montana Department of Environmental Quality**

**Water Quality Division – Water Protection Bureau**

**Po Box 200901**

**Helena Mt. 59602**

**Re: Monitoring Parameters Exceedance dated June 10, 2024**

Dear Wendy,

We have checked our records and yes, the numbers reported for April 2024 DMR's were correct.

During the month of March, our operator observed that our sludge holding basin had a turnover with the increasing water temperatures. This turnover is the direct result of our high Nitrogen test result. Our Operator and City Engineers are working closely together to ensure that all functions of our plant are operating as designed.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Best Regards

Kevin Ore

Public Works Director



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# City of East Helena

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January 14, 2025

Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
Water Protection Bureau  
Attn: Jeff May, Permit Writer  
1520 East 6th Avenue  
Helena, MT 59601

RE: East Helena Wastewater Treatment Plant  
2025 Annual Wastewater Report

Dear Jeff:

Per Section I.D.3 of our MPDES Permit (No. MT0022560), we are submitting this annual report to document the ongoing measures to reduce nutrients in our WWTP effluent. As discussed in our 2024 report, we continue to operate the reaction basin with the process air constantly on to reduce the amount of solids settling on the bottom. Also, we did not allow septage to be dumped at the WWTP during 2024 which has helped with the increasing load from new houses in the various subdivisions. Process performance in the spring was compromised due to a process upset in the reaction basin that lasted approximately three months. The exact cause of the episode was never determined, but it can likely be attributed to excess solids in the sludge storage basin that turned over in the spring and caused foaming and low oxygen conditions in the reaction basin via the supernatant return. The summary of 2024 effluent results contained in Attachment 1 shows that process performance was far better and more stable after May. It should be noted that there were several MPDES Permit violations during this upset period.

As mentioned in the last report, the City cleaned and shock chlorinated the tertiary sand filters and switched to aluminum sulfate (alum) from ferric chloride. The City ran another pilot in 2024 with the goal of determining the required alum dose to consistently reduce phosphorous to less than 0.5 mg/L. The City collected extra samples at the screen building (headworks influent), UV trough (secondary effluent), and metals building (filter effluent) to try and optimize the tertiary filtration facility. Attachment 2 includes results that indicate a slight reduction in phosphorous through the treatment process. However, the data is a little sporadic and not typical of what should be expected with the noted alum dose. Follow up stoichiometric calculations indicate that a higher dose of alum may be needed to remove phosphorous to lower concentrations. Additional phosphorous testing will be performed during the first quarter of 2025.

As noted previously, the upset in the reaction basin may be due to excess solids in the bottom of the sludge storage basin. For many years, the previous operations staff at the WWTP only pumped and dewatered roughly 10 tons of biosolids in the drying beds annually. This has resulted in excess solids at the bottom of the basin that undergo anaerobic conditions that turn over in the spring time resulting in odor complaints and upsets to the secondary treatment process. To reduce future impacts, the current plant operators lowered the water level in the sludge storage basin and sprayed the solids that had accumulated on the edges of the liner

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JAN 17 2025

DEQ WATER QUALITY DIVISION



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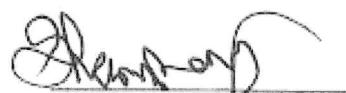
toward the hopper at the center of the basin. In addition, WWTP staff were able to get the existing rotary drum thickener (RDT) operational after years of sitting idle which allowed them to thicken the sludge prior to being placed in the drying beds. Through these efforts, the City was able to process over 93 tons of biosolids that were hauled to the landfill in the fall of 2024. Photos of these conditions and activities are included in Attachment 3.

In addition to the extensive work put into the solids handling operations, the City performed numerous maintenance projects during 2024. The City completed replacement of all six filter feed pumps this past year. Also, the City cleaned and replaced most of the membrane diffusers in the reaction basin in July of 2024. They intend to perform the same maintenance in the sludge storage basin in 2025. Lastly, the City replaced two of their positive displacement blowers that supply air for the reaction and sludge storage basins in November 2024.

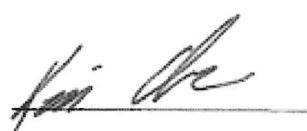
It should be noted that the City recently awarded two construction projects for improvements to the wastewater system. The first is a CIPP lining project to reduce I/I in the collection system. The second project is the construction of a new influent pump station and Headworks Building that includes new screening and grit equipment. This latter project will reduce the amount of rags and grit in the wastewater flow that can impact downstream treatment processes. Also, the City submitted a groundwater (GW) discharge permit application to the Department in August of 2024. The permit has been deemed complete and is currently under review by MDEQ. If a GW permit is obtained, the City will design and construct infiltration/percolation (I/P) cells to reduce future nutrient loads to Prickly Pear Creek. Lastly, the City's engineering consultant has started work on a WWTP facility plan that will provide alternatives and costs for future secondary treatment and solids handling upgrades to improve current nutrient removal capabilities and to accommodate the proposed future growth.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns with this annual report

Respectfully,



Shane Pursley  
City of East Helena  
WWTP Superintendent



Kevin Ore  
City of East Helena  
Director of Public Works

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JAN 17 2025

DEQ WATER QUALITY DIVISION

# City of East Helena

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**Montana Department of Environmental Quality**  
**Water Quality Division – Water Protection Bureau**  
**Po Box 200901**  
**Helena Mt. 59602**

**Re: Monitoring Parameters Exceedance dated August 8th, 2025**

Dear Wendy,

We have checked our records and yes, the numbers reported for May 2025 DMR's were correct.

During the month of May and June, our wastewater plant Clarifier has floc rake mechanical issues. Our Operator and City Engineers are working closely together to ensure that all functions of our plant are operating as designed.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Best Regards

Kevin Ore

Public Works Director



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# City of East Helena

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## Mayor

Kelly Harris

## Council Members

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Wesley Feist  
Suzanne Ferguson  
Judy Leland

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Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Water Quality Division – Water Protection Bureau

Po Box 200901

Helena Mt. 59602

Re: Monitoring Parameters Exceedance dated July 10th, 2025

Dear Wendy,

We have checked our records and yes, the numbers reported for May 2025 DMR's were correct.

During the month of May and June, our wastewater plant Clarifier has floc rake mechanical issues. Our Operator and City Engineers are working closely together to ensure that all functions of our plant are operating as designed.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Best Regards

Kevin Ore

Public Works Director



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Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
Water Quality Division – Water Protection Bureau  
Po Box 200901  
Helena Mt. 59602

**Re: Monitoring Parameters Exceedance dated September 10th, 2025**

Dear Wendy,

We have checked our records and yes, the numbers reported for July 2025 DMR's were correct.

During the month of June, our wastewater plant sludge holding basin had an upset. Our Operator and City Engineers are working closely together and the plant is coming back into compliance for the month of August and September.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Best Regards

Kevin Ore

Public Works Director



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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE  
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS  
LT. GOVERNOR

February 10, 2026

Kelly Harris, Mayor  
City of East Helena  
PO Box 1170  
East Helena, MT 59635

Re: Notice of Montana Coal Endowment Program Planning Grant Award

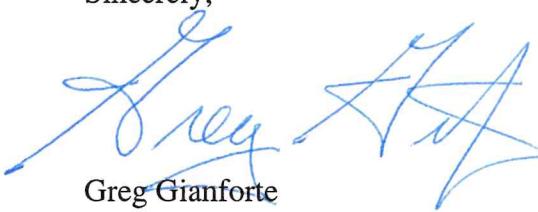
Dear Mayor Harris:

Congratulations! On behalf of the State of Montana, it is my pleasure to notify you that City of East Helena has been selected for a Montana Coal Endowment Program Planning Grant award in the amount of \$30,000 to complete a wastewater master plan update.

All awardees will be contacted directly with more information in the upcoming weeks by program staff. If you have any questions, please contact the Community MT Division at the Montana Department of Commerce at 406-841-2770 or email [doccdd@mt.gov](mailto:doccdd@mt.gov).

Again, congratulations. I wish you great success in the completion of your project.

Sincerely,

  
Greg Gianforte  
Governor



CITY OF EAST HELENA  
306 E MAIN ST / PO BOX 1170  
EAST HELENA, MT 59635  
(406) 227-5321

ORIGINAL COUNCIL MEETING DATE: 02/17/2026

Agenda item:

MBAC & MEDA East Helena Community Review Council Room Fee Waiver

From:

MBAC & MEDA

Initiated by City:  YES  NO (check one)

Department:

Planning

Presented by:

Council Member Wesley Feist

Action requested:

Approve / Deny /Table

PLEASE PROVIDE A NARRATIVE BACKGROUND OF THE PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:

Request for Fee waiver for City Hall Council Room, March 9th, 10th and 11th. The MBAC Hometeam has been working to gather information for the Community Review, sponsored by the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) and led by Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC). There will be numerous listening sessions to hear from the community about needs, gaps, benefits, opportunities, etc for the East Helena and Greater EH community.

Attachments:  YES  NO (check one)

Date submitted:

February 12, 2026

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Initial:

Approve for agenda:  YES  NO \_\_\_\_\_

Referred to Dept. Head for resolution:  YES  NO \_\_\_\_\_

Referred to \_\_\_\_\_:  YES  NO \_\_\_\_\_

Agenda requests must be submitted to East Helena City Hall by noon the Wednesday prior to the Tuesday council meeting.