

**Department of Environmental Conservation
Response to Comments**

For

**The City of Palmer Wastewater Treatment Facility
APDES Permit No. AK0022497**

Public Noticed

November 20, 2024 – December 23, 2024

FINAL

January 15, 2025



**Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program
555 Cordova Street
Anchorage, AK 99501**

1 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Facility / Permit

The City of Palmer owns, operates, and maintains the City of Palmer Wastewater Treatment Facility (Palmer WWTF), a publicly owned treatment works in Palmer, Alaska. The Palmer WWTF collects and treats domestic wastewater from the community of Palmer, which has an approximate population of 6,100. The collection system is not combined with a stormwater sewer system. The Palmer WWTF has undergone major facility changes since last permit issuance in 2006. Effluent limits for this permit are updated to meet Alaska water quality standards and reflect the changes made to the facility. The current state of the Palmer WWTF is comprised of three lagoons, a sludge drying field, three Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor (MBBR) tanks, and a set of buildings containing the headworks, clarifier systems, and ultraviolet radiation disinfection chamber. There are no major modifications planned for the upcoming permit cycle; however, the Palmer WWTF plans to alter lagoon and headworks functionality in conjunction with the relatively new MBBR system.

The Palmer WWTF continuously discharges secondary-treated domestic wastewater into the Unnamed Stream via Outfall 001A at a single discharge unit. The treated wastewater is discharged subsurface and subsequently percolates upward through the adjacent rock and sediment, and gravity feeds to the receiving water: the Unnamed Stream, a braid to the Matanuska River. The Unnamed Stream is an Alaska Department of Fish and Game documented stream denoted as 247-50-10220-2033-3020-4020 in the Anadromous Waters Catalog. The Department has not authorized mixing zones for the Palmer WWTF. All water quality standards are to be met at the point of discharge with the exception of temperature. The permit requires a temperature study as a condition to the permit and will result in temperature meeting water quality standards or compliance with regulatory standards in the permit cycle following the temperature study.

1.2 Opportunities for Public Participation

The Department of Environmental Conservation proposed to reissue an Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) wastewater discharge permit to the City of Palmer for the Palmer WWTF. To ensure public, agency, and tribal notification and opportunities for participation the Department:

- identified the permit on the annual Permit Issuance Plan posted online at: <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/wastewater/pip/>
- notified potentially affected tribes and local governments that the Department would be working on this permit via letter, fax and/or email on April 31, 2024
- posted a preliminary draft of the permit on-line for a 10-day applicant review on October 11, 2024, and notified tribes, local governments, and other agencies
- formally published public notice of the draft permit on November 20, 2024 in the Anchorage Daily News and posted the public notice on the Department's public notice web page
- sent email notifications via the APDES Program List Serve when the preliminary draft and draft permits were available for review

The Department did not receive any comments during the public notice period. The Department requested comments from the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The permittee waived the five day proposed final applicant review in writing on January 2, 2025.

1.3 Final Permit

The final permit was issued by the Department on January 15, 2025. There were no changes from the public noticed permit.