Elma Rock N Redi Mix fined for permit violations

Local News

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OLYMPIA – The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) today penalized Elma Rock N Redi Mix $24,000 for water quality permit violations at its rock mining and concrete plant facility on State Route 12 in Elma.

Ecology inspected the Grays Harbor site in January 2010 and found several sand and gravel permit violations:

•Concrete slurry pouring out of a broken PVC pipe directly onto the ground instead of piping to the treatment basin. The discharge had a highly corrosive pH (alkalinity) level of 12. An acceptable level is between 6.5 and 8.5.

•Solid concrete waste strewn on the bare ground instead of contained in protective lined areas.

•Evidence of leaks and spills from trucks, mining equipment and unused equipment on the ground at the mine. Oil sheen was seen in nearby puddles.

Permit provisions help protect groundwater and nearby Wildcat Creek. The creek provides habitat for salmon. Concrete wastes and byproducts have the potential to harm ground and surface water if improperly managed.

The facility’s gravel mine is close to Wildcat Creek. The water table is routinely exposed in the mine. Leaking oil and other fluids from equipment could get into the water table and travel through groundwater into the creek.

“Basic maintenance and inexpensive fixes would resolve many of Elma Rock N Redi’s problems with permit compliance and environmental stewardship,” said Ecology’s Garin Schrieve, regional manager for the Water Quality Program.

In February 2010, Ecology mailed Elma Rock N Redi an inspection report, requiring the company to correct the problems within 15 days or lay out a timeline for making the fixes. The company didn’t accept delivery of Ecology’s report sent by certified mail. After it was hand delivered, the company has failed to respond. As a result, Ecology is issuing this penalty and an

administrative order requiring action.

Elma Rock N Redi has a record of non-compliance with its sand and gravel permit at this facility. Ecology has issued several penalties and orders to the company, including a $9,000 penalty issued by Ecology in 2009 that has gone unpaid and was sent to collections.

Schrieve said, “This company has a poor track record when it comes to correcting problems. Failing to follow the rules, which other businesses follow, gives Elma Rock N Redi an unfair advantage over other businesses. And it puts our state’s public waters at risk.”

The company has 30 days to respond to Ecology’s penalty: paying the fine, appealing it to the Pollution Control Hearings Board or asking Ecology for reconsideration.

The money collected from water quality penalties funds grants to local environmental enhancement and restoration projects sponsored by local governments, tribes and other state agencies.