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CONTACT: Mark Shaffer, Director of Communications, (602) 771-2215 (o);
(480) 433-9551 (cell)

Town of Prescott Valley Agrees to \$675,000 Settlement to Resolve Wastewater Spills from 2010-12

PHOENIX – (April 5, 2013) – The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality announced today that the Town of Prescott Valley has agreed to a \$675,000 settlement for numerous wastewater spills due to contractor failure, including the discharge of 1.6 million gallons of wastewater into the Agua Fria River in January 2010.

In addition to paying a \$25,000 penalty, the town must complete a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) valued at \$150,000 and implement a “Sanitary Sewer Overflow Action Plan,” valued at \$500,000, to resolve at least 10 separate untreated wastewater discharges that occurred between 2010 and 2012.

The SEP includes the installation during the next year of computerized equipment at all 10 of the town’s sewage collection pump stations to link with the town’s wastewater treatment plant. It is intended to provide early detection and response to potential malfunctions or overflows before substantial environmental impacts occur.

The action plan includes the purchase of a new sewer-cleaning truck that will be used to clean the town’s 280 miles of collection system pipelines and manholes during a two-year period and distributing and airing educational materials intended to reduce flushing of items that may cause line blockages. Also, a review of emergency response procedures and surveying, inspecting and sampling of large commercial or industrial customers whose wastewater contains pollutants that may require pre-treatment prior to disposal into the town’s sewers will be performed.

“These spills could have been prevented or stopped much more rapidly had the town manned its facilities or inspected them more frequently.” said ADEQ Director Henry Darwin. “The substantial commitments made by the Town of Prescott Valley in this settlement will provide environmental benefits to Yavapai County and its citizens well into the future by reducing the frequency and volume of unplanned discharges.”

A total of more than 2 million gallons of wastewater were discharged in all the events. The largest occurred Jan. 21-22, 2010 at the town’s wastewater treatment plant, 1100 E. Treatment Plant Drive, following a series of equipment and alarm failures that occurred while the plant was unmanned.

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A second large discharge occurred from Oct. 13 - 18, 2011, when approximately 320,000 gallons of sewage overflowed from the town's Quailwood pump station, located in Dewey-Humboldt, after a failure to reset the alarm, two pumps failed, and an extended time between pump station inspections.

The settlement is subject to court approval.

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