



Maryland Department of Environment
Water and Science Administration
Compliance Program
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Inspector: Jacob Haglund
AI ID: 172623
Site Name: QLoop LLC - Sage Fiber
Facility Address: Potomac Edison Row, 39.249374 -77.483653, Fisher Avenue, Poolesville, MD 20842
County: Montgomery County
Start Date/Time: April 25, 2024 11:00 AM
End Date /Time: April 25, 2024 05:00 PM
Media Type(s): Waterway Construction, NPDES Construction Activity, Nontidal Wetlands
Contact(s):

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- Jeremy Peterson - NPL Construction Co.
- Brian Reddit - NPL Construction Co.

NPDES Construction Activity
& Waterway Construction

Permit / Approval Numbers: 20CPY06G4, 21-NT-3181
NPDES Numbers: MDRCY06G4
Inspection Reason: Follow-up (Non-Compliance), Initial Quarterly, Initial Yearly, Routine Scheduled
Site Status: Active
Compliance Status: Noncompliance
Recommended Action: Continue Routine Inspection
Evidence Collected: Photos or Videos Taken, Record Review, Visual Observation
Delivery Method: Emailed to above contacts on 05/02/2024.
Weather: Calm

Nontidal Wetlands

Permit / Approval Numbers: 21-NT-3181
NPDES Numbers: N/A
Inspection Reason: Follow-up (Non-Compliance), Initial Quarterly, Initial Yearly, Routine Scheduled
Site Status: Active
Compliance Status: Compliance
Recommended Action: Continue Routine Inspection
Evidence Collected: Photos or Videos Taken, Record Review, Visual Observation
Delivery Method: Emailed to above contacts on 05/02/2024.
Weather: Calm

Inspection Findings:

An announced follow-up noncompliance inspection and meeting was done for the Sage Telecommunication Fiber Network project. The site has 20-CP permit coverage, but NPL Construction Co. does not have coverage. NPDES self-inspections appeared to be well documented and up to date. Segments 2 and 16 were inspected. Two property owners that have land that borders

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and/or is directly impacted by Segment 2 met with me on-site to discuss issues regarding the frac-outs off of Mouth of Monocacy Road. Another property owner met with me at Segment 16 to discuss impacts associated with frac-outs and land disturbance near and/or on his agricultural use property.

This project has gained authorization to bore under the Monocacy River during the designated use stream closure period. Boring has commenced again after the drilling under the Monocacy operation had to cease due to a stop-work order issued by the Frederick County Government. During the time of today's inspection, the water downstream of the pump around discharge location was found to be turbid because the pump used for the pump around practice appeared to be discharging water in a vertical direction, therefore once the water landed in the waterway it was causing the stream substrate to become dislodged and suspended. Once the pump was fixed by one of the representatives onsite the downstream water cleared up. The waterway directly below the frac-outs was clear. Sediment/bentonite deposition was evident from the several frac-out locations downstream to the mouth of the waterway.

There were 6 frac-out (inadvertent returns) locations that were noticed downslope of the active drilling operation on the east side of the Monocacy River. One frac-out was within a previously bored hole that was later abandoned. Three frac-outs are within the channel of a waterway (UT to Monocacy River, use class I-P waters), and the discharge points are located underwater. There are two frac-outs on the western side of the same waterway, these frac-outs are on dry land. All of the frac-outs are contained to one portion of the stream (UT to Monocacy River, use class I-P waters), which was blocked off with sandbags and impermeable fabric. The frac-outs are not all individually contained; some of the frac-outs that lack full individual containment flow into the portion of the stream (UT to Monocacy River, use class I-P waters) that is blocked off and where pumps are being used to vacuum out the deposited sediment (bentonite). Many areas of sediment (bentonite) pollution were found in the Waters of the State.

Two frac-out locations were inspected at Segment 16. These frac-outs were found to be no longer discharging; both areas appeared to be cleaned up, other than one frac-out location that appeared to have caused a crack/fracture noticed on the ground surface and lacked stabilization. Segment 16 had no other non-compliance issues found during the time of the inspection.

The following violations were **corrected** since the last MDE inspection of 04/10/2024:

- 1) Matting was crushed in some locations and/or sinking. Waterways and wetlands that were crossed lacked adequate controls at the edge of the matting and road. Sediment pollution was observed and remains in a position likely to pollute the Waters of the State.
- 2) There are disturbed areas outside of the LOD lacking stabilization. These areas are around where the frac-outs were noticed. The downslope areas of the drilling operation (outside of the LOD) lacked sediment and erosion controls.

The following violations were noticed during the time of the inspection and/or continue to be present since the last MDE inspections on 04/04/2024 and 04/10/2024. The corrective actions are listed below as well.

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This site is in violation of Environmental Article Titles 4, 5 & 9. The following violations// corrective actions should be addressed immediately:

- 1) There were several frac-outs found outside of the LOD and it was evident that sediment (bentonite) pollution had entered the Waters of the State. Two of these frac-outs have not been reported to MDE by a representative for QLoop but rather discovered on this date of inspection. One of the undocumented frac-outs was found by the documented (in the 04/10/2024 MDE inspection report) frac-out on the western side of the waterway (UT to Monocacy River, use class I-P waters), on dry land. The other undocumented frac-out was within the stream (UT to Monocacy River, use class I-P waters) channel just downstream of the documented (in the 04/10/2024 MDE inspection report) frac-out that was contained with sandbags around the discharge point. Sediment (bentonite) pollution also remains in a position likely to pollute the Waters of the State. // Deposited sediment (bentonite) should be pumped out where it is deposited behind sandbags or filter logs. Each frac-out location should be separately contained, isolated with controls, and pumped out. All deposited sediment (bentonite) downstream of the frac-out locations should be pumped out the of waterway (UT to Monocacy River, use class I-P waters). Stabilize the stream bank with seed (native floodplain mix) and straw once all emergency work has been completed around the impacted waterway and floodplain. Ensure that the outfall pipe for the pump around is secured so that the pipe end will not vibrate and cause disturbance on the stream bank.
- 2) A 24-hour notification was not given to MDE when the frac-out events were first noticed. The Frac-out Contingency Plan was not followed. // The Frac-out Contingency Plan should be utilized and followed in the event of a frac-out and/or a pressure decrease when drilling. Ensure the Contingency Plan is followed when remediating the issues of a frac-out and when notifying MDE. MDE should be notified in 24 hours when a frac-out has been found. There should always be personnel inspecting the surrounding area for frac-outs when the drilling operation is active.
- 3) There were cracks/fractures in the ground, noticed at the frac-out location in Segment 16 (located at roughly 39.3158900, -77.4996900). Sediment (bentonite) pollution has occurred in the Waters of the State but was contained during the time of the inspection. // Backfill the cracks/fractures where there was a frac-out with clean soil. Ensure areas outside of the LOD are stabilized on the day of the disturbance. These areas should be stabilized with seed (native floodplain mix) and straw.
- 4) NPL Construction Co. does not have 20-CP coverage. NPL has operational control over the sediment and erosion controls. // Ensure that NPL Construction Co. applies for 20-CP (Construction Stormwater Permit) coverage. Alternatively, Telcon may transfer its coverage to NPL.
- 5) Vehicles have been pulling in and out of unapproved areas along Segment 1, and some dirt and sediment tracking were noticed on the road. // Vehicles should park at approved locations and access Segment 1 at approved locations. Access points should be added to the approved plan for Segment 1 and approved by the Soil Conservation District. These access points should have SCEs and/or matting that are installed and maintained as per the 2011 Maryland Standards and Specifications for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control. All sediment tracking should be cleaned up from the public roads and SCE should be maintained and installed.

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- 6) The access route south of Whites Ferry Rd. appears to have been made and not authorized and shown on the approved plan. // Access routes should be shown on the approved plan and authorized.
- 7) A waterway (an untitled tributary to the Potomac River, designated use class I Waters) has been crossed and forded without authorization. Matting and stone materials have been installed within the floodplain. The location of the waterway crossing is on Noland's-Ferry Road (located at roughly 39.2432419, -77.4642022). // Cease crossing immediately and obtain authorization to install a suitable authorized crossing. Impacts associated with the stream crossing and the flood plain should be authorized and shown within the LOD and on an approved plan set. A pump around practice and/or a mountable berm could be utilized to divert the waterway. Ensure all controls are installed as per the 2011 Maryland Standards and Specifications for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.

Routine inspections will occur for this site. Please contact me when corrective actions have been implemented as described above. You can reach me at 443-571-1589 or by email which is listed below.

Inspector:  _____ 04/30/2024 Received by: _____
Jacob Haglund /Date _____ Signature/Date
jacob.haglund@maryland.gov _____
301-689-1486 _____
Print Name