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Action Report: Landowner wants to know if the MDEQ is doing its job

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By AJ Giardina **CONNECT**

SAUCIER, MS (WLOX) - Bobby Tubre is the grandson of Don Williams, who owns property located next to the Lakeview RV Park off Highway 15.

Tubre says the new owner of the RV Park, Greg Williams, no relation to Don Williams, started bringing in truckloads of debris after he cleared some property.

"He was clearing almost 8,000 square feet, encroached on my family property," Tubre said.

Tubre said he was more concerned about sewer issues with the RV Park, and he filed a complaint with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality in April of 2013.

"Suppose to have a spray field to where it doesn't runoff, and I've had samples taken of runoff that's going across our property and onto the National Forest and also DEQ had samples," said Tubre.

On June 23, 2014, MDEQ test results showed fecal matter present and indicated it was greater than 2,000 colonies per hundred milliliter and too numerous to count.

I spoke with the MDEQ inspector and he said he stands by his findings. He told me once he makes his findings, he sends them up the chain of command, who will make the final decision.

Andrew Whitehurst, with the environmental group Gulf Restoration Network, is the Water Policy Director. He said he also inspected the site off Highway 15, and submitted his findings to MDEQ.

"All three samples were over 2,000 colonies per hundred milliliter, which is over the permit limit of a big city sewer plant. They have a 2,000 limit for the winter so it was over, way over the winter limit. It was too numerous to count," said Whitehurst.

He says there's overwhelming evidence that there is a problem.

"It remains an open question right now why they're not taking more action on this," stated Whitehurst. "It's a no discharge permit, and it was clearly discharging, so it's violating the very terms of the permit."

Greg Williams didn't want to be interviewed on camera, but told me that he has followed all regulations and has evidence to back it up. His attorney, Laurie Paulk, says there is no sewer issue.

MDEQ Communications Director Robbie Wilbur stated in an email to me, "That the MDEQ staff has worked consistently and diligently for several years to respond to complaints and resolve issues at the site."

Tubre wants MDEQ to put out a public notice so hunters or anyone else who goes into this area of the DeSoto National Forest is made aware that they could come in contact with the sewer problem.

MDEQ September and October reports show fecal colonies of over 2,000 in section four of the sampling location, but MDEQ said that no flow was occurring at the time of the sampling. It went on to say sites three and four are small intermittent streams that only flow during or after rainfall events.

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