

Crackdown On Swim Pool Discharges

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A crackdown on swimming pool owners who may be polluting county streams and their tributaries has been launched by the county health department.

Department inspectors have been asked to check public and private pools and to report by Dec. 1 arrangements made by owners for disposition of backwash waste discharge.

Owners will have a problem if the discharge is made directly into a stream or its tributaries, according to L. Raynor Talley, county environmental health officer.

"It is the policy of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, the State Department of Public Health and the county Health Department

that there shall be no direct discharge of wastes into streams or their tributaries throughout the county," Talley said Tuesday.

Talley said that any pool owner who discharges backwash water directly into a stream or tributary is in violation of the policies of the three governmental agencies and will be required to take corrective action.

"By direct discharge," Talley said, "is meant either piping waste water into a stream or tributary or allowing the waste water to enter a stream or tributary via surface flow."

Disposal of backwash water should be into a sewer, if such is available, or by means of a subsurface land disposal system, Talley said.

"There is no need for a septic tank," he elaborated. "A cribbed or bricked sump is acceptable. Rather than designing for an adequate surface area for wastewater infiltration, the prime criterion is to design a sump of adequate capacity to hold the volume of backwash water. In some cases where diatomaceous earth is used, it may be feasible to install a settling basin or filtering system to remove the suspended material."

Already in question is wastewater disposal from Forest Pool in Boulder Creek, which was leased to San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District last summer for the recreation department's aquatics program.

County health authorities contend that backwash waste from

Forest Pool should not be discharged into Boulder Creek or any other tributary leading to the San Lorenzo River, which is a source of the City of Santa Cruz water supply.

The pool is owned by Harold Hilton Jr., but has been operated by the school district's recreation department the past two years.

Paul Hartman, the district's recreation director, has been told that a violation exists and the health department has recommended installation of a sump on the site to receive the backwash water.

"Since the sump would receive a large volume of water on an intermittent basis, the sump need not be filled with rock, as is required for con-

ventional septic tank systems," Talley said in a letter to Hartman. "A cribbed sump with a sufficient protective top would be suitable."

"I am sure that enforcement of the anti-pollution policy will cause a number of persons expense and inconvenience," Talley said in commenting on the crackdown. "But it is essential that we eliminate waste discharges into streams and their tributaries wherever possible in order to maintain reasonable water quality. I have therefore instructed district sanitarians to investigate the swimming pools under their jurisdiction to assure that there will not be discharges of pool waste into the creeks and streams of Santa Cruz county."