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## **Environment Department Takes Action against City of Rio Rancho to Clean Up Sludge in Ponds at Chamisa Hills Golf and Country Club**

*Permit with State Reflects City of Rio Rancho Responsible for Wastewater Discharged at Club*

(Santa Fe, NM) The New Mexico Environment Department issued a notice of violation to the City of Rio Rancho today for violating its discharge permit at Chamisa Hills Golf and Country Club where ducks have died from avian botulism in ponds. The notice alleges that the city's operations related to discharges of treated wastewater to the ponds violate the city's permit and state laws.

"This issue has dragged on far too long and must be resolved now," said New Mexico Environment Department Deputy Secretary Jon Goldstein. "Requiring the city to take responsibility for effluent discharges at the country club that occurred under its permit is only fair. The city asked for this responsibility in its permit application and we are holding them to it."

The discharges at the golf course have been permitted by the state since 1982. The city assumed responsibility for that permit in 1995.

The permit requires that the city inspect effluent storage lagoons at the golf course for integrity and if needed, submit a corrective action plan to the department. The city has not fulfilled that responsibility.

The department's notice gives the city 10 days to comply with requirements. Those requirements include submitting a plan to clean sludge in ponds, removing vegetation that harms liners in ponds and investigating the integrity of liners. Once the city fulfills its responsibilities under the permit, the department will transfer future operational responsibilities at Chamisa Hills to the country club.

The department has been involved in this issue for the past two years because of environmental issues and concerns of citizens. The department also formed a task force composed of city and state governments, homeowners' associations and residents to address problems with the ponds.

For more information, call Marissa Stone at (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475.

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