



Memorandum

To: Shauna Soeth, Code Compliance Investigator

From: Adam Molofsky, REHS, Division of Environmental Health

Date: October 23, 2024

Subject: APN 515-172-010; 473 Quarry Rd., Trinidad CA

On October 3, 2024, staff from Code Enforcement Unit (CEU), Planning and Building Department, and Division of Environmental Health (DEH) participated in an inspection conducted under warrant (SW2400619) at the above-mentioned parcel. It is the role of DEH staff to identify violations related to sanitation deficiencies and conditions with potential to impact public health or the environment. The inspection was a result of Board of Supervisor direction to provide an updated assessment of conditions compared to previous efforts to document violations and precipitate compliance (see DEH letter to Charles Garth dated August 31, 2017). Note that observations made by DEH staff during previous efforts focused on Substandard Housing conditions which have since been reassigned to the CEU. Below are observations made by DEH staff with associated violations and remedies.

Sewage and Wastewater

Three privies were observed with evidence of recent use. Two of the privies emptied into barrels and one had unknown disposal. An estimated two yards of domestic septage is piled on the ground under a tarp, adjacent to the privy identified as #91 on the site map attached.

A portable chemical toilet, with signs of recent use, was located along a central access road.

Two water toilets were observed connected to subsurface disposal systems of unknown design and capacity. A kitchen sink was observed discharging sewage to a subsurface location of unknown design and capacity. Sewage, from a failed joint in two-inch drainage pipe behind two-level building (#88 on attached site plan), discharged to surface. Multiple outdoor sinks and showers were observed to discharge wastewater into buckets and onto the ground surface. DEH has no records of approved permits for any type of onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) on this parcel.

These conditions are potentially injurious to public health and the environment, are in violation of the Humboldt County (HCC) and California Health and Safety (HSC) Codes, shown below, and constitute a public nuisance per HCC §612-5 Declaration of Public Nuisance.

HSC §5411 No person shall discharge sewage or other waste, or the effluent of treated sewage or other waste, in any manner which will result in contamination, pollution or a nuisance.

HCC §611-3 Approved Sewage Disposal System required

HCC §612-2 Permit Required

HCC §613-4 Prohibition of Holding Tanks; Portable Toilets; Vault Toilet

HCC §641-1 Prohibition against Pollution of Waters.

Remedies:

Use of the privies should be discontinued. The structures erected over the pits should be dismantled and discarded in a sanitary landfill. Fill pits with compacted soil, mounded, and contoured so that water drains away and soil settles to grade. Septage from barrels and under tarp shall be transported, by a DEH permitted septage hauler, to a municipal wastewater treatment facility or disposed of in a sanitary manner approved by DEH. Discontinue discharge from outdoor sinks, showers, and leaky faulty plumbing.

Application can be made to the Planning and Building Department for a permit to construct a sewage disposal and/or graywater systems, approved by DEH, concurrent with application to permit structures per HCC §612-2(e).

Water sources

During the inspection, multiple water sources were identified.

Two water wells were identified. A dug well, covered by a concrete riser and lid, adjacent to the blue round structure (#99 on attached site plan), does not appear to be connected to the water system. A drilled well (#105 on attached site plan) was observed with an open wellhead, allowing contaminants to enter the casing, connected to distribution plumbing. There are no permits for well construction within the DEH file. It is a violation of HCC §631-3 to construct a well without an approved permit from DEH.

There is a complex web of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) water supply pipes weaving at, or near, the ground surface between the structures and a variety of water tanks including multiple plastic barrels and 330-gallon plastic bins. Potential for cross connection of drinking water supply with irrigation water systems appears high.

Many of above ground water supply lines are in close proximity to one of the pit privies, increasing the risk of fecal contamination of the water system. Though bacteriological samples were not taken at the time of investigation, general sanitation and potability of these water supplies is questionable. Serving the 33 people reportedly living on the property, the water system meets the definition of a Public Water System per HSC §116275 known as the California Safe Drinking Water Act.

Remedy:

Owner shall provide documentation of county approval of the wells or demonstrate the existence of each well prior to enactment of permit requirement in ordinance 897, December 21, 1972.

Regardless of legal history, the top of the drilled well casing shall be provided with a cover that is secured by a lock or by other means to prevent its removal without the use of equipment or tools, to prevent unauthorized access, prevent a safety hazard to humans and animals, and to prevent contamination of the well and connected groundwater. A pump motor, angle drive, or other surface feature of a well, when in compliance with the above provisions, shall suffice as a cover.

Obtain permits from Humboldt County Building Department for installation of potable water supply and distribution system from well to the permitted structure.

Disinfect the well to be used for potable water source.

Once the potable water supply and distribution system is installed, the water at the kitchen sink tap of the permitted structure should be sampled for total coliform and E coli/Fecal coliform bacteria. Confirmation of the presence of coliform bacteria or E coli will require further assessment of the water source and distribution system.

Clarify the use and permit history of the dug well.

If a well is abandoned (no longer intended to be used or not used within one year), additional requirements apply including well destruction permits.

As the population served by the onsite water system exceeds thresholds for regulation as a Public Water System a referral to the California State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water to regulate the system was completed.



Photos



Disconnected 2" drain pipe behind #92



Water storage (~330gal) and HDPE pipe for irrigation or potable system



Toilet paper, wastewater and HDPE water distribution pipe



Surface discharge of unknown water source



Effluent discharge from privy #91



Domestic septage covered by tarp near privy #91



Septage and privy #91 20-25' to drainage swale



2" discharge pipe to subsurface disposal centrally located wood dwelling



sink discharge to bucket near #93



Outdoor tub to surface discharge near #93



Miscellaneous water storage for irrigation or potable system



Dug well near structure #99



Privy near #107



Water well #105



Water well #105



Privy #103



Privy #103