

opportunity to submit comments in response to public notices nor do the state's public notice procedures include providing public notices by mail to all interested parties, as required by the regulations. In order to partially address this concern, the state has implemented an internet based public notice system that makes all public notices available on the MDEQ website. EPA and MDEQ will be discussing additional corrective actions that need to be taken to ensure that all interested persons receive timely public notices of projects requiring CWA section 404 permits.

As part of our review of MDEQ's enforcement efforts, citizen complaint files were reviewed in all of the MDEQ district offices. Based on the annual reports prepared by MDEQ, an average of 800 citizen complaints are investigated each year. The program review found that district offices make a concerted effort to address complaints. Generally, the review found complaints were routinely followed with site inspections, which usually were made within two weeks of receipt of the complaint.

An opportunity for public participation in the State's enforcement process is required by federal law, and MDEQ has agreed to implement procedures to comply with the requirements of 40 CFR 233.41(e)(2).

This review concludes that MDEQ has maintained a satisfactory enforcement program. MDEQ has designed the enforcement program to identify unpermitted activities and initiates enforcement responses in a timely manner. Overall, Michigan's enforcement program achieves appropriate injunctive relief through wetlands restoration and wetland mitigation and obtains adequate penalties. The review of MDEQ's use of administrative consent agreements found that the agreements effectively resolved the violations at issue and resulted in additional environmental restoration and conservation of wetland.

Although there is no legal requirement that EPA receive public comment regarding the preliminary determinations of its informal review of Michigan's section 404 program, EPA has decided to accept such public comments for a period of sixty (60) days from the publication date of this notice. EPA seeks public comment on its preliminary determination that formal withdrawal proceedings not be commenced, as well as EPA's detailed findings regarding MDEQ's administration of the permitting and enforcement program and the adequacy of Michigan's legal authorities. If public comments received by EPA indicate

significant public interest in the holding of a public hearing, EPA may decide to hold such a hearing.

Dated: December 18, 2002.

Bharat Mathur,

Acting Regional Administrator, Region 5.

[FR Doc. 03-285 Filed 1-6-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-7436-5]

Issuance of a General Permit to the National Science Foundation for the Ocean Disposal of Man-Made Ice Piers From its Base at McMurdo Sound on Antarctica

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Proposed permit.

SUMMARY: EPA is today proposing to issue a general permit under sections 102(a) and 104(c) of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA) to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for the disposal at sea of man-made ice piers from its base at McMurdo Sound on Antarctica. The NSF is the agency of the United States Government responsible for oversight of the United States Antarctic Program. The NSF currently operates three major bases in Antarctica: McMurdo Station on Ross Island, adjacent to McMurdo Sound; Palmer Station, near the western terminus of the Antarctic Peninsula; and Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, at the geographic South Pole. McMurdo Station is the largest of the three stations, and serves as the primary logistics base for Antarctica. In order to unload supplies at McMurdo Station, ships dock at an ice pier at McMurdo Station; this man-made pier has a normal life span of three to five years. At the end of its useful life, all transportable equipment, materials, and debris are removed, the pier is cast loose from its moorings at the base and towed out to McMurdo Sound for disposal, where it melts naturally. Issuance of this general permit is necessary because the pier must be towed out to sea for disposal at the end of its useful life. This proposed general permit is intended to protect the marine environment by setting forth specific permit terms and conditions, including operating conditions during use of the pier and clean-up, with which the NSF must comply before the disposal of such ice piers would take place.

DATES: Written comments on this proposed general permit will be

accepted until February 6, 2003. All comments must be received or postmarked by midnight of February 6, 2003, or must be delivered by hand by the close of business of that date to the address specified below.

ADDRESSES: This proposed permit is identified as Docket No. OW-2002-0048. Please send an original and three copies of your comments and enclosures (including references) to the "OW-2002-0048, Comment Clerk", Water Docket (MC 4101T), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20460. Hand deliveries should be delivered to: EPA Water Docket, 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room B-135, Washington, DC 20004. Electronic mail comments will be accepted at the e-mail address, ow-docket@epamail.epa.gov, and must be received by close of business of the date specified above. Electronic comments must be submitted as an ASCII, WP 5.1, WP 6.1, or WP 8 file, avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Electronic comments must be identified by Docket Number OW-2002-0048. Comments and data will also be accepted on discs in ASCII, WP 5.1, WP 6.1, or WP 8 file format. Electronic comments on this notice may be filed online at many Federal Depository Libraries. To ensure that the Agency can read, understand, and therefore properly respond to comments, commenters should cite the paragraph(s) or sections in the proposed permit to which each comment refers. Commenters should use a separate paragraph for each issue discussed. Commenters should submit any references cited in their comments. Commenters who want the Agency to acknowledge receipt of their comments should include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. No comments submitted by facsimile transmission (fax) will be accepted. The record for this proposed permit has been established, as noted above, as Docket No. OW-2002-0048, and includes printed, paper versions of electronic comments. The record is available for inspection from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays, at the Water Docket, 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room B-135, Washington, DC 20004. For access to docket materials, call (202) 566-2426, to schedule an appointment.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Redford, Chief, Marine Pollution Control Branch, Oceans and Coastal Protection Division (4504T), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.,