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the river level is low, and simply average it out later. Sometimes 5 percent of the river flow is over 100 percent of the Laguna capacity, yet under the new permit the wastewater can be discharged, regardless. Already, from October of last year to April of this year, Santa Rosa has discharged 3.5 billion gallons of wastewater into the Laguna.

According to attorney Silver, permits typically allow a discharge capacity that is around 1 percent of the total volume of the receiving waters—that is, the water that is going to get the discharge. In Sonoma County, the receiving waters are the Laguna. Under Santa Rosa's permits, the city can discharge not 1 percent of the Laguna, but 5 percent of the river flow 15 miles downstream. In essence, the permits allow Santa Rosa to flood the Laguna, scouring up anything and everything that has settled on the Laguna bottom—mostly a lot of dairy runoff.

One member of Trout Unlimited, a fisheries advocacy group, suggested the estuary name be changed to "Laguna de Sewage." Another Trout Unlimited member pointed out that the discharge hits the Russian River just above the county's new Steelhead Park. "Perhaps," he quipped, "the steelhead 'park' themselves" when they "get a whiff of what Santa Rosa discharges out of the Laguna and into the river."

The city's new discharge permits also eliminate the previously established requirement that the river be flowing at a minimum of 1,000 cubic feet per second before discharge is permissible. In other words, at low flow periods, the Laguna may hold more discharge than river water.

According to Santa Rosa City Manager Ken Blackman, the wastewater that comes out of the treatment plant is cleaner than the surface water of the river. Blackman told the *Sun* that he was not aware of any plume entering the Russian River at Mirabel Park Resort.

"I haven't seen anything in the papers," said Blackman, who has been city manager for 30 years. The plume, which has reportedly been observed at Mirabel on and off for about 13 years, has never come to his attention, Blackman explained. After hearing the plume described in detail, Blackman said, "I would assume there was some kind of construction going on" along the creek that was causing the sedimentation. Blackman pointed out that perhaps someone would report the construction crew and have them cited, since sediment pollution is "a criminal offense."

In response to the suggestion that the discharge into the Russian River was too high, Blackman said that discharge was needed "for recreational purposes." Blackman will be retiring this year and said he plans to "go fishing a lot." His choice of fishing spots are not local ones, but sites in Alaska and Montana. Not seeming to be aware of any irony in his statement, Blackman said he hopes Alaska, a good source of plentiful fishing, "always stays that way," because once you've fished there it "really spoils you for fishing other places."

When Steve Jackson, at King's Sporting and Tackle, heard of Blackman's plans, he said, "I'm sure he won't be fishing in Guerneville when he retires."

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