

- e. Detecting and monitoring any related plumes of contamination underground
9. Require Valdosta to continue frequent, regular, water quality monitoring downstream at least as far as the state line, preferably weekly, at least monthly.
 - a. Including require Valdosta to resume water quality testing at Horn Bridge at the Georgia-Florida line.
 - b. Including require Valdosta to publish the results of its own testing as soon as they are available, on its own website, and with Georgia Adopt-A-Stream.
10. Require Valdosta to fund an educational campaign via a vehicle such as the Florida Counties Rivers Task Force to inform the public when the rivers are clean, when they are not, and where. Valdosta continues to fail to comprehend that every spill affects the entire Suwannee River Basin, adding to the stigma that causes people to stay off the rivers, even upstream, which is why even Columbia and Alachua Counties, Florida, are part of that Task Force. To reduce that stigma, far fewer and smaller wastewater spills from Valdosta would help, along with all the other numbered items above. However, much damage has already been done, and ongoing monitoring and public education is also needed.

There is also a growing sentiment downstream for legal action against Valdosta. WWALS member Deanna Mericle, who lives on the Withlacoochee River in Hamilton County, Florida, articulates that sentiment:

“As a person living downstream on the Withlacoochee River in Florida, I feel shat upon by Valdosta over and over. I cannot drink the water from my well. I worry about the health of the river itself and the animals that live in it and drink from it. We in Florida were patient while Valdosta was improving their wastewater plant, which apparently was not adequate since we still have spills when it rains heavily. But this time it was not a rain event. It was gross negligence. I am out of patience. I believe it is time for legal action.”

Back in March 2015, WWALS helped organize a meeting with the City of Valdosta and interested parties, including Deanna and Chris Mericle. <http://wwals.net/?p=7061>

At that time, four and a half years ago, we thought that lawsuits against Valdosta would merely take away from funds needed to fix the problems. Yet tens of millions of dollars later with two new Wastewater Treatment Plants and a Force Main system, one of that system’s Pump Stations failed when there was not even any rain, causing Valdosta’s record-largest raw sewage spill. We have had to think again, and at this time it appears that it may take lawsuits to get Valdosta to think again.

GA-EPD already has the equivalent of a lawsuit against Valdosta, in the form of a [Consent Order](#). Others may file other legal actions soon.

However, GA-EPD can require all of the numbered items above. For some of them, GA-EPD is the only organisation that can require them.

Thank you for your consideration.

For the rivers and the aquifer,

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