

INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Entry Date/Time	05/14/2025 09:00 AM (ET)	Announced: Yes	
Inspection Exit Date/Time	05/14/2025 10:48 AM (ET)	Access: Granted	
Weather			
Media	Water		
Statute(s)/Program(s)	Clean Water Act, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitting program (NPDES), Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)		
Type of Inspection	Compliance Evaluation Inspection (CEI)		
Permittee Name	Saline Valley Farms WWTP		
Facility or Site Name	Saline Valley Farms WWTP		
Facility/Site Physical Address	10496 River Edge Trail		
City, State, Zip Code	Saline, MI 48176		
County/Borough/Parish			
Facility GPS Coordinates	42.128824, -83.769458		
Mailing Address (If different)			
City, State, Zip Code			
FRS ID	110024404367		
Permit Number(s) (If Applicable)	MI0057012		
SIC and/or NAICS	4952		
Lead Inspector:			
Joseph Forth	JOSEPH FORTH	Digitally signed by JOSEPH FORTH Date: 2025.12.12 11:14:09 -06'00'	
	EPA REGION 5	Forth.Joseph@epa.gov	(312) 886-7275
Supervisor Review:			
Molly Smith	MOLLY SMITH	Digitally signed by MOLLY SMITH Date: 2025.12.12 11:23:34 -06'00'	
	EPA REGION 5	Smith.Molly@epa.gov	(312) 353-8773

SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

Site Entry and Inspection Objectives

EPA REGION 5 Lead Inspector, Joseph Forth, arrived at the Saline Valley Farms WWTP (the “Site” or “Facility”), located at 10496 River Edge Trail, Saline, MI 48176, at 09:00 AM (ET) on 05/14/2025 for an announced inspection. EPA REGION 5 Lead Inspector presented credentials to Anthony Dowson and informed them that this was an EPA REGION 5 inspection to investigate elements of the Clean Water Act (CWA), as authorized by

CWA Section 308 and implementing regulations. This report is based on information supplied by Saline Valley Farms WWTP representatives, direct observations made by the EPA REGION 5 inspectors, records and reports maintained by the permittee and other information including: photographs taken by EPA REGION 5 inspectors, physical evidence collected by the EPA REGION 5 inspectors, measurements taken by EPA REGION 5 inspectors, verbal or written statements made by information supplied by Saline Valley Farms WWTP representatives during or subsequent to the on-site Inspection, and materials, processes, data, photographs, or documents shown, demonstrated, or submitted to the EPA REGION 5 inspectors by Saline Valley Farms WWTP representatives during or subsequent to the on-site Inspection. In addition, information gathered prior to or subsequent to the Inspection from a review of EPA, State, and/or public records may be included in this report.

Attendees

Organization	Attendee Name	Title	Present in Opening Conf.	Present in Closing Conf.
EPA REGION 5	Joseph Forth	Lead Inspector	Yes	Yes
EPA REGION 5	Elizabeth DeMilt	Inspector	Yes	Yes
Highland Treatment, Inc.	Anthony Dowson	Certified Operator, Operator in Charge	Yes	Yes
Highland Treatment, Inc.	Matt Horn	Operator	Yes	Yes
Michigan EGLE	Bridgett Carver	NPDES Compliance Staff	Yes	Yes
Michigan EGLE	Olivia Hagan	NPDES Compliance Staff - Part 41 Engineer	Yes	Yes

Facility/Site Description

EPA REGION 5 lead inspector confirmed the following facility information:

Saline Valley Farms WWTP is a municipal wastewater treatment facility. The Plant was built in 2000 with upgrades installed in 2015. An operator is usually onsite 5 days a week, 3 hours a day. Anthony Dowson has a Municipal Class A certification, as well as some industrial wastewater certifications. Matt Horn does not currently have an operator certification but is in the process of receiving certification. The Facility has an average daily flow of 20,000 gallons per day (gpd) and a max daily flow of 30,000 gpd. The max designed flow of the Facility is 160,000 gpd. The Facility does not accept any industrial discharge, only residential sanitary discharge. The collection system separates sanitary and storm sewers.

The wastewater treatment process begins with influent, which is fed by grinder pumps that convey the wastewater into the system. The flow then enters one of two equalization tanks, each approximately 18,000 gallons. The wastewater is pumped to one of the extended aeration basins, liquid alum is added to help treat phosphorous. After aeration, the flow enters final clarification (installed 8 years ago). The wastewater stream then goes through the ultraviolet (UV) building for disinfection. After disinfection, the wastewater flow is measured and conveyed via gravity to the final discharge point (Outfall 001A) at the Saline River.

The Plant treats sludge with 2 large digesters. The Facility does not often need to haul out sludge, but when it does, the sludge is sent to a landfill in Tennessee County, Michigan.

Samples are taken before and after disinfection. The Facility analyzes Dissolved Oxygen (DO) and pH onsite. At the time of inspection, the Facility was not recording the time when pH and DO samples were analyzed to

ensure that the time sensitive sampling requirements are met. Carbonaceous Biological Oxygen Demand (CBOD), phosphorous, ammonia, total suspended solids (TSS) are analyzed by Highland Treatment Laboratories offsite.

During the inspection, the Facility shared information about recent updates and upgrades to the Facility. These include: a third blower, fine air diffusers, Ross line increased diameter. According to Anthony Dowson, the 2023 self-reported nitrogen effluent limit exceedances were related to not being able to “waste enough and get the waste liquor down”. In response, the Facility replaced Blower #2. According to Anthony Dowson, the 2024 self-reported phosphorous effluent limit exceedances were caused by the liquid alum line freezing. The issue was addressed by changing the location where the alum is added and increasing the amount of liquid alum added. Between November 13, 2023, and November 17, 2023, the automatic continuous sampler malfunctioned, and the staff did not separately take the permit required grab samples.

The Facility is currently in the renewal process for a new NPDES permit with the State of Michigan.

Facility/Site Information

Location(s)

Location/Area/Sub-area	Description
WWTP	All processes and equipment related to the wastewater treatment system.

SECTION II – OBSERVATIONS

Location: WWTP		
Observation #: JF1-OB-001	Date: 05/14/2025	Weather:
Water from the sludge digesters is decanted to the clarifiers. During the inspection, EPA staff noted there was stagnant water standing in the aeration basin not being currently utilized. Anthony Dowson stated that the stagnant water in the aeration basin, not currently being utilized, is kept at that level to protect the diffusers to UV deterioration. Additionally, at the time of inspection, the sample refrigerator was at 5 degrees Celsius.		
Photo(s) 1. IMG_0489.JPG 2. IMG_0488.JPG 3. IMG_0485.JPG 4. IMG_0487.JPG 5. IMG_0483.JPG 6. IMG_0486.JPG 7. IMG_0490.JPG 8. IMG_0484.JPG 9. IMG_0482.JPG		

SECTION III – RECORDS REVIEW

Records may not be in sequential order.

Record: Other - Bench sheet		AOC: No
Ref #: JF1-RR-001	Reviewed By: Joseph Forth	Reviewed Date: 06/06/2025
Facility provided updated bench sheet with columns for recording pH sampling times.		
Document(s)		
1. Copy of Ph and DO bench sheet.xlsx		

SECTION IV – SAMPLING ACTIVITIES AND ANALYTICAL RESULTS

No sampling was conducted.

SECTION V - AREA OF CONCERN

Areas of Concern may not be in sequential order.

The presentation of Areas of Concern does not constitute a formal compliance determination or violation.

AOC Reference #: JF1-OC-FD	Opening Conference
AOC:	
At the time of inspection, the Facility was not recording the time pH and DO samples are analyzed, to ensure that the time sensitive sampling requirements are met.	
Additional Notes: On June 6, 2025, Anthony Dowson provided a new bench sheet template containing fields to record both sample collection and sample analyzation time.	

AOC Reference #: JF1-OC-FD	Opening Conference
AOC:	
An operator is usually onsite 5 days a week, 3 hours a day.	
Additional Notes: During the inspection, Anthony Dowson stated that Highland Treatment is in the process of hiring and certifying 4 new wastewater operators to help increase operator presence at all of Highland Treatment’s facilities.	

SECTION VI – CLOSING CONFERENCE AND FOLLOW UP

Closing Conference

The EPA REGION 5 Lead Inspector held a closing conference with Facility personnel at 10:48 AM (ET) on 05/14/2025 for the inspection. During the closing conference, EPA REGION 5 Lead Inspector discussed the observations and Areas of Concern identified during the inspection. Observations and Areas of Concern have not yet been evaluated for a formal compliance determination.

U.S. EPA Staff conducted a Cybersecurity Questionnaire was conducted at 10:40 AM.

Follow Up/ Communication Log

Anthony Dowson contacted U.S. EPA staff on 05/14/2025 and 6/6/2025 to provide requested information/materials via email.

Highland Treatment, Inc. has hired 4 new operators and is in the process of getting each operator certified to help expand operator presence at all their facilities.

SECTION VII – LIST OF APPENDICES

1. Photo Log
2. Document Log

APPENDIX 1: PHOTO LOG



Photo 1			IMG_0482.JPG
05/14/2025 09:58 AM	No CBI	No PII	Photographer: Joseph Forth
WWTP			Down
Photo of DO sampling point.			



Photo 2			IMG_0483.JPG
05/14/2025 09:59 AM	No CBI	No PII	Photographer: Joseph Forth
WWTP			South
Photo of the equalization tank.			



Photo 3			IMG_0484.JPG
05/14/2025 10:00 AM	No CBI	No PII	Photographer: Joseph Forth
WWTP			North
Photo of aeration basin.			



Photo 4			IMG_0485.JPG
05/14/2025 10:02 AM	No CBI	No PII	Photographer: Joseph Forth
WWTP			Down
Photo of digester system.			



Photo 5			IMG_0486.JPG
05/14/2025 10:06 AM	No CBI	No PII	Photographer: Joseph Forth
WWTP			Down
Photo of clarifier.			



Photo 6			IMG_0487.JPG
05/14/2025 10:06 AM	No CBI	No PII	Photographer: Joseph Forth
WWTP			Down
Photo of clarifier.			



Photo 7			IMG_0488.JPG
05/14/2025 10:09 AM	No CBI	No PII	Photographer: Joseph Forth
WWTP			UV Building
Photo of UV system and post disinfection grab sample point.			



Photo 8			IMG_0489.JPG
05/14/2025 10:10 AM	No CBI	No PII	Photographer: Joseph Forth
WWTP			UV Building
Photo of composite sampler.			



Photo 9			IMG_0490.JPG
05/14/2025 10:19 AM	No CBI	No PII	Photographer: Joseph Forth
WWTP			South
Outfall 001-A			

APPENDIX 2: DOCUMENT LOG

Document Type	Document Name	Contains CBI	Contains PII	Uploaded By	Date Received
Other - Bench sheet	Copy of Ph and DO bench sheet.xlsx	No	No	Joseph Forth	06/6/2025