

Northants waste firm pays out to charity after contaminating groundwater

- Augean South Limited agreed to pay £25,000 to Rockingham Forest Trust

A company which handles hazardous waste has made a payment of £25,000 to an environmental charity following the contamination of groundwater at its site.

Augean South Limited of Stamford Road, Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire also paid £11,058.90 to cover the costs of the Environment Agency investigation.

The discharge in 2020 had a short-term impact on wildlife and saw some amphibian species decline but populations recovered by the following summer. Vegetation also naturally improved after the pollution.

Routine inspections in March 2020, detected high levels of chemicals in the groundwater adjacent to the treatment centre at East Northants Resource Management Facility. The site is operated by Augean South Limited.

After performing further tests, Augean notified the Environment Agency. Officers concluded Augean had negligently exceeded its environmental permits, contrary to regulations 12(1)(b) and 38(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

The Environment Agency accepted an Enforcement Undertaking submitted by Augean.

Enforcement undertakings are 1 of the civil sanctions available to the Environment Agency, enabling the wrongdoer to put right the situation and compensate for any environmental harm.

As part of this agreement, Augean donated £25,000 to the Rockingham Forest Trust, a local charity which promotes environmental projects in Northamptonshire.

It is believed that heavy rainfall during the winter and subsequent storms contributed to the chemical discharge.

The Environment Agency was satisfied Augean took appropriate action to resolve the situation. The company had acted in a timely manner to remove and clean the affected land, whilst continuing to monitor the groundwater and soil.

There have been no similar incidents since at the waste facility.

Members of the public with concerns about pollution should contact our 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.