WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the state of Indiana today announced that Guide Corp. will pay more than $10 million to settle a civil lawsuit over one of the largest fish kills in Indiana history. The company, an automotive lighting manufacturer, agreed to pay $6 million into two White River restoration funds, $2 million to reimburse the costs of agencies that responded to the fish kill, and $2 million in civil penalties.

In a separate action today, Anderson, Ind.-based Guide Corp. agreed to plead guilty to criminal violations of the Clean Water Act. Guide Corp. will pay more than $4.1 million in criminal penalties, asset forfeiture, and restitution, under a plea agreement with the Justice Department.

The United States and Indiana in April 2000 filed a civil lawsuit against Guide Corp. and Crown EG, Inc. of Dayton, Ohio, alleging that over several weeks beginning in December 1999, the companies discharged toxic wastewater from an automotive parts facility in Anderson, Ind. These toxic discharges killed more than 100 tons of fish and other aquatic creatures along more than 40 miles of the White River, from Anderson to downtown Indianapolis.

The White River restoration funds called for under the civil settlement will pay for ongoing efforts to restock the river with fish and for projects to restore natural resources and enhance the conservation and the recreational value of the river. These projects will be implemented by natural resource trustees of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the state of Indiana. A citizens' council will advise the trustees on the restoration projects.

"Since becoming EPA Administrator I have stressed partnerships. I strongly believe that as partners we can work together to protect the environment and ensure that we set reasonable and effective standards," said EPA Administrator Christie Whitman. "That being said, when necessary, we will take needed action to enforce the law. The White River Restoration Funds will pay for ongoing efforts to restock the river with fish and for projects to restore the river."

The civil settlement also requires Guide Corp. to complete a compliance audit of its Anderson facility, take steps to bring the plant into compliance with environmental regulations, and submit a compliance report to the EPA and the state.

Following the White River fish kill, the United States Attorney's Office in Indianapolis and the EPA began a separate criminal investigation. The federal Clean Water Act contains both civil and criminal provisions, and under the Act, it is a crime for a company or an individual to knowingly or negligently take certain actions that result in water pollution.

Guide Corp. admitted in a criminal plea agreement filed today that it committed seven misdemeanor violations of the Clean Water Act by negligently discharging pollution to the Anderson, Ind., sewage treatment plant. For these environmental crimes, the company will pay $1.9 in criminal penalties, $1.9 million in asset forfeitures, and $275,000 restitution for damaging the Anderson treatment plant. Forensic support from EPA's National Enforcement Investigations Center established the link between the fish kill and discharges from Guide Corp.'s automotive facility. The U.S. Attorney's Office is continuing its criminal investigation into the events surrounding the fish kill.

The government's civil case against Crown EG is pending. The civil settlement with Guide Corp. filed today will undergo a 30-comment period.

About Guide Corp.

Guide Corp. is one of the world's largest manufacturers of automotive lighting. Its parent corporation is Lightsource Parent Corp. Crown EG, Inc. was hired to operate Guide's wastewater treatment plant.

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