

Billings mobile home park residents file suit against Meadowlark owners

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BILLINGS - For nearly two years, residents at Meadowlark Mobile Home Park in Billings have been dealing with [water that contains iron and magnesium](#), according to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

A lawsuit was filed in Yellowstone County District Court on Tuesday related to the water quality and an allegation by residents that management cut off trailer tongues attached to the mobile homes.

Residents say water comes out of the tap with sediment, and it's undrinkable and unsafe.

"I've seen that the kids had the same rashes that I was experiencing," said Steve Woodard, who lives at Meadowlark. "And I finally figured out it was the water."

This water is now the norm at Meadowlark Mobile Home Park.

Woodard also owns several other trailers that he rents out.

He says he potentially faces bankruptcy after letting two families out of the leases.

"We've just come to the determination, I said, I'm gonna break your lease," Woodard said. "You get your babies to where you think it's safe."

Woodard said he will no longer rent to families with children because of the water.

Gary Deveraux still lives at Meadowlark and says water like this is nothing new and they've had to deal with the problem for almost two years.

"It doesn't look drinkable when you use it," Deveraux said. "And it burns your skin and blisters people. Puts blisters on their scalp and skin from showering in it. And there's a big concern there." But finally, there's hope.

Teague Westrope, with the AVA Law Group, has filed a complaint on behalf of six families including the Woodards and Deverauxs against Havenpark Management, which owns Meadowlark.

"We're filing this lawsuit to bring accountability here to the owners of the park," Westrope said. The suit alleges that Meadowlark has failed to keep the premises in habitable condition and the management committed actual fraud or negligent misrepresentation by making false or untrue representations about the water condition.

But the lawsuit addresses more than just the water.

It also accuses the company of unlawfully cutting off the hitches on residents' mobile homes, so they couldn't be moved.

"It's our belief that Havenpark knew that when they were cutting these trailer hitches off of these mobile homes that these tenants would be left without options to move," Westrope said. "Trespassing and destruction of private property," Deveraux said.

As for the water, Westrope says the DEQ, which tests only for bacteria, only calls the water unpalatable.

"I don't think that it takes an expert to look at that water," Westrope said about the water being undrinkable.

Havenpark sent an email response.

"We appreciate you giving us an opportunity to comment, but at this time we cannot respond as this matter is in litigation," stated Josh Weiss, spokesman for Havenpark.

Source: <https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/billings-mobile-home-park-residents-file-suit-against-meadowlark-owners>