September 4, 2019

Preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact
To All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies

Hocking County
Union Furnace Sanitary Sewer Improvements
Loan Number: CS390037-0014

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a sewer infrastructure improvement project in Hocking County which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) below-market interest rate revolving loan program. The EA describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. We would appreciate receiving any comments you may have on the project. Making available this EA and seeking your comments fulfills Ohio EPA’s environmental review and public notice requirements for this loan program, as stated in the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3745-150-06.

Ohio EPA analyzes environmental effects of proposed projects as part of its WPCLF program review and approval process. We have concluded that the proposed project should not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. More information can be obtained by contacting the person named at the end of the attached EA.

Any comments on our preliminary determination should be sent to me at the letterhead address. We will not act on this project for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice. In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. After that, Hocking County can then proceed with its application for the WPCLF loan.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Jonathan Bernstein, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Identification

Project: Hocking County – Union Furnace Sanitary Sewer Improvements

Applicant: Sandra Ogle, President
Hocking County Commissioners
1 E. Main Street
Logan, OH 43138

Loan Number: CS390037-0014

Project Summary

The Hocking County Commissioners have requested financial assistance from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to install a sanitary sewer system (force main and gravity sewers) in the unincorporated area of Union Furnace, Hocking County. The proposed sanitary sewer system will convey wastewater to the City of Logan’s Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). Union Furnace residents are currently served by individual on-lot systems that are currently failing or are too small to function properly. Logan operates a regional WWTP, which was designed to accept waste from surrounding communities and has the capacity to treat the additional flow.

Hocking County qualifies for a WPCLF principal forgiveness loan in the amount of $683,450. This loan will not need to be repaid. Hocking County will borrow an additional $991,550 from the WPCLF to fund the project.

Construction will involve trenching along residential streets in Union Furnace and along State Route (SR) 328 to the site of the WWTP in Logan, Ohio. All stream crossings will be accomplished through horizontal directional drilling (HDD).

History & Existing Conditions

Union Furnace is an unsewered community of 80 households that utilize household sewage treatment systems (HSTS) to collect and treat sanitary waste. Many of these individual on-lot treatment systems are failing due to age or are improperly sized. The neighboring City of Logan operates a regional WWTP and has committed to accepting and treating sanitary waste from several surrounding unsewered communities. Logan’s WWTP releases water into the Hocking River which has an aquatic life use (ALU) designation of warmwater habitat (WWH).

Population and Flow Projections

Union Furnace and the City of Logan entered into a treatment agreement that will allow Logan's WWTP to receive and treat sanitary waste from the Union Furnace area. Logan’s WWTP (see Figure 1) has the capacity to receive and treat wastewater from surrounding communities and will act as a regional WWTP. Estimated population growth in the area was considered when developing the treatment agreement and Logan has the capacity treat the additional sanitary flow from Union Furnace.
Alternatives

Doing nothing is not an acceptable alternative because it would allow undersized and deteriorated home septic systems to continue to operate improperly which could contribute to surface water contamination and potentially create a public health threat. Residents could replace their individual on-lot systems, but this option is very costly, and many customers may not be able to afford it. Union Furnace could potentially build its own WWTP but may not generate enough revenue to pay for it because it is such a small community.

Selected Alternative

Considering the need for reliable sanitary collection and treatment services in the area and considering the benefits of utility regionalization, it is more cost effective for communities surrounding Logan to send their sanitary waste to a regional WWTP rather than replacing individual home treatment systems or building their own WWTP. Logan's WWTP was designed for regionalization and has the additional treatment capacity to accept sanitary waste from surrounding areas.

Implementation

This project will install 10,040 linear feet (LF) of 6 and 8-inch gravity sewers and 24,186 LF of 2 and 4-inch force main (pressurized sewers) to transport sanitary waste from the Union Furnace area to Logan's regional WWTP. The new sewer system will tie in to Logan's existing sewer system.

Figure 1 – Logan WWTP location (red pin) adjacent to the Hocking River and US 33
Figure 2 – Proposed location (yellow line) of sanitary sewer installation along SR 328 and Kern Road in Union Furnace.
Hocking County anticipates the project will cost $2,625,000. The project is eligible for $683,450 in WPCLF principal forgiveness funds that will not need to be repaid. Hocking County will also borrow $991,550 from the WPCLF program at the disadvantaged community interest rate of 0%. During the 45-year loan period, Hocking County will save approximately $755,460 by borrowing WPCLF dollars at this rate, compared to the market rate of 2.79%.

Hocking County is also receiving a $750,000 grant from the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) under the Residential Public Infrastructure Program (RPIG) and a $500,000 grant from the Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA).

Based on a loan award date of October 2019, the project is expected to commence in December 2019 and be completed by July 2020.
Public Participation

The Logan Daily News published an article on February 23, 2019, titled “Union Furnace sewer project soon underway,” and another article on June 25, 2019, titled “Union Furnace residents get update on sewer system.” This project has also been discussed at multiple Hocking County Commissioners monthly meetings which are open to the public.

As part of its State Environmental Review Process, Ohio EPA will post this Environmental Assessment to the Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA) web page located at: http://epa.ohio.gov/defa/ofa.aspx#169638769-wpclf-documents-for-review-and-comment. Ohio EPA is unaware of any public opposition to this project.

Environmental Impacts

This project will provide new sanitary sewer service to areas previously served by aging and undersized on-lot systems. Installation of new gravity sewers and force main, along residential streets in Union Furnace and along SR 328 to Logan, will primarily occur in narrow trenches within or adjacent to the road right-of-way.

No coastal zones, state-designated scenic rivers or state- or federally-designated wildlife areas are present in or near the project area. No farmland losses are expected from this project. It will have no impact on ground water resources since the work will primarily occur in shallow trenches approximately 5-feet deep except when horizontal directional drilling. The proper floodplain development permit was obtained for this project from the local floodplain administrator.

Air Quality: There are no new permanent air contaminant sources being installed as part of this project. There will be short-term increases in dust and exhaust emissions from heavy equipment operations and construction activities which will be controlled with best management practices. For these reasons, the project should have no significant short or long-term adverse impacts on the local air quality.

Archaeological and Historical Resources: There are no Ohio Historic Inventory properties within the project disturbance area. In the event of any archaeological find, Ohio Revised Code Section 149.53 requires contractors and subcontractors to notify the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of any archaeological discoveries in the project area, and to cooperate with the SHPO on archaeological and historic surveys and in salvage efforts when appropriate. Ohio EPA has determined that the project will not cause any significant adverse effect to archaeological or historical resources (properties listed or eligible for the listing in the National Register of Historic Places).

Endangered Species and Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitats: The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) indicates that the endangered Indiana bat and threatened northern long-eared bat can be found in the project area. Tree clearing will only be done if necessary and only between October 1 and March 31 to protect sensitive bat species.

Horizontal directional drilling will avoid impacting to any streams and there is no suitable habitat for the following threatened, endangered or species of concern where trenching will occur along paved roads and rights-of-way: bald eagle, northern monkshood, timber rattlesnake, American burying beetle, running buffalo cover, and small whorled pogonia.
Surface Water and Wetlands: Construction will not have significant adverse long-term impacts on surface water resources as there will be no in-water work because of horizontal directional drilling. There will be no impacts to wetlands. Work will be predominately performed in paved roads and lawn grass. Erosion and sedimentation impacts from construction are unlikely because contractors will use standard controls to minimize the potential for excavated soil to enter surface water or stormwater conveyances. All stream crossings will be horizontal directional drilled.

Dust, Noise, Odors, Safety and Traffic: Construction noise will be audible but insignificant compared to normal vehicle traffic and only during daytime hours. Public safety will be ensured by proper traffic management in the construction area and by covering or filling trench excavations at the end of each workday. Local aesthetics will be unchanged after construction and restoration are complete; road surfaces will be repaved, and the off-road easement will be planted with grass.

Local Economy: New customers will pay a one-time fee to construct a lateral which will connect their residence to the new sewer system and an on-going monthly utility fee of $42.45. The median household income (MHI) in Hocking County is $43,382. The monthly sewer fee is approximately 1.2% of the MHI and considered affordable.

Conclusion

Based on the review of general planning, design, and other information for this project, Ohio EPA concludes that no significant short-term or long-term adverse direct environmental impacts will result from the project as related to the environmental features discussed in this Environmental Assessment. This is because these features do not exist in the project area, the features exist but will not be adversely affected, or the impacts of construction will be temporary and mitigated.

The project equally serves the entire project area and no segment of the community will be faced with additional adverse impacts or be deprived of environmental benefits, compared to any other segment.

For these reasons, this project, alone or in combination with other projects, is not expected to result in any significant indirect or cumulative short-term or long-term adverse environmental impacts.

Ohio EPA expects the economic impact of the project on the average user to be acceptable because the project will replace failing and undersized HSTS with reliable public sewer service.

Contact

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