

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Section 531 – Dry Fork Addition of the Crafts Colley Sanitary Sewer Extension Phase I Letcher County Fiscal Court

Letcher County, Kentucky

1. Under authority of Section 531 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996, the Letcher County Fiscal Court and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Nashville District (USACE), have performed an evaluation of force main lines with residential connections, and Parkway Inn Lift Station Alternatives for the Dry Fork Addition of the Crafts Colley Sanitary Sewer Extension, Phase I in Letcher County, Kentucky. The USACE Federal action is the 75% funding for the project construction under the Section 531 program. The local sponsor, Letcher County Fiscal Court would provide the remaining 25% funding. The Preferred Action Alternative consists of installing approximately 20,000 linear feet of force main lines and new residential connects to serve residents along State Highway Routes 588 and 3401 near the City of Whitesburg. The force main collection system would be connected to the Parkway Inn Lift Station on State Highway Route 15. The lift station would be rehabilitated and pump sewage to the City of Whitesburg Wastewater Treatment Plant for treatment and discharge.

2. The purpose of the proposed project is to eliminate sewage discharges from poorly functioning septic tank systems and straight pipe outfalls for 35 new sanitary sewer customers. The need for the proposed project is to improve the health and safety of the public and land and water resources. The possible consequences of the Preferred Action Alternative have been studied for environmental, cultural, and social well-being effects.

3. The No Action and Preferred Action Alternatives were the only alternatives carried forward for detailed evaluation. Alternative 3 would install a gravity sewer collection system instead of force mains. However, due to the hilly terrain, extremely deep trenching would have been required to achieve the necessary slope and flow for the system to operate, therefore Alternative 3 was eliminated from detailed consideration. Alternative 4 would upgrade treatment systems onsite (new/repaired septic tanks and lines). However, most properties do not have the suitable soils or space to upgrade their individual subsurface disposal system, therefore Alternative 4 was eliminated from detailed consideration.

4. The No Action Alternative would result in continuation of failing septic tank systems and straight pipes with increased risks for raw sewage discharges into Dry Fork Creek, North Fork Kentucky River, or on the ground. Exposure to raw sewage would endanger the health and safety of the public and contaminate water and land resources.

5. Primary impacts from the Preferred Action Alternative are the effects of construction (noise, dust, and erosion control) which are considered to be minor and temporary, due to the limited nature of the construction and with utilization of best management practices. The Preferred Action Alternative is expected to be protective of land and water resources as well as to the human and social environment.

6. A detailed evaluation of the Preferred Action Alternative produced the following pertinent conclusions:

- a. Environmental Considerations. USACE has taken reasonable measures to assemble and present the known or foreseeable impacts of the No Action and Preferred Action Alternatives to the human and natural environment in the Environmental Assessment. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) to identify hazardous, toxic, radioactive waste (HTRW) was completed on February 11, 2015. The ESA did not identify any recognizable environmental conditions regarding HTRW within the project footprint that could pose a liability to the government as a result of acquisition, easement or cost share. No wetlands, floodplain, prime farmland, or water resources would be negatively impacted by the Preferred Action Alternative. All potential adverse impacts of the proposed Preferred Action Alternative are insignificant and short-term in duration.
- b. Social Well-Being considerations. No significant economic or social well-being impacts that are both adverse and/or unavoidable are foreseen as a result of the Preferred Action Alternative. No minority, low-income populations, or children's health would be negatively impacted by the Preferred Action Alternative. The human community and natural environment would benefit from having a reliable sewage collection system with elimination of failing septic tanks and straight piping of raw sewerage discharges.
- c. Coordination with Resource and Other Agencies. Pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958 as amended, coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources has been completed. Appropriate measures and best management practices have been identified and incorporated into the plan. Also, in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1970 as amended, the Preferred Action Alternative would not have any adverse impacts on Federally listed species or any associated critical habitat. Trees provide habitat to endangered bats. The sponsor has stated that no trees would be removed to construct the project. Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as implemented by regulations at 36 CFR 800, the Kentucky Heritage Council was consulted and concurred with USACE findings that no historic properties would be affected by the Preferred Action Alternative.

7. In light of the general public interest, I have determined that the work would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human or natural environments within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Accordingly, I have concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement covering the proposed work is not required. Further, having weighed the potential benefits that may be accrued as a result of implementing the proposed Preferred Action Alternative against the reasonably-foreseeable detrimental effects, I conclude that the Letcher County Fiscal Court's Dry Fork Addition of the Crafts Colley Sanitary Sewer Extension Phase I, Section 531 project in Whitesburg, Letcher County, Kentucky, would be in the public interest.

Date

John L. Hudson, P.E.
Lieutenant Colonel
Corps of Engineers
District Engineer