



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8**

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AUG 29 2013

Ref: 8P-W-TF

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

PROJECT: Ten Mile / Pleasant Valley Wastewater System Improvement

TO: All Interested Government Agencies and the Public

<u>TOTAL COST:</u>	\$5,634,000
<u>EPA GRANT:</u>	\$ 329,000
<u>LOCAL SHARE:</u>	\$5,305,000

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an environmental review has been performed on the proposed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant for the above project.

The proposed Ten Mile/Pleasant Valley Wastewater System Improvement project consists of three phases. The first phase of improvements was completed in the spring of 2013 and consisted of spot repairs to reduce the amount of inflow/infiltration into the collection system. The second phase of the project, for which the STAG grant will be used, is for further improvements to the wastewater collection system including a new lift station and a new force main. In order to reduce groundwater levels in the Pleasant Valley Subdivision, a liner will be installed in an irrigation canal adjacent to the subdivision. Phase 3 (not funded by this STAG grant) will begin in the spring of 2015. Phase 3 will consist of upgrading the existing wastewater treatment system to the appropriate size based on the County Sewage District engineer's wastewater flow study following the Phase 2 collection system improvements.

The Ten Mile Estates and Pleasant Valley Subdivision (Subdivisions) are located about two miles north of Helena, Montana, in Lewis and Clark County. The Subdivisions include approximately 806 residents on 310 services. The wastewater treatment system is a total retention system designed and approved for two aerated treatment cells and three storage cells to accommodate up to 314 homes. When originally designed, the two treatment cells were to be lined with a PVC liner, and the three storage cells were to be lined with a natural clay and bentonite soil liner to prevent treated water from rapidly percolating into the ground. However, when constructed, only one treatment cell and one storage cell were lined and the third and fourth storage cells were never completed. The planned aeration system was never installed in either of the treatment cells. Due to leakage in the treatment and storage cells, untreated wastewater is leaking to the groundwater which may be impacting water quality for downstream users.

The collection system pipes in the Subdivisions were recently inspected using closed circuit television by the City of Helena, and they were found to be in fair condition. However, some sewer mains were in poor condition, especially in the Pleasant Valley subdivision where cracked pipe, inadequately sloped pipe, and sagging sections were found. The poor pipe conditions are likely the cause of numerous sewer backups into homes which have been reported to have occurred and to have contributed to overflows from manholes in which sewage surfaced to the ground. Due to the naturally occurring high groundwater level in the area, homes with basements may be using sump pumps discharging to the sewer system to protect their basements causing higher flows than originally planned to the wastewater system. Phase II of the project will improve the collection system with the following actions: 1) installing a liner in an irrigation canal near the Pleasant Valley subdivision to help control groundwater level, 2) replacing the sewer main in Kelly Road with 4000 feet of 8 and 10-inch gravity sewer main and approximately 1600 feet of sewer service pipe replacing 60 sewer services in the Pleasant Valley subdivision, 3) installing a new lift station which is needed due to the lowering of the collection pipe elevation from its original depth, and 4) installing a new force main pipe from the lift station to the new treatment cells.

The improved collection system will impact a ditch in which vegetation may be classified as wetland vegetation. Preliminary field inspection estimates that at most 0.1 acre of wetlands will be impacted. With a disturbance of less than one-half acre, the project should qualify for a Nationwide General Permit. All conditions and mitigation required for a U.S. Corps of Engineer's Clean Water Act Section 404 permit will be followed.

The review process did not indicate that significant environmental impacts would result from the proposed action. Consequently, a preliminary decision not to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement has been made. This action is taken on the basis of careful review of the Ten Mile/Pleasant Valley Wastewater System Improvement Environmental Assessment prepared for this project. Copies of the document are available at the Department of Environmental Quality, Technical and Financial Assistance Bureau, located at 1520 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, MT 59601. For questions concerning the proposed project, call Scott Aspenlieder, President of the Ten Mile Estates County Sewer District at 406-443-3962.

Comments supporting or disagreeing with this decision may be submitted for consideration by the EPA to:

Brian Friel
US EPA, Region 8, 8P-W-TF
1595 Wynkoop Street
Denver, CO 80202

After evaluating the comments received, the EPA will make a final decision. No administrative action will be taken on the project for at least 30 calendar days after release of the Finding of No Significant Impact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne J. Bohan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Suzanne J. Bohan
Director, NEPA Compliance and Review Program
Ecosystems Protection and Remediation