

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Applegate Regional Sewer Pipeline Project
County of Placer, California**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Region 9 awarded a grant to the County of Placer to fund a wastewater treatment plant closure and pipeline project. EPA Region 9's award of a grant for the proposed project is a federal action requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC §§4321-4370f. In accordance with NEPA, Council of Environmental Quality Regulations at 40 CFR §§1500.1-1508.28, and U.S. EPA NEPA regulations at 40 CFR Part 6, U.S. EPA Region 9 has prepared an environmental information document (EID), which EPA has adopted as an environmental assessment (EA). The EA describes the potential environmental impacts associated with, and the alternatives to, the proposed project. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) documents U.S. EPA Region 9's decision that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Project Location and Description

Applegate, CA is a community in Placer County (County) located approximately 9 miles northeast of the city of Auburn along Interstate 80. The County provides public sewerage to the portion of Applegate that falls within the County Service Area. The proposed project would retire the treatment ponds at Applegate Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and install a pump station and a force main to convey Applegate's wastewater to the existing sewer collection system that flows to the Sewer Maintenance District (SMD) #1 WWTP. The wastewater would be treated at the SMD 1 WWTP and discharged to Rock Creek.

Purpose and Need

The intent of the proposed project is to meet the requirements of the Settlement Agreement reached by the County and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board in December 2006. Under the proposed project, the Applegate WWTP would be decommissioned and wastewater would be rerouted to the SMD 1 WWTP via the new pipeline. This would enable the County to meet the terms of the Settlement Agreement and would eliminate the need to temporarily store and haul wastewater to prevent the ponds from overtopping during the winter months.

Environmental Consequences

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 requires federal agencies to consult with US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), to ensure that the project actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of endangered or threatened species. EPA's Biological Assessment (BA) found that, while the project area is suitable habitat for California red-legged frog (CLF), surveys found no detection of CLF in the project area. FWS concurred with EPA that this project is not

likely to adversely affect the California red-legged frog. FWS recommended, and Placer County agreed to follow, conservation measures to reduce potential effects on CLF.


Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act defines the purpose and requirements of the federal review process to ensure that historic properties are considered during federal project planning and execution. Based on a site and literature review, it was determined that no historic properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) were located within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). In addition to consulting with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), EPA consulted with the United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO). The THPO requested that a cultural monitor be present for ground disturbing activity within two portions of the APE. The SHPO concurred that there were no historic properties eligible for listing in the NRHP within the APE and advised accommodation of the THPO's concern. The County is working with, and will continue to work with, the THPO to address their concerns.

Public Review

U.S. EPA Region 9 made the EA and FONSI available for public review at the offices of the EPA Region 9 Office in San Francisco, CA and on the EPA website: <http://www.epa.gov/region09/nepa/epa-generated.html>. The EA was also available for public review at the following Placer County locations: 1) Auburn Public Library 350 Nevada Street, Auburn, CA; and 2) Meadow Vista Public Library 16981 Placer Hills Road, Meadow Vista, CA. No comments were received on the EA or unsigned FONSI prior to the close of the public comment period on December 31, 2011.

Finding

Based on the information contained in the EA, and after opportunity for public comment, U.S. EPA Region 9 has determined the proposed project will not result in significant impacts to the environment and an environmental impact statement is not required. This FONSI is final upon signature. U.S. EPA Region 9 will not re-circulate this FONSI for public review, but will make it available to any individual upon request.



Alexis Strauss
Director, Water Division

13 Jan 2012
Date

Attachment: Conservation Measures

APPLEGATE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT CLOSURE AND PIPELINE PROJECT: PROPOSED CONSERVATION MEASURES

General Construction Measures

1. Before any work, including grading, occurs in the construction area, a USFWS-approved biologist will conduct an environmental education program for construction personnel concerning the California red-legged frogs that could occur in the project area. The mandatory environmental education program will include a description, representative photographs, and legal status of each federally listed species; the terms and conditions of the biological opinion; and the penalties for not complying with biological mitigation requirements. Proof of this instruction will be kept on file with the County. In the absence of a Service-approved biologist, environmental training pamphlets will also be available on site for use by environmentally trained leads in training new personnel. Construction personnel will learn that if a California red-legged frog is encountered in the work area, construction will cease, and USFWS will be called for guidance before any construction activities resume.
2. The program will emphasize the need to protect water quality and the importance of implementing the conservation measures included in this BA. The biologist will review the measures that must be implemented to protect water quality as well as general restrictions and guidelines that must be followed by all construction personnel to avoid or reduce effects on federally listed species during project implementation. The resident inspector will be responsible for ensuring that construction personnel adhere to the guidelines and restrictions. If new construction personnel are added to the project, the crew foreman will ensure that they receive the mandatory training before starting work. Restrictions and guidelines that must be followed by construction personnel are listed below.
3. The contractor will clearly delineate the project boundaries and prohibit any off-road construction travel outside these boundaries.
4. Project-related vehicles and construction equipment will be restricted to the designated construction area.
5. The contractor will provide closed garbage containers for the disposal of all food-related trash items (e.g., wrappers, cans, bottles, food scraps). All garbage will be picked up daily around the project site. Construction personnel will not feed or otherwise attract fish or wildlife to the action area.
6. To prevent possible resource damage from hazardous materials such as motor oil or gasoline, construction personnel will not service vehicles or construction equipment outside designated staging areas. Staging areas as well as areas for fueling and

maintenance activities will be located a minimum of 100 feet from riparian or aquatic habitats. The project proponent will prepare a spill prevention and cleanup plan.

Biological Monitoring During Construction

1. Wet season - During project construction activities occurring during the wet season (generally October 15 to April 15), a Service-approved biological monitor will conduct a preconstruction survey for California red-legged frogs no more than 48 hours before new ground disturbance and remain on site for all construction activities that occur during the wet season. If a California red-legged frog is encountered during any project activities, construction activities will cease and the Service will be immediately contacted for further guidance.
2. Dry season - During construction activities occurring during the dry season (generally April 15 to October 15), the construction monitor will monitor for California red-legged frog when construction occurs within 300 feet of suitable aquatic habitat as identified as suitable or marginally suitable in Table 1 of the California red-legged frog site assessment prepared for the project (ICF 2010). If a California red-legged frog is encountered during any project activities, construction activities will cease and the Service will be immediately contacted for further guidance.
3. The County will submit to Service the name and credentials of the biologist or team of biologists who will monitor the project for California red-legged frog. Review and approval must occur at least 15 days prior to the onset of construction activities. Minimum credentials for a biologist include completion of at least 4 years of university training in wildlife biology or a related science and/or demonstrated field experience pertaining to the identification and life history of the California red-legged frog as well as common amphibians known to occur in area. Once approved, said biologist, or team of biologists, will be referred to as the Service-approved biological monitor for the project.

Pipeline Installation (Wet or Dry Season)

1. Where possible, all trenches created for pipeline installation will be filled in on the same day they are created during the duration of construction for either the wet or dry season.
2. In the event that trenches remain open overnight, exclusion fencing (defined as sediment fencing 18 to 24 inches high buried at least 6 inches into the ground) will be installed around the open area or the trench will be covered to reduce the likelihood of California red-legged frogs entering the trench. Prior to filling any portion of the trenches along the pipeline alignment, the USFWS-approved biological monitor or environmentally trained lead will check for frogs. If any frogs are located within the trench, the Service-approved biological monitor and Service will immediately be contacted for guidance.

WWTP Pond Dewatering and Recontouring

1. If feasible, dewatering of the WWTP ponds will occur in mid- to late summer to avoid affecting breeding habitat. A Service-approved biological monitor will be placed on site just prior to and shortly after drawdown of the ponds to determine whether frogs are present regardless of when the drawdown occurs. If California red-legged frogs are present, the Service will be notified. During dewatering, frogs and other wildlife should be allowed to disperse passively to nearby aquatic and upland habitat outside of the WWTP. Shortly after the ponds are dewatered and the area is surveyed and cleared by a biologist, exclusion fencing will be placed around the perimeter of the Applegate facility to prevent frogs and other wildlife from re-entering the site.
2. Once recontouring is completed, the exclusion fencing will be removed. Recontoured areas will be stabilized with erosion control materials (fiber blankets, wattles, etc.) and hydro-seeded with a mix of native herbs and grasses.

Restore Disturbed Areas to Pre-project Conditions

1. After completion of construction activities in natural areas, the County will ensure that any temporary fill or construction debris is removed from the project areas and that unpaved disturbed areas are restored to pre-project conditions. No trees will be planted over the pipeline to prevent potential damage to the pipeline from roots.