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CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Clean Water State Revolving Fund environmental review process, which is based on the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below.

This information reviews the environmental impact likely from a project. This project is planned to be federally funded through your tax dollars; therefore, you are entitled to take part in its review. If you have concerns about the environmental impact of this project, please provide them at this time. The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME:	Culbertson Wastewater Treatment Facility
APPLICANT:	Village of Culbertson, Nebraska
COUNTY:	Hitchcock County
POPULATION:	595
CWSRF PROJECT NUMBER:	C317664
TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT:	\$928,950
ESTIMATED CWSRF LOAN AMOUNT:	\$783,950
POTENTIAL CWSRF PRINCIPAL FORGIVENESS:	\$100,000
OTHER COSTS	\$45,000

The Village of Culbertson (Village) has applied for funding for the above-referenced project through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program administered by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ). This project is included on the Priority List in the CWSRF State Fiscal Year 2016 Intended Use Plan and ranked with 85 points. Based on Culbertson's median household income of \$48,750, the Village is eligible for principal forgiveness of 12.80% of the eligible project costs capped at \$100,000. This loan forgiveness will be matched by \$783,950 of CWSRF loan financing at an interest rate of 1.5% per annum plus 1% annual administrative fee on the outstanding principal balance. Land purchase, easements, and legal costs are ineligible CWSRF costs.

The Village of Culbertson is located in Hitchcock County in southwestern Nebraska. The current population (2010 census) served by Village's sewer is 595. The Village's population has generally decreased over the past half century, but has leveled off in the past 10 years. The project is being designed for the current population of 595.

The Village currently has a separate sanitary sewer system, a lift station, and a two-cell lagoon system originally built in 1963. The two-cells of the lagoon are labeled cell no. 1 with a surface area of 2.25 acres, and cell no. 2 with a surface area of 3.07 acres at the high water level. In 1987, two rapid infiltration cells each with a surface area of 0.64 acres were added on the east edge of cell no.2. Repairs to the lift station were also made at that time. The Village's National Pollutant Discharge

Elimination System (NPDES) permit has a limit of 10 mg/l of total Nitrogen on the treated water from cell no. 2 that is discharged to the rapid infiltration cells. This permit limit has been consistently exceeded. The Village received a new NPDES permit on December 15, 2014, which included a requirement that the Village complete Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) upgrade, which would result in compliance with the NPDES permit.

The Village's Consulting Engineer has used a design flow of 47,000 gallons per day to size the proposed upgrade of the existing facility. The two existing lagoons (i.e. cells no. 1 & 2) are in satisfactory condition and have partial erosion protection. The existing cells are 7.5 feet deep. The Village is proposing to abandon the two rapid infiltration cells, and build an additional facultative cell east of and adjacent to cell no. 2. The new cell will have a surface area of 4.1 acres, will be 8-9 feet deep, will have rip-rap on the interior dike slope, and will have interconnecting piping. The three-cell lagoon system will have a total surface area of 9.42 acres and is designed as a complete retention lagoon facility. The scope of the project also includes replacing the pumps at the existing lift station. The lift station currently has a generator, which provides back-up power to the lift station. The project will be complete with a bentonite clay liner, diversion structure, plus seeding and fencing. The clay liner will be tested for permeability in accordance with Title 123 of the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) regulations and will be limited to a maximum seepage of 1/8 inch per day. Moving to a complete retention lagoon system would exempt the Village from a NPDES permit.

The impact to Culbertson's sewer user charge is estimated as follows: Culbertson's current residential sewer user charge is a flat rate of \$17.00/month. The Village has 330 sewer connections. The projected monthly user charge will need to be increased by an average of \$12.50 a month to cover the 20 year CWSRF debt service and \$17.00 O&M costs or a projected total of \$29.50 average monthly sewer rate. In addition, non-CWSRF debt retirement for the land costs should be added to the projected monthly sewer rate.

The Village conducted a public hearing on this project on October 6, 2015, which had the required 30 day advertised notice. No citizens attended the public hearing. The Consulting Engineer presented the project, and the associated impact to the sewer rates.

The Village's Consulting Engineer sent out eighteen requests for comments to related state and federal agencies, eight responses were received. No fill material will be introduced into the waters of the United States (US) with the project. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) reviewed the area of the proposed lagoons and determined that the site did not involve prime farmland. Approximately 3.5 acres of farmland will be acquired for the new lagoon system and buffer area. A Farmland Conversion Impact Rating was not requested by NRCS. The Nebraska State Historical Society had no recorded historic resources at the proposed new lagoon site, nor need for a survey. The proposed lagoon system is out of the 100-year flood plain. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) indicated that the project would not impact federally listed species, or their critical habitats.

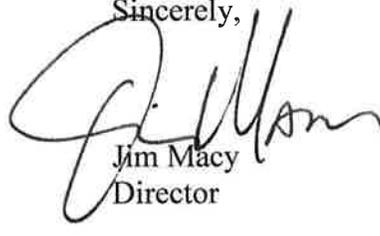
A native clay liner is being proposed for the new lagoon system with an estimated 1/16 inch/day seepage permeability. Depth to ground water at the lagoon site was determined by soil borings. Depth to ground water is approximately 10 feet. Greater than 4 feet of separation from the bottom of the lagoon cell's liner and the top of high seasonal ground water will be maintained as required by NDEQ regulations. A construction storm water permit will be required by the NDEQ since more than one acre of land will be disturbed. The Village will need to file a storm water permit notice of intent with the NDEQ.

The environmental impact will be positive, as area ground water quality should improve. No significant negative impact has been identified. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

This action is taken on the basis of careful review of the facility plan, the environmental assessment and other supporting data, which are on file in the office of the NDEQ. These are available for public review upon request. A copy of the environmental assessment is attached. The NDEQ will not take any administrative action on the project for at least 30 calendar days from the date signed. Persons having a comment on this determination are encouraged to submit directly to Gautam Bhadbhade of the NDEQ (email [gautam.bhadbhade@nebraska.gov](mailto:gautam.bhadbhade@nebraska.gov) or phone (402) 471-4207) during this period.

Signed this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of October, 2015.

Sincerely,



Jim Macy  
Director

JM/gmb

Attachments: Environmental Assessment  
Distribution List  
Maps