

# EVALUATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICANT PREPARED WATER FACILITIES PLAN AND FINAL FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

## Water System Improvements Project

City of Weston  
Franklin County, Idaho

July 2019

### I. Introduction and Background Information

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District (Corps) proposes to assist the City of Weston, Idaho (City) with its Water System Improvements Project under the authority of Section 595 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1999, as amended. The City of Weston is a small community with a population of about 400 and is located in the southeastern corner of Idaho near the border with Utah.

The City has dealt with dwindling water supplies for several years, as local springs and wells tied into the City water system are producing less water. Currently there is not enough water storage to meet the community's peak demand, and water from available fire storage is used to offset the demands, making it impossible for the City to respond to fire fights effectively.

The City's proposed action includes the construction of a 500,000-gallon water storage tank and development of a new well to increase the amount of water delivered to the storage tank. A new transmission line would also be installed from the well to the existing system. The final piece of the City's proposed action would be to re-plumb the chlorination building. The City has requested construction assistance from the Corps under the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Section 595 Program. Section 595 funds would not be used to complete the entire proposed action, only to construct the following project features in two phases:

**Phase 1 – Test Wells.** The City hired a contractor to dig two test wells during the winter of 2018-2019. The test well within the City park location failed, however the test well that was drilled near the existing chlorination building produced water at approximately 180 feet down with no to very little sands. Environmental compliance to address the drilling of the two test wells was completed in a Memorandum for Record dated October 30, 2018 and is included as Attachment A.

**Phase 2 – Production Well Construction.** The City would proceed to drill a full production well at this site and construct a well house for the pumps and pumping equipment.

This is hereafter referred to as the "Corps Project".

Section 595 of WRDA 1999 [Public Law (PL) 106-53], authorizes the Corps to participate in water-related environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development projects in rural Nevada and Montana. In 2003, Section 126 of PL 108-7 amended PL 106-53 to include Idaho. As a result, the Corps is able to participate in the Weston Water System Improvements Project.

**II. Applicant Prepared Environmental Information Document**

In accordance with 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1506.5(b), the Corps is authorized to allow applicants to prepare environmental documentation, as long as the Corps performs its own evaluation of the environmental issues and makes its own findings on potential impacts.

The City submitted to the Corps, the *Weston City Culinary Water Facilities Plan*, prepared by Sunrise Engineering in September 2016 (hereinafter, the “Facilities Plan”). The Facilities Plan updated a previous plan for the City completed in 2006, and provided the City with documentation required to receive Federal and state funding, including an evaluation of environmental impacts. The Corps had no role in the preparation of the Facilities Plan, but did undertake an independent review of the document and determined the information contained therein is accurate and satisfies the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, except as supplemented or explained below in Section V. The Facilities Plan is, therefore, incorporated in its entirety herein by reference and made a part hereof (Attachment B). See the table below that associates the sections in the Facilities Plan with the corresponding and relevant Environmental Assessment sections of a typical NEPA document prepared by the Corps:

Traditional NEPA Format	Facilities Plan
Introduction/Background	Section 1: Introduction/General Information (Pages 1-2)
Purpose and Need Statement	Section 2: Project Information/Purpose and Need (Page 3)
Alternatives (Description)	Section 2.1.3: Proposed Alternatives (Page 4) and Section 5: Development and Initial Screening of Alternatives (Pages 36-38)
Screening Criteria	Section 6: Final Screening of Principal Alternatives (Pages 41-44)

Affected Environment/Environmental Consequences (includes cumulative impacts)	Section 2: Existing Conditions (Pages 3-14) and Section 5.2.5: Environmental Impacts (Page 38) and Section 6.2: Evaluation of Environmental Impacts (Page 44)
Preferred Alternative	Section 7: Selected Alternative Description (Pages 49-51)
Agencies/Public Coordination	Section 6.5: Evaluation of Final Public Input (Pages 47-48)
Compliance with Other Laws	Appendix D: Mailing List and Correspondences

**III. Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the Corps Project is to assist the City, under Section 595, with upgrading the City’s water system by providing funding to drill two test wells and construct a full production well. The Corps Project is needed because the current water system is aging and does not provide an adequate water supply to the City’s residents.

**IV. Project Alternatives**

The Facilities Plan evaluated three alternatives to provide the additional water source and storage that the City needs. These alternatives were: (1) No Action; (2) the Proposed Action – abandoning the existing tanks, building a new 400,000-gallon tank, and adding a new well to the system; and (3) adding a new 200,000-gallon tank near the existing tanks, repairing and maintain the existing tanks, and adding a new well to the system.

**Alternative 1-No Action:** If no action is taken, the water system in Weston would continue to operate under the existing conditions. The distribution system would provide required pressures, but would not provide required fire flow. The system would continue under automated chlorine disinfection of the three water sources. Weston would continue to have a shortage of storage capacity, causing possible water shortages in the future during peak demand periods. These future shortages would also be caused due to the lack of water sources.

**Alternative-2: Proposed Action.** Both of the existing tanks would be abandoned and a new 400,000-gallon tank would be built just to the north and a little west of the existing tanks. A 12-inch transmission line would be placed to connect the new tank to the existing distribution system. By moving the location of the tanks, it would allow the distribution system to flow by gravity with adequate pressure for the City. This option would eliminate the necessity of the booster pump station located to the southeast of the current tank location.

A new well would also be drilled and plumbed into the existing system in order to provide additional and an emergency water source. The target flow rate of the new well is between 225 and 300 gallons per minute (gpm). The well would be piped into the chlorination building so the existing chlorination equipment could be used to provide the residuals desired.

With the addition of the new well, improvements in the chlorination building would be needed. These improvements could include upgrading the pumps, the chlorination system, the size of the temporary holding vault, and pipe sizes. Instead of performing these improvements on the chlorination building, it was recommended that a separate chlorinator be added for the well water. With the separate chlorinator, the well water could flow to the chlorination building and then on to the tanks by gravity alone. With the reduction in the volume of water having to be pumped from the chlorination building to the tanks, the pumps would consume less energy and their life span would be extended.

**Alternative-3:** An additional tank with a volume of 200,000 gallons would be added next to the two existing tanks. The two existing tanks would also be repaired and maintained to extend their life span. A new well would also be added to the system as described in Alternative 2 with the separate chlorinator, as well as the distribution system would be improved as described in Alternative 2.

The Facilities Plan analyzed all alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, and a public review period was held from August 24 to September 7, 2016. No comments were received. The review period ended in conjunction with a public meeting on September 7, 2016. Three comments were received at the public meeting, two of which questioned probable water rate increases, and another concerning the grants and loans that would be used to pay for the improvements. There were no comments regarding potential effects to environmental resources. The City selected Alternative 2 as their Preferred Alternative/Proposed Action. This is hereafter referred to as the Proposed Action.

## **V. Environmental Effects**

The Facilities Plan evaluated the effects of the Proposed Action on the following resources:

- Physiography, Topography, Geology
- Surface and Groundwater Hydrology
- Fauna, Flora, and Natural Communities
- Housing, Industrial, and Commercial Development
- Cultural Resources (Historical and Archaeological)
- Utility Use (Water System, Sewer System)
- Floodplains
- Wetlands
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Public Health and Water Quality Considerations
- Important Farmland Protection
- Proximity to a Sole Source Aquifer and Coastal Areas
- Land Use and Development
- Recreation and Open Space
- Climate
- Air Quality and Noise
- Storm Water and Hazardous Waste
- Energy Production and Consumption
- Socioeconomic Profile
- Regionalization

The analysis did not identify any significant impacts to the human environment should the Proposed Action be implemented. Short-term negative effects that may occur during project construction include temporary disruption of the water systems, increased noise, increased dust pollution, increased potential for stormwater runoff, and disruption of localized traffic conditions. There would not be long-term or cumulative effects as a result of the Proposed Action. The contractor would be responsible for managing the temporary disruptions of the system and implementing Best Management Practices to reduce negative construction effects.

- a. **Endangered Species Act (ESA).** The Corps obtained a species list from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) dated March 12, 2019 (Attachment C, Consultation Code: 01EIFW00-2019-SLI-0128). The USFWS indicated that North American wolverine (*Gulo gulo luscus*) is proposed for listing as threatened in Franklin County, Idaho. The Corps has determined the Corps Project would have no effect on this species because it is not found near the City of Weston. There are no ESA-listed species under jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the proposed action area.
- b. **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).** This project was reviewed in accordance with the processes established in Section 106 of the NHPA and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR Part 800 to include consultation with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and regional Tribal Governments; the Northwest Band of the Shoshone Tribe, the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe, and the Shoshone Bannock Tribe. The Facilities

Plan contains correspondence which documents consultation with both parties.

During the consultation process, SHPO was the only respondent and reported that based on information received, the project would result in *no historic properties affected* (36 CFR 800.4(d)). The Corps has determined the City followed the USDA's prescribed process, to include consultation with the Idaho SHPO and regional Tribal Governments, and further, that the Corps has determined the City and USDA's documentation and consultation satisfies the requirements of the NHPA (Section 106) and the Corps can adopt the same without any need for further supplementation or consultation (Attachment D).

- c. **Clean Water Act (CWA).** Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) requires a Department of the Army permit be obtained for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. As the Proposed Action does not involve the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, no 404 permit is required.

Section 402 requires that construction-related ground disturbing activities greater than one acre with the potential of run-off into a surface water of the US, requires the applicant obtain a Construction General Permit from the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and implement Best Management Practices to control erosion and stormwater runoff throughout construction activities. The City would coordinate with IDEQ to meet these requirements.

- d. **Executive Order 11988: Floodplain Management.** This EO requires Federal agencies to avoid to the extent possible the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and to avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative. A Floodplain Development Permit would be required prior to the start of construction from the Floodplain Administrator for the City.

## VI. Coordination

Coordination with Federal, state, local agencies, organizations and tribes has been conducted by the consultant, Sunrise Engineering. Those contacted include the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Idaho Department of Water Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, City of Weston, Southeast Idaho Council of Governments, and Idaho State Historic Preservation Office. Each agency and organization was provided information on the proposed improvements to the water system and given an opportunity to comment. In compliance with NEPA, the Corps sent the draft FONSI and all attachments out for a

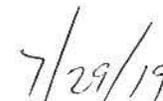
30-day public comment period that began on June 18, 2019 and concluded on July 18, 2019. One comment document was received from the Idaho Department of Water Resources indicating that a Floodplain Development Permit would be required for this action from the City of Weston Floodplain Administrator.

## VII. Finding

Having reviewed the Facilities Plan and associated attachments, I find that the actions addressed in it are substantially the same actions that the Corps is authorized and committed to participate in pursuant to Section 595 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 with the City. Further, the Facilities Plan provides sufficient discussions on the need for the Proposed Action, alternatives to the Proposed Action, the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and the alternatives, and a listing of agencies and persons consulted. Finally, after an independent review of the Facilities Plan, the Corps has determined the document provides both sufficient evidence and analysis to meet its requirements pursuant to NEPA, except as supplemented or explained above.

I have taken into consideration the technical aspects of the Corps Project, best scientific information available, public comments, and the information contained in the Facilities Plan. Based on this information, I have determined that the proposed Corps Project would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and therefore an environmental impact statement is not required. The Corps will proceed to fund the proposed Corps Project under the authority of Section 595 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999, when funds are made available for that purpose.

  
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CHRISTIAN N. DIETZ  
Lieutenant Colonel, EN  
Commanding

  
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Date