



CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

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 wholly or in part 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 Environment & Energy encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Wastewater Treatment Facility
APPLICANT: Phillips, Nebraska
COUNTY: County, Hamilton
POPULATION: 287
CWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: C318034
TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$1,030,920
ESTIMATED CWSRF LOAN AMOUNT: \$523,190
POTENTIAL LOAN FORGIVENESS: \$257,730
POTENTIAL SMALL TOWN GRANT: \$250,000

Phillips, Nebraska is located in Hamilton County. The 2010 census population of Phillips was 287. The Village of Phillips constructed their collection system in 1981. The collection system consists of 18,640 feet of 8-inch vitrified clay pipe (VCP), sewer mains, 52 manholes, and 12 clean-outs. Sewage flows via gravity to wastewater treatment system located northwest of town. The Village operates a four-cell lagoon system, with two primary cells #1 & 4 to the south, each with a surface area of 2.33 acres and two rapid infiltration cells #2 & 3 to the north with a surface area of 0.5 acres each. The lagoons were also constructed in 1981. The lagoons were designed and have always operated as a non-discharging facility. Influent enters by gravity via a control structure into the primary cells. Periodically effluent from the primary cells is discharged into the rapid infiltration cells. In the recent past the discharge to the rapid

infiltration cells has occurred once a year, typically in spring. The effluent seeps into the subsurface.

The primary cells have experienced erosion. These cells currently do not have rip-rap on the side slopes. The primary cells have also had sludge build-up. The estimated depth of sludge in the lagoons is about 22 inches. Since flow to the lagoons is by gravity, sludge tends to backup into the control structure. The operator uses a firetruck to blow out the influent lines from the control structure in order to prevent backup of sewage. Over the past several years, rapid infiltration lagoon systems in the state have been replaced by either complete retention lagoons or by lagoons with an irrigation component, due to the requirement of 10 mg/l of total nitrogen in the effluent from the primary lagoon cells into the rapid infiltration cells. The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy conducted an inspection of the wastewater treatment system and noted that the Village was sampling for nitrate-nitrite instead of total nitrogen in the effluent prior to discharge into the rapid infiltration cells.

The proposed project consists raising manholes in ditches in order to reduce infiltration/inflow. The proposed also includes converting the existing system into a complete retention lagoon system. Sludge from the existing primary cells will be removed, the side slopes will be repaired, and rip-rap will be placed on the side slopes. The primary cells, each with a surface area of 2.33 acres, will be lined to limit seepage to less than 0.125 inches/day. The existing rapid infiltration cells will be converted into a new facultative third cell. Additional surface area will be added to the proposed third cell. The third cell will have a surface area of 2.66 acres. The three cell lagoon system will have an effective area of 7.32 acres and is designed for a daily flow of 25,500 gallons and a daily seepage rate of 1/16 inches. The proposed three cell lagoon system is designed as a complete retention system. The existing influent control structure, influent lines, and piping between the existing and new lagoons will also be replaced and/or constructed. The proposed expansion is adjacent to the existing rapid infiltration basins on property currently owned by the Village.

The Village has applied for financial assistance from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan program. The project is listed on the planning list of the FY2021 Intended Use Plan and is eligible for CWSRF financing. Phillips' median household income is \$45,000, and has an AWIN score of 16. Phillips is eligible for a 20-year or a 30-year CWSRF loan at the current program interest rate of 0.0% and an administration fee of 0.0%. The Village of Phillips is eligible to receive \$257,730 in loan forgiveness funds, \$250,000 in small town grant, and a term loan of \$523,190. Revenues generated from the sewer use fees will be used to repay the CWSRF loan.

Sewer use fees will be dedicated to service the proposed CWSRF loan and the operation and maintenance of the sewer utility. The current sewer rate is \$21.00/month/user. Preliminary estimates indicate that the impact on the sewer rates as a result of servicing the 20-year loan is \$14.53/month/user and servicing the 30-year loan is \$9.68/month/user.

The project will result in repair of a small portion of the collection system, the repair of the existing lagoons, and construction of a new lagoon cell. Both the collection system and the lift station are 40 years old. The project will provide reliable treatment of wastewater for the foreseeable future.

The proposed project was reviewed for eligibility for a categorical exclusion from the National Environmental Policy Act review specified in 40 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 6.204. The project meets all criteria described in the above reference and the Department has determined that this project is eligible for a categorical exclusion. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that a Finding of No Significant Impact will not be prepared.

Justification for categorical exclusion includes:

- The proposed action is not known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively over time;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect national natural landmarks or any property with nationally significant historic, architectural, prehistoric archeological or cultural value, including but not limited to, property listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect environmentally important natural resource areas as floodplains, prime farmland, wild and scenic rivers, and significant fish or wildlife habitat;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to have a significant effect on the pattern and type of land use (industrial, commercial, agricultural, recreational, residential) or growth and distribution of population including altering the character of existing residential areas, or may be consistent with state or local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe approved land use plans or federal land management plans;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to cause significant public controversy.

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy shall revoke the categorical exclusion and shall require a full environmental review if, subsequent to the granting of exclusion, the state determines that the proposed project no longer meets the requirements for a categorical exclusion due to changes in the proposed project; or new evidence reveals that serious local or environmental issues exist; or federal, state, local, or tribal laws are being violated.

This action is taken on the basis of careful review of the application and other supporting data, which are on file in the office of the NDEE. These are available for public review upon request. Persons having a comment on this

categorical exclusion determination are encouraged to submit such comments directly to Gautam Bhadbhade, P.E, Environmental Engineer, of the Technical Assistance Section of NDEE, who can be reached at (402) 471-4207 or email: gautam.bhadbhade@nebraska.gov

Signed this 25th day of January, 2021.

Sincerely,

Jim Macy
Director

Attachments: Distribution List
 Map

CE DISTRIBUTION LIST

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LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Aurora News-Register
1320 K Street
Aurora, NE 68818



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LEGEND

- Proposed Land Application Area
- Splash Pad
- System Valves
- Overflow Structure (Depth Ft.)
- Diversion Structure (Depth Ft.)
- Sewer Mains**
- 8" VCP
- 8" DIP

5/21/2020
Prepared By:

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Figure 4.1
Map of Proposed
Land Application Site
Project 194-D1-002
Phillips, Nebraska