July 12, 2022

DETERMINATION OF NO EFFECT

TO ALL POTENTIALLY INTERESTED AGENCIES:

Pursuant to the environmental assessment requirements of 31 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) § 363.14, the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) staff has determined that proposed action identified below may be exempted from formal environmental review requirements:

Greater Texoma Utility Authority, Grayson County, Texas  
TWDB DFUND Project No. 21798  
Water System Improvements  
Water Meters, Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements, Asset Management Plan  
Total Financing Amount: $7,200,000 (L1001462)

The Greater Texoma Utility Authority (GTUA) is proposing to use $7,200,000 in financing from the Water Development Fund (DFund) to make improvements to the City of Bells’ water and wastewater systems. The TWDB committed this financing on March 3, 2022. The GTUA closed the financing on June 23, 2022.

This Determination of No Effect (DNE) is completed for specific project components described below, which are hereafter referred to as the proposed project. Because the proposed components are numerous, spread throughout a large area, and will be completed as funding allows, subsequent portions of the project will be completed under separate environmental findings.

Water and wastewater system improvements covered under this DNE include the replacement of approximately 700 analog water meters with electronic meters; the rehabilitation design and planning of wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) components, including aeration equipment, valve replacement, chlorine contact basin repairs, a remote alarm system, a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System, influent pumps, and a new microstrainer with a concrete wet well expansion; and the development of an Asset Management Plan.

All WWTP rehabilitation will occur within the existing footprint of the plant. No additional buildings will be constructed, but the new microstrainer will involve a minor extension of a wall, to remain within the existing site. The project area was cleared of vegetation more
than 25 years ago and has been continuously disturbed by plant operations. An ephemeral stream with associated vegetation lies south of the WWTP site but will not be affected by plant modifications. Water meters within city limits will be replaced *in situ* and will not require any additional disturbances.

To ensure that there will be no adverse cultural or environmental impacts associated with the proposed project, the GTUA coordinated with two regulatory agencies, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). In a letter dated January 1, 2022, the THC stated that no historic properties are present or affected by the proposed project and that there would be no effect on identified archeological sites or other cultural resources. In its response dated December 8, 2021, TPWD indicated that it does not anticipate significant adverse impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered species as a result of the proposed project. The proposed project will not adversely impact waters of the United States, including wetlands nor is it located within a 100-year floodplain.

The decision to grant a Determination of No Effect is allowed because the specified project elements should not cause significant adverse impacts to the quality of the environment. Documentation supporting this determination is on file at the TWDB.

This determination shall be revoked if it is found that:

1. the project no longer meets the requirements for a categorical exclusion from a full environmental review as a result of changes in the project;
2. the project involves extraordinary circumstances as described in 31 TAC § 363.14; or
3. the project may violate or has violated federal, state, local, or tribal laws.

The GTUA has committed to the environmental conditions and has the ability and authority to do so. The project must comply with the following environmental conditions:

- As per an agreement with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD Project No. 47806), to ensure compliance with Texas Parks and Wildlife Code, Chapter 65, pertaining to state-listed endangered or threatened animals, the Greater Texoma Utility Authority will implement measures to protect state-listed species in the project area:
  - The length of trenches left open at any given time during construction will be minimized. Open trenches and excavation areas will be checked to ensure no wildlife species have been trapped, with trenches left open for more than two daylight hours, or overnight, inspected prior to backfilling.
If state-listed species are encountered, the animals must be allowed to leave the area safely. Any translocation of reptiles will be the minimum distance possible, no greater than one mile and preferably within 100-200 yards from the initial encounter location. State-listed species may be handled only by persons with authorization obtained through the TPWD.

For soil stabilization and revegetation of disturbed areas within the project area, erosion and seed/mulch stabilization materials will be used that avoid entanglement hazards to wildlife species. Because the mesh found in many erosion control blankets or mats pose an entanglement hazard to wildlife, no-till drilling, hydromulching (avoiding plastic ingredients), and/or hydroseeding will be utilized. If erosion control blankets or mats cannot be avoided, the use of netting and plastic mesh matting will be avoided.

- Standard emergency condition for the discovery of cultural resources
- Standard emergency condition for the discovery of threatened and endangered species

Comments regarding this determination may be submitted to the Director of Regional Water Project Development, Texas Water Development Board, P.O. Box 13231, Austin, Texas 78711-3231 or via email at RWPD-Environmental@twdb.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

T. Clay Schultz

T. Clay Schultz, Ph.D., Director
Regional Water Project Development

Enclosure