

Draft Environmental Assessment
Section 531 Revelo to Stearns
Sewer System Extension Project
McCreary County, Kentucky



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Huntington District
Huntington, West Virginia
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McCreary County, Kentucky

Executive Summary

The McCreary County Water District is proposing to provide sewer service to 85 households in the communities of Revelo and Stearns, Kentucky. Within the project area, failing septic systems and straight piping have been identified. The sewer system would provide residents with a sewage system that would minimize ground water and stream pollution.

The Proposed Action Alternative would entail construction and installation of approximately 22,525 linear feet of 3-inch, 2.5-inch, 2-inch, and 1.5-inch sewer force main, and 85 grinder stations. The sewer system extension would follow local roads and connect to the existing wastewater treatment plant

The proposed project is a partnership agreement between the McCreary County Water District and the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), established under the authority of Section 531 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996. The Section 531 program provides design and construction assistance for water related environmental infrastructure projects to Non-Federal interests in southern and eastern Kentucky. Under this program the Corps may provide support in the form of design and construction assistance for water-related environmental infrastructure, water resource protection and development, and environmental restoration. Examples of possible projects that would qualify under this program could include wastewater treatment and related facilities, water supply, water storage, water treatment, water distribution facilities, and surface water resource protection and development. Funding, as established under Section 531, shall be shared 75% Federal and 25% Non-Federal (State and Local). This Environmental Assessment is prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Corps implementing regulation, ER 200-2-2.

The Draft Environmental Assessment has concluded there are no significant impacts to the human environment associated with the implementation of the proposed Revelo to Stearns Sewer System Extension Project.



SECTION 531
REVLEO TO STERNS
SEWER SYSTEM EXTENSION PROJECT
MCCREARY COUNTY, KENTUCKY

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The brief and concise nature of this document is consistent with the 40 CFR requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to reduce paperwork and delay by eliminating duplication with existing environmental documentation, incorporating pertinent material by reference, and by emphasizing interagency cooperation. The majority of data collection and analysis in this document was performed by Environmental Assessment Services, LLC in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Project Background

This draft Environmental Assessment (EA) examines the potential environmental impacts of the Revelo to Stearns Sewer System Extension project as proposed by the McCreary County Water District. The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

1.2 Purpose, Need, and Authorization

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide sewer service to the communities of Revelo and Stearns. Residents within the Revelo and Stearns areas do not currently have access to public sewage system. Within the past decade, numerous failing septic systems and illegal straight piping has been identified within the proposed project area. The need for the sewer system extension in the proposed area is to provide residents with a sewage system that would minimize ground water and stream pollution in the South Fork Cumberland Watershed.

The proposed project is a partnership agreement between the McCreary County Water District and Corps established under the authority of Section 531 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1996 (Public Law No. 104- 303), as amended, which provides authority for the Corps to establish a program to provide environmental assistance to Non-Federal interests in southern and eastern Kentucky. This law provides design and construction assistance for water related environmental infrastructure projects to Non-Federal interests in southern and eastern Kentucky, including projects for wastewater treatment and related facilities, water supply, water storage, water treatment, water distribution facilities, and surface water resource protection and development.

This EA is prepared pursuant to NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Corps implementing regulation, ER 200-2-2.

2.0 PROPOSED ACTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Proposed Action Alternative (PAA)

The PAA would provide a sewer system extension by means of the McCreary County Water District's existing wastewater treatment plant to approximately 85 households. The PAA consists of the construction and installation of approximately 22,525 linear feet of 3 inch, 2.5 inch, 2



inch, and 1.5 inch sewer force main, and 85 grinder stations. The sewer system extension would follow local roads and connect to the existing wastewater treatment plant (Appendix A).

2.2 No Action Alternative (NAA)

Under the NAA, the Corps would not provide funding for the project. Additionally, the McCreary County Water District would not expand their sewer system and the communities would have continued use of poorly working septic tanks and straight piping until either the system was upgraded or alternative funding sources were obtained to construct the proposed system. This alternative was considered unacceptable due to health and safety hazards for the community in the proposed project area.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND CONSEQUENCES

3.1 Location

The affected area is located from the Revelo to Stearns communities of McCreary County, Kentucky. The sewer system extension would follow local roads including Lick Creek Road, Bridge Fork Road, Pine Ridge Road, Gene Jones Road, Poplar Springs Road, Farm Ridge Road, and Newtown Road.

3.2 Land Use

Land use in the vicinity of the PAA is rural, consisting of primarily residential properties situated along ridges. The vast majority of the proposed sewer lines would be constructed in road right-of-ways. As a result, the sewer lines would be installed in previously disturbed areas. After installation of the sewer line, existing conditions would be re-established.

There would be no impacts to land use as a result of either the PAA or NAA.

3.3 Climate

Executive Order (E.O.) 13653 requires Federal actions to address climate change. The South Fork Cumberland Watershed's mid-latitude position makes it susceptible to highly variable weather throughout the year. The watershed's climate is greatly influenced by oceanic and atmospheric interactions. The watershed experiences seasonal weather patterns throughout the year, with climatic conditions typical of summer, fall, winter, and spring seasons for the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast Regions of the United States. Variability in weather tends to be greater during the late winter, spring, and fall seasons within the watershed. Summers are usually characterized by warm to hot weather with periods of high humidity. Winters within the watershed are typically mild, with areas at higher elevations experiencing slightly harsher winters and greater snowfall. Fall is typically the driest season within the watershed, while spring is typically the wettest.

The PAA would not involve any activity that could affect the environment in regard to climate change. This region is not projected to experience severe drought conditions and is instead



expected to experience more precipitation in the future. As a result, the condition of the PAA would not likely be influenced by future climate change. For the same reasons, there are also no impacts expected with respect to climate as a result of the NAA.

3.4 Terrestrial Habitat

The majority of the PAA would be constructed on previously disturbed areas, including road right-of-ways; therefore, potential impacts to vegetation would be minimal and temporary. Construction activities associated with the sewer system extension would take place in previously disturbed areas along existing road right-of-ways. The areas would be graded and reseeded with native grasses in order to be returned to pre-construction conditions upon completion of construction activities. Only short-term temporary impacts during construction are anticipated to occur from the PAA. Long-term beneficial positive impacts would occur from the PAA with the elimination of standing sewage.

As the selection of the NAA would entail no changes to the project area, there are no impacts to terrestrial habitat anticipated as part of the NAA.

3.5 Floodplains

Executive Order 11988 requires Federal agencies to consider the potential effects of their proposed actions to floodplains. In order to determine the PAA's potential floodplain impact, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) was reviewed and the proposed project area is not located within the base floodplain or the area that has a 1-percent chance or greater of having a flood in any given year. (<https://www.fema.gov/floodplain-management/flood-zones>). The proposed sewer system would be buried and result in no change in grade or elevation.

Therefore, no impacts to floodplains are anticipated to occur from the PAA or NAA.

3.6 Prime and Unique Farmland

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) requires Federal agencies to minimize the conversion of prime and unique farmland to non-agricultural uses. The project area follows road right-of-ways, and previously disturbed areas. Based upon review of the project, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) determined that since the road right-of-way is considered previously converted ground and the pipeline is 3 inches or less, that the FPPA would not apply to this proposed project.

Based upon the NRCS determination, a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating does not need to be completed and the PAA would have no impact on Prime or Unique, Statewide, or Locally important farmland (Appendix B).

There are no impacts to Prime and Unique Farmland anticipated as part of the NAA.



3.7 Aquatic Habitat/Water Quality

McCreary County is located within the South Fork Cumberland Watershed. Several waterbodies within the watershed are listed on Kentucky's 2012 Section 303(d) list of impaired waters. Implementation of the PAA would not result in any new discharges of a pollutant. The PAA will protect the overall quality of ground water in the area. Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used throughout the project to prevent runoff from the project into adjacent surface waters.

Construction of the PAA will avoid any permanent and temporary in-stream impacts. Therefore, under the Clean Water Act, a 404 permit is not needed for this action. Prior to construction, Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection (KYDEP) Division of Water (DOW) shall be contacted and construction of the wastewater components of this project will not begin until written approval is received from DOW.

In the long term, the implementation of the PAA is expected to have a positive impact on the aquatic habitat and water quality within the proposed project area. Implementation of the PAA would ensure that untreated sewage does not reach ground water or area streams.

Under the NAA, aquatic impacts would continue in nearby streams and groundwater due to the numerous failing septic systems and straight piping. The water quality in the project area would remain impaired.

3.8 Wetlands

National Wetland Inventory Maps (NWI) were reviewed for the proposed project area and a site reconnaissance was conducted to determine validity of NWI Maps. NWI maps indicated that there are no wetlands adjacent to the project area aside from the Levisa Fork River, which will not be impacted by the proposed project. The site reconnaissance also indicated no wetlands are located within the proposed project area. No impacts to wetlands are anticipated as part of the PAA or NAA.

3.9 Wild and Scenic Rivers

No designated State Wild or Scenic Rivers are present within the Project Area. Therefore, no impacts to these resources are anticipated as part of the PAA or NAA.

3.10 Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste (HTRW)

A Phase 1 HTRW Environmental Site Assessment was conducted for the Revelo to Stearns Sewer System Extensions Project to identify environmental conditions and to identify the potential presence of HTRW contamination located in the project's construction work limits. Below are the following Phase 1 HTRW findings:



The Corps HTRW staff determined the Phase 1 HTRW showed no evidence of recognized environmental conditions with the property and no further HTRW action is required. Therefore, no impacts to HTRW are anticipated with the PAA.

The NAA would not result in ground disturbing activities, and would not disturb areas of HTRW contamination; therefore, there are no HTRW impacts associated with the NAA. A clearance memorandum was signed by Corps HTRW staff May 28, 2015.

3.11 Cultural Resources

Coordination with the Kentucky Heritage Council (KHC) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) was initiated by Environmental Assessment Services. KHC determined that there will be no historic properties affected by the proposed undertaking.

In a letter dated October 22, 2014, KHC concurred with the determination that no further consultation under Section 106 of the NHPA is necessary (Appendix B). There are no architectural resources eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places that would be impacted by this project; therefore, no additional consultation is necessary for architectural resources.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the Corps has made the determination that no historic properties will be affected by the PAA. Additionally, there would be no impacts associated with the NAA.

3.12 Threatened and Endangered Species

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) website, there are 15 listed species in McCreary County, Kentucky. They are the endangered Cumberland bean (*pearlymussel*) (*Villosa trabalis*), Littlewing pearlymussel (*Pegias fibula*), Cumberland combshell (*Epioblasma brevidens*), Cumberland elktoe (*Alasmidonta atropurpurea*), Oyster mussel (*Epioblasma capsaeformis*), Fluted kidneyshell (*Ptychobranchus subentum*), Palezone shiner (*Notropis albizonatus*), Cumberland darter (*Etheostoma susanae*), Dusktail darter (*Etheostoma percnurum*), Cumberland sandwort (*Arenaria cumberlandensis*), Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the threatened Blackside dace (*Phoxinus cumberlandensis*), Cumberland rosemary (*Conradina verticillate*), Virginia spiraea (*Spiraea virginiana*), and Northern Long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*).

In correspondence dated September 15, 2014, the USFWS stated “no significant adverse impacts to wetlands or federally listed endangered or threatened species are anticipated from this proposal” (Appendix B). The proposed sewer force main would primarily occur in road right-of-ways, not require tree removal, and no in-water work would occur. Therefore, the Corps’s Huntington District has determined that the proposed action would have no effect on the Indiana Bat or Northern Long-eared Bat given no tree clearing would occur and the area is previously disturbed. The Corp’s Huntington District has also determined that the proposed action would have no effect on endangered or threatened aquatic species as no in-water work would occur. Furthermore, the proposed project would have no effect on endangered or threatened flowering



plant species as work would occur in previously disturbed road right-of-ways that do not fall within these species habitat requirements. No further Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act is required.

No impacts to threatened or endangered species are anticipated to occur from the PAA or the NAA.

3.13 Air Quality

According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) website, McCreary County, Kentucky is classified as “in attainment” (maintaining applicable standards) for all criteria pollutants. Emissions from construction equipment would occur during the construction period. Contractors would operate all equipment in accordance with local, State, and Federal regulations. The PAA is exempted by 40 CFR Part 93.153 from making a conformity determination, since estimated emissions from construction equipment would not be expected to exceed *deminimis* levels, direct emissions of a criteria pollutant, or its precursors. Any impacts would be short-term, localized, and would occur only during construction phase activities. Impacts to air quality under the PAA would be temporary during construction and minor.

No impacts to air quality are anticipated to occur as part of the NAA.

3.14 Noise

Noise associated with the PAA would be limited to that generated during construction. The noise associated with construction would be short in duration and would only occur during daylight hours. Noise is measured as Day Night average noise levels (DNL) in “A-weighted” decibels that the human ear is most sensitive to (dBA). There are no Federal standards for allowable noise levels. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development Guidelines, DNLs below 65 dBA are normally acceptable levels of exterior noise in residential areas. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) denotes a DNL above 65 dBA as the level of significant noise impact. Several other agencies, including the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, use a DNL criterion of 55 dBA as the threshold for defining noise impacts in suburban and rural residential areas. According to Dr. Paul Schomer in his 2001 Whitepaper, while there are numerous thresholds for acceptable noise in residential areas, research suggests an area’s current noise environment, which has experienced noise in the past, may reasonably expect to tolerate a level of noise about 5 dBA higher than the general guidelines. The Corps Safety and Health Requirements Manual provides criteria for temporary permissible noise exposure levels (see Table 3.1 below), for consideration of hearing protection or the need to administer sound reduction controls.



Duration/day (hours)	Noise level (dBA)
8	90
6	92
4	95
3	97
2	100
1.5	102
1	105

Construction noise would be similar to that of farm equipment and other small machinery used in the local area. A backhoe, end loader, road grader and/or vibratory roller are examples of equipment that is likely to be used during construction. Each emits noise levels around 85 dBA at 45 feet. Construction equipment would be operated during daylight hours when many residents are at work; therefore a reasonable exposure time of two hours would be expected during the time residents may be home during the day. Peak outdoor noise levels ranging from 78-90 dBA would occur during the time in which equipment is directly in front of or in proximity to homes and businesses (within 25-100 feet). A maximum noise exposure of approximately 98 dBA, for one hour could occur if equipment were within 10 feet of homes and business. The noise projections do not account for screening objects, such as trees, outbuildings or other objects that muffle and reduce the noise being emitted. The outdoor construction noise would be further muffled inside the home. While the construction noise generated would be considered unacceptable according to HUD and FAA standards, these limited exposures and time intervals are still within allowable Corps safety levels. Further, they are similar to typical neighborhood noise generated by gas powered lawnmowers in the local area, which could range from 90-95 dBA at three feet and 70-75 dBA at 100 feet. Residents being exposed to these noise levels would occur if/when residents are home and outdoors.

Due to daytime construction and the short and limited duration of elevated noise levels associated with the PAA, impacts from noise to local residences would be temporary and minor. There would be no change in noise with the NAA.

3.15 Socioeconomic Conditions

Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 requires Federal actions to address environmental justice in minority populations and low-income populations. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2014 population estimate for McCreary County, Kentucky was 17,863 and does not contain significant minority populations. The 2013 census indicates McCreary County is 98% white and has a median household income of \$20,972 compared with the median household income of \$43,036 for the State of Kentucky. Individuals residing in the county below the poverty level is 30.3% compared to 18.8% statewide.

Service provided by the sewer force main distribution lines would serve approximately 85 customers whose presently have failing septic systems and illegal straight pipe discharge systems. Implementation of the PAA would aid in protection of ground water quality in the area thereby improving the living environment for all residents. No homes or buildings would be



impacted by the proposed project; therefore, the PAA meets the directive of EO 12898 by avoiding any disproportionately high adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low income populations.

No impacts to minority or low income populations are anticipated to occur from the NAA.

3.16 Aesthetics

The project area is rural, primarily consisting of residential properties. Temporary disturbance of the local aesthetics would be anticipated during construction of the sewer force main; however after construction, the excavated sites would be restored to original conditions.

Neither the PAA nor NAA would significantly impact local aesthetics.

3.17 Transportation and Traffic

The proposed sewer system would follow local roads such as Lick Creek Road, Bridge Fork Road, Pine Ridge Road, Gene Jones Road, Poplar Springs Road, Farm Ridge Road, and Newtown Road in the Revelo and Stearns area. Existing local traffic patterns in the area consist of small streets and access roads to homes. Construction of the PAA in and along existing road rights-of-way would involve some delays and potential detours in the normal traffic flow. If detours would occur, the distance associated with road detours would be relatively short and temporary in nature. Prior to construction, the public would be informed about areas under construction and possible road closures or traffic delays. Construction on and near road surfaces would be in compliance with Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) guidelines. All appropriate KYTC guidelines for traffic control would be implemented and emergency access would be maintained. Impacts anticipated to occur from the PAA would be minimal and temporary.

No impacts to transportation and traffic are anticipated to occur from the NAA.

3.18 Health and Safety

The PAA has been designed to eliminate sewage entering ground water and area streams and provide safe and sanitary service to the Revelo and Stearns areas. As previously stated residents in the communities of Revelo and Stearns do not have access to a sewer system extension and are using inadequate failing septic systems and illegal straight piping. Providing a safe sanitary system is necessary to prevent the possibility of untreated sewage from reaching ground water and polluting streams. Therefore, the PAA is anticipated to have a long term beneficial impact on health and safety of the project area.

Under the NAA, current illegal straight piping and failing septic systems in the project area would continue; perpetuating health and safety concerns.



3.19 Cumulative Effects

The Corps must consider the cumulative effects of the proposed project on the environment as stipulated in the NEPA. Cumulative effects are "the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or Non-Federal) or person undertakes such actions". Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR Part 1508.7 Council on Environmental Quality [CEQ] Regulations).

The cumulative effects analysis is based on the potential effects of the proposed project when added to similar impacts from other projects in the region. An inherent part of the cumulative effects analysis is the uncertainty surrounding actions that have not yet been fully developed. The CEQ regulations provide for the inclusion of uncertainties in the analysis and states that "when an agency is evaluating reasonably foreseeable significant adverse effects on the human environment...and there is incomplete or unavailable information, the agency shall always make clear that such information is lacking" (40 CFR 1502.22).

Temporal and geographical limits for this project must be established in order to frame the analysis. These limits can vary by the resources that are affected. The construction of the sewer line would have temporary and insignificant negative impacts of the environment. Resources which would show long term beneficial effects from the project would be health and safety. The temporal limits for assessment of this impact would initiate in 1972 with the passage of the Clean Water Act and end 50 years after completion of this project. The geographical extent would be broadened to consider effects beyond the PAA. The geographical extent considered is the South Fork Cumberland Watershed.

Several tributaries of the South Fork Cumberland Watershed are listed on Kentucky's 2012 Section 303(d) list of impaired waters due to siltation, pH, and E.coli. Some of the suspected leading causes of impaired water are mining and failing septic systems, etc. In the past, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources completed a 2013 Wildlife Action Plan which focused on geographic areas that had the largest number of species with the greatest conservation need. The South Fork Cumberland Watershed was identified as an aquatic conservation area. The Cumberland River Compact was founded in 1997 with the mission to improve the quality of water in the Cumberland River Basin. The Cumberland River Compact is currently working in the watershed with other State partners to develop a basin report, implement, and demonstrate stormwater treatment, dam inventory, and education. In the future, watershed programs may address stormwater treatment and other maintenance activities. Impairment of the South Fork Cumberland Watershed is expected to continue but if the proposed actions are implemented, a cleaner, healthier watershed would be promoted. Water quality standards and regulations are expected to remain as stringent today as in the future.

Section 4.0 documents the existing environment and potential environmental effects of the PAA and NAA with respect to existing conditions. The effects of the PAA, as discussed beforehand, are localized and minor. Past actions that may result in similar effects may include upgrading of other wastewater utilities in the watershed. No reasonably foreseeable future actions that would have similar impacts as the proposed action were identified. In scoping cumulative effects



issues, no resources were identified as having a potential to be significantly affected. Only minor and temporary impacts to ecological resources would be sustained with the implementation of the PAA. These resources would be fully reestablished upon completion of construction.

The availability of Federal funds through programs, such as the 531 Program, to assist communities with installation and construction of water-related environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development projects in Kentucky is an additional benefit to the area. The significance of this action on health and safety would be positive. Given the current program is in place for the foreseeable future and the overall beneficial effect from implementation of the PAA, there is expected to be a positive, though small, cumulative effect on health and safety based on past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions.

4.0 Status of Environmental Compliance

The PAA is in full compliance with all local, State, and Federal statutes as well as Executive Orders is complete. This compliance is documented below in Table 2

Table 2 - Environmental Compliance Status			
Statute/Executive Order	Full	Partial	N/A
National Environmental Policy Act (considered partial until the FONSI is signed)		X	
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act	X		
Endangered Species Act	X		
Clean Water Act	X		
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	X		
Clean Air Act	X		
National Historic Preservation Act	X		
Archeological Resources Protection Act			N/A
Comprehensive, Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act	X		
Resource Conservation and Recovery Act	X		
Toxic Substances Control Act	X		
Quiet Communities Act	X		
Farmland Protection Act	X		
Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management	X		
Executive Order 11990 Protection of Wetlands	X		
Executive Order 12898 Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations	X		

*Anticipated FONSI signature to occur after public review



5.0 REQUIRED COORDINATION

5.1 Agencies Contacted

Direct coordination with the USFWS, USDA, and KHC was completed prior to publication of the draft EA. Agency correspondence is included in Appendix B.

5.2 Public Review and Comments

The draft EA and FONSI will be made available for public review and comment for a period of 30 days, as required under NEPA. A Notice of Availability will be published in the local newspaper, The McCreary Voice, advising the public of this document's availability for review and comment. A copy of the draft EA will also be placed in the McCreary County Public Library and made available on-line at <http://www.lrh.Corps.army.mil/Missions/PublicReview.aspx>. The mailing list for the draft EA is located in Appendix C.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Revelo and Stearns areas' local septic systems are failing. Residents within the communities of Revelo and Stearns are currently on failing septic systems or illegal straight pipes. The proposed project would provide the area with a sewage system that would minimize ground water and stream pollution. The sewer system would follow local roads and connect to the existing wastewater treatment plant. No significant adverse impacts have been identified as a result of implementation of the proposed sewer system.

Construction would mainly take place on previously disturbed land. Health and safety would be realized immediately with project implementation. Effects associated with construction would be minor and temporary. BMPs would be implemented during construction to minimize impacts to residents and the environment. Therefore, the PAA would not be expected to have significant impacts on the human environment.