Public Notice Announcing Availability of an Environmental Assessment

PROPOSED TUOLUMNE UTILITIES DISTRICT SONORA REGIONAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

SONORA REGIONAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY
SONORA, CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Rural Development

APPLICANT: Tuolumne Utilities District

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service (RUS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

ACTION: Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the USDA RUS, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, is issuing an environmental assessment (EA) in connection with possible impacts related to a project proposed by the Tuolumne Utilities District (District), of Sonora, California. The proposal is for construction of the Sonora Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvements Project (Project).

The District owns and operates the Sonora Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (SRWWTF). The proposed Project will provide replacement of existing polishing ponds with a new activated sludge treatment facility. The new facilities will be renovated or constructed in the location of existing buildings and polishing ponds, which will be drained and filled with material to be generated onsite. The proposed Project area will be conducted within property owned by the District; as such, no land purchases, easements, rights-of-way procurement, etc. will be required for proposed Project-related activities.

The District has submitted an application to USDA RUS for funding the proposal.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Antonio Ybarra, Community Programs Specialist, USDA Rural Development, 4625 W. Jennifer Street, Suite 126, Fresno, CA 93722, Phone: 559-490-8035, antonio.ybarra@usda.gov, Erik D. Johnson P.E., District Engineer, Tuolumne Utilities District, 18885 Nugget Blvd. Sonora, CA 95370 209-532-5536 ejohnson@tudwater.com

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The SRWWTF Improvements Project (proposed Project) is located in the City of Sonora in Tuolumne County, California at the existing District SRWWTF. The proposed Project is located within the Sonora U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangle map at Township 1N, Range 14E, and Section 1. The Project vicinity map is included as Figure 1.

The proposed Project will provide replacement of existing trickling filter processes and polishing ponds with a new activated sludge wastewater treatment facility consisting of the following: headworks primary screening and grit removal, new activated sludge extended aeration secondary treatment processing, new secondary clarifiers, new cloth disk filters, new chlorine disinfection facilities, renovated sludge digestion to aerated digestion, renovated secondary clarifiers to sludge thickeners, and new sludge dewatering facilities. A new administration and electrical building will be constructed adjacent to the treatment facility. A second new building will contain headworks and sludge dewatering systems. The existing digestion building will be a renovated for continued use. Existing septage receiving station, headworks, primary clarifiers, trickling filters, and existing office/lab building will be demolished as part of the project. The existing Emergency Storage Basin will be lined and reused in the proposed Project. The new facilities will be constructed in the location of the existing polishing ponds to minimize operations disturbance during construction. The polishing pond land area will be reclaimed by draining and filling the ponds with approximately 90,000 cubic yards of local fill material generated onsite.
The SRWWTF receives a combination of three influent waste streams: 1) septage, 2) raw sewage, and 3) primary effluent from the Twain Harte Community Service District (THCSD). The primary source of the wastewater is municipal. Average annual wastewater inflow was approximately 1.7 MGD in 2018-2019. Concentrations of particulate, suspended, and dissolved constituents have increased in the past 10 years due to water conservation and increasing regulation of septic systems, such that the load of constituents has increased. The new facility will be designed for an annual average daily flow of 2.0 MGD and a maximum daily flow of 5.0 MGD.

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES AND ESTIMATED SCHEDULE: Construction activities will include grading, site preparation, excavation, concrete placement, and mechanical and electrical equipment installation. The proposed Project construction is anticipated to take place in 2021 and 2022. The total length of proposed Project construction is anticipated to take approximately 18 months but could extend as long as 24 months. Construction is expected to take place Monday through Friday from 7am to 5pm.

Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (Stantec), an environmental consultant, prepared an environmental assessment for USDA Rural Utilities Service (USDA RUS) that describes the proposed Project, assesses the proposed Project's environmental impacts, and summarizes as applicable any mitigation measures used to minimize environmental effects. USDA RUS has conducted an independent evaluation of the environmental assessment and believes that it accurately assesses the impacts of the proposed Project. No significant impacts are expected as a result of the construction of the Project.

Questions and comments should be sent to USDA RUS at the address provided. USDA RUS will accept questions and comments on the environmental assessment for 14 days from the first date of publication of this notice.
Any final action by USDA RUS related to the proposed Project will be subject to, and contingent upon, compliance with all relevant Federal environmental laws and regulations and completion of environmental review procedures as prescribed by 7 CFR Part 1970, Environmental Policies and Procedures.
DATED: 1st Publication – 7/14/20

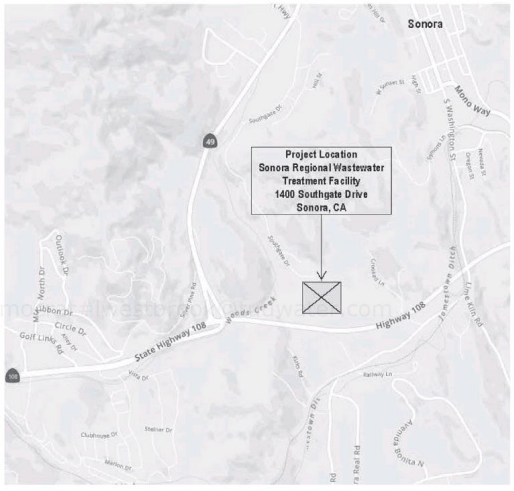

FIGURE 1: Vicinity Map

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