

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **Rural Development**

#### **Town of Waitsfield: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact**

**AGENCY:** Rural Utility Service, USDA

**ACTION:** Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact.

**SUMMARY:** The RUS has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a request for possible financing assistance to the Town of Waitsfield for their Wastewater System project in Washington County, Vermont.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** To obtain copies of the EA and FONSI, or for further information, contact: Alexander Gauthier, Community Programs Specialist, 28 Vernon Street, Suite 333, Brattleboro, VT 05301, 802.689.3034, [Alexander.Gauthier@usda.gov](mailto:Alexander.Gauthier@usda.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The proposed project consists of a village wastewater system to collect wastewater from Irasville and the Waitsfield Designated Village Center, providing primary treatment in shared neighborhood septic tanks, and pumping the wastewater effluent to a tertiary treatment and disposal system on a Town-owned site south of the village. The proposed wastewater project includes a Neighborhood STEP wastewater collection system that includes gravity sewer mains collecting to four municipal pump stations located at low points in the Service Area; a smaller neighborhood pump station to pump wastewater to the final pump station; municipal septic tanks provided prior to each pump station; a shared effluent forcemain connecting the pump stations to a gravity sewer line that drains to the final pump station; private STEP tanks for a small number of properties on the hill between the Village Residential District and Irasville to connect to the system; private STEP tanks for two properties located just below the final pump station; a pump station that will convey all of the effluent from the Service Area to the Munn Site treatment and disposal facility; a portable generator that can be used to power each of the municipal pump stations; a 95,040 gpd tertiary wastewater treatment facility located at the Munn Site. The installation and implementation of this plan will meet current design guidelines to improve quality and efficiency of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal and be less prone to leakage.

The proposed Project will utilize the Nationwide Programmatic Agreement Among the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Programs, National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers and The Advisory Council on historic Preservation for Sequencing Section 106 (NPA) to achieve conditional compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act for the purposes of obligating financial assistance only, and during the completion of Section 106 the agency will formally determine effects on historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Alternatives considered by RUS and the Town of Waitsfield include: No action; Connect remaining properties with private wells in the Irasville Commercial, Waitsfield Village Business, and Village Residential Zoning Districts to the water system; Provide increased disposal capacity at existing wastewater leachfields in well-suited soils within the Study Area; Develop

community wastewater systems on one or more different sites; Clustered Community Wastewater Disposal Systems. The RUS has reviewed and approved the EA for the proposed project.

The availability of the EA for public review was announced via notice in the following newspaper: The Valley Reporter on December 12th, 2024 and December 19th, 2024. A 14-day comment period was announced in the newspaper notices. The EA was also available for public review at the USDA Rural Development office as well as digitally via email.

Based on its EA, commitments made by the Town of Waitsfield, and public comments received, RUS has concluded that the project would have no significant impact (or no impacts) to water quality, wetlands, floodplains, land use, aesthetics, transportation, or human health and safety.

The proposed project will have no adverse effect on resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Agency has also concluded that the proposed project is not likely to affect federally listed threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat thereof. The proposed project would not disproportionately affect minority and/or low-income populations.

No other potential significant impacts resulting from the proposed project have been identified. Therefore, RUS has determined that this FONSI fulfills its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR §§ 1500-1508), and USDA Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970) for its action related to the project.

RUS is satisfied that the environmental impacts of the proposed project have been adequately addressed. RUS federal action would not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment, and as such it will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for its action related to the proposed project.

Dated: 12/27/2024