

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Baldwin Wastewater Facility Improvements
St. Croix County, Wisconsin**

**Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture**

Village of Baldwin

**Prepared by:
Joseph M. Dorava
Rural Development, USDA**

May 19, 2021

A. INTRODUCTION

Village of Baldwin plans to submit a financing request to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (RD) to construct the proposed Wastewater Facility Improvements (Project) in St. Croix County, Wisconsin. RD is considering this financing request. Prior to taking a federal action (i.e., providing financial assistance), RD is required to complete an environmental impact analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (U.S.C. 4231 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and RD's NEPA implementing regulations, Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970). After completing an independent analysis of an environmental report prepared by the Village of Baldwin and its consultant, RD concurred with its scope and content. In accordance with 7 CFR § 1970.102, RD adopted the report and issued it as the Agency's Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Project. RD finds that the EA is consistent with federal regulations and meets the standards for an adequate assessment. Village of Baldwin published newspaper notices, announcing the availability of the EA for public review, in accordance with 7 CFR § 1970.102. In addition, RD considers the proposed Project an undertaking subject to review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 16 USC 470(f), and its implementing regulation, "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 CFR Part 800).

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE/NEED

The overall purpose of the Project is for construction of Wastewater Facility Improvements. RD has reviewed the purpose and need for the Project and determined that the proposal will meet the present and future needs of the Village of Baldwin .

C. ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED

1. No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, RD would not provide financial assistance to the Village of Baldwin , and/or the proposed Project would not be constructed. This alternative would not assist the Village of Baldwin in providing wastewater treatment consistent with regulations.

2. Action Alternative (Preferred Alternative)

Under the Action Alternative, RD would consider financing the proposed Project, and the Village of Baldwin would construct the Project. The proposed project would construct Wastewater Facility Improvements.

D. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The analyses in the EA documented that the proposed Project would have no adverse effects to farm land, formally classified lands, flood plains, wetlands, cultural resources, water resources, water quality, coastal resources, social and environmental justice, transportation, aesthetics, human health and safety. In accordance with the requirements of § 1970.104(b), a summary of anticipated impacts on the human environment is provided below, including any mitigation measures deemed necessary to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts. Village of Baldwin is responsible for implementing these measures.

The effects on biological resources, which include northern long eared bat will be mitigated with limitations placed on when trees can be cleared from the project site. The increase in noise, especially during construction will be mitigated with an existing plan of operations which mitigates noise production levels.

E. PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

A local newspaper advertisement and legal notice, announcing the availability of the EA and participation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, were published on May 11th and 18th, in The Baldwin Bulletin, and, on the Village web page on May 4th. A copy of the EA was available for public review at USDA RD by contacting Joseph M. Dorava, State Environmental Coordinator, 5417 Clem's Way, Stevens Point WI 54482, 715-345-7649, joseph.dorava@usda.gov. The EA is also available for public review at Short Elliott Hendrickson, 329 Jay St. Ste 301, La Crosse, WI 54601. The 15-day comment period ended on May 19, 2021. RD received no comments.

F. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on its EA, RD has concluded that the proposed Project would have no significant effects to the quality of the human environment. The proposed Project will have no effects on historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and no effects to federally listed species or designated critical habitat. The proposed Project would not disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations.

In accordance with 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 RD's Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970), RD has determined that the environmental impacts of the proposed Project have been adequately addressed and that no significant impacts to the quality of the human environment would result from construction and operation of the proposed Project. Any final action by RD related to the proposed Project will be

subject to, and contingent upon, compliance with all relevant federal and state environmental laws and regulations. Because RD action will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment, RD will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for its potential federal action associated with the proposed Project.

G. LOAN REVIEW AND RIGHT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

This FONSI is not a decision on a loan application and therefore not an approval of the expenditure of federal funds. Issuance of the FONSI and its notices concludes RD environmental review process. The ultimate decision on loan approval depends upon conclusion of this environmental review process in addition to financial and engineering reviews. Issuance of the FONSI and publication of notices will allow for these reviews to proceed. The decision to provide financial assistance also is subject to the availability of loan funds for the designated purpose in RD budget. There are no provisions to appeal this decision (i.e., issuance of a FONSI). Legal challenges to the FONSI may be filed in Federal District Court under the Administrative Procedures Act.

H. APPROVAL

This Finding of No Significant Impact is effective upon signature.

Dated: May 19, 2021

NATHAN BILLINGHURST
Community Programs Director
Water and Environmental Program
USDA Rural Development

Contact Person

For additional information on this FONSI and EA, please contact Joseph M. Dorava, State Environmental Coordinator, 5417 Clem's Way, Stevens Point WI 54482, 715-345-7649, joseph.dorava@usda.gov.