



John R. Kasich, Governor
Mary Taylor, Lt. Governor
Craig W. Butler, Director

January 26, 2016

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TO ALL INTERESTED CITIZENS, ORGANIZATIONS,
AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

**NORTHWESTERN WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT
RUDOLPH ROAD FORCEMAIN EXTENSION PROJECT
CS391432-0025**

The purpose of this notice is to seek public input and comments on Ohio EPA's preliminary decision that a Supplemental Environmental Study is not required to implement the recommendations discussed in the attached Environmental Assessment of a general plan submitted by the entity mentioned above.

How were environmental issues considered?

The Water Pollution Control Loan Fund program requires the inclusion of environmental factors in the decision-making process. Ohio EPA has done this by incorporating a detailed analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed alternatives in its review and approval process. Environmental information was developed as part of the general plan, as well as through the general plan review process and during site inspections. The Agency's preliminary Environmental Assessment found that the project does not require the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Study.

Why is a Supplemental Environmental Study not required?

Our environmental review concluded that significant environmental impacts will not result from the action. Any adverse impacts have either been eliminated by changes in the general plan or have been reduced by the implementation of the mitigative measures discussed in the attached Assessment.

How do I get more information?

A map depicting the location of the project is included as part of the Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Assessment presents additional information on the project, alternatives that were considered, impacts of the action and the basis for our decision. Further information can be obtained by calling or writing the contact person listed in the back of the Environmental Assessment.

How do I submit comments?

Any comments supporting or disagreeing with this preliminary decision should be submitted to me at the letterhead address. We will take no action on this general plan for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice in order to receive and consider any comments.

What happens next?

In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. The entity will then be eligible to receive loan assistance from this agency.

Please bring any information that you feel should be considered to our attention. We appreciate your interest in the environmental review process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Jerome H. Rouch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Jerry Rouch, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For
Northwestern Water and Sewer District
Wood County**

**Rudolph Road Forcemain Extension Project
Loan Number CS391432-0025**

**Applicant: Jerry Greiner, President
Northwestern Water and Sewer District
12560 Middleton Pike
Bowling Green, OH 43402**

Project Summary

The Northwestern Water and Sewer District (NWWSD) proposes to install a system of small diameter force mains and individual home grinder pumps to collect wastewater from 37 homes primarily located along Rudolph Road, between Defiance Pike and Bays Road (see Figures 1 and 2). The purpose of the system is to take failing individual home sewage treatment systems (HSTS) out of service, thereby eliminating high bacterial counts and septic conditions in local surface waters. The project will connect 37 new sewer customers to public sewers owned and operated by NWWSD. The project has a total capital cost of \$773, 628.05. The approximate construction schedule is April, 2016 through August, 2016.

Existing Conditions

The project area, in an unincorporated area of Liberty Township, Wood County, bounded by Mitchell Road to the west and South Dixie Highway to the east, is primarily residential and agricultural. Sampling and investigation within the project area by Ohio EPA found high fecal coliform and E. coli values in surface water bodies due to inadequate or failing on-site or aeration HSTS, which were discharging raw or partially treated sewage into waters of the state. These unsanitary conditions are a violation of Ohio's general water quality criteria set forth in Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Rule 3745-1-04, and demonstrated the existence of a public health nuisance in accordance with OAC Rule 3745-1-04. Due to unsuitable local soil conditions and hydrology, it was determined that the replacement or repair of existing on-site HSTS would not be a viable solution to remedy the unsanitary conditions. Based on these violations, and due to soil conditions, Ohio EPA issued NWWSD Director's Final Findings and Orders (DFFO) on March 12, 2010 to construct sewers in the Rudolph Road project area to abate water pollution and long-standing unsanitary conditions. In May, 2011, NWWSD submitted a wastewater collection and treatment general plan response to the DFFOs. This plan included a review of project alternatives and probable costs.

Alternatives Analysis

The Clean Water Act Section 208 Areawide Water Quality Management Plan prepared by the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) indicates that the ordered area is within the Wood County Facility Planning area, and requires wastewater from the Rudolph Road planning area to be transported to and treated by the City of Bowling Green Wastewater Treatment Plant. Therefore, Ohio EPA will not approve any other treatment options in this service area and no other treatment alternatives were given detailed consideration.

For conveyance in the planning area, NWWSD evaluated gravity sewers and small diameter low-pressure sewers and grinder pumps. Gravity sewers would have lower operation, maintenance and replacement costs than low-pressure small diameter sewers and grinder pumps. However, gravity sewers would require deep excavation into the roadways, resulting in unaffordable construction costs. Low pressure small diameter sewers and grinder pumps require significantly less excavation. The road shoulders in the planning area are wide enough to allow placement of small diameter sewers without pavement excavation. For that reason, low-pressure small diameter sewers and grinder pumps were the selected conveyance alternative.

Project Description

A total of 7,064 linear feet (LF) of 1½-, 2-, and 3-inch diameter low-pressure sewers and 37 grinder pumps will be installed along the south side of Defiance Pike (west of Rudolph Road), along the west side of Rudolph Road (between Defiance Pike and just south of Bays Road), along the north side of Bays Road (east of Rudolph Road), and the south side of Bays Road (west of Rudolph Road). One grinder pump with an air vent will be installed on each property in a permanent easement for servicing of the system. Electrical service connections and grinder pump alarm panels will be installed on each house. Sewage from the Rudolph Road project area will discharge to NWWSD's existing 6-inch sewer located at the northwest corner of Rudolph Road and Defiance Pike, which will in turn drain to the City of Bowling Green Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Approximately 5,400 LF of the construction will be by open-cut excavation and 1,700 LF installed by directional bore. Most work will be carried out in the public road right-of-way. Excavation on private property will be necessary to install electrical cables between the controls and the grinder pumps at each house.

Implementation

NWWSD proposes to fund the capital costs of the \$773,628.05 project through a combination of grants and loans. NWWSD received a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$568,900. NWWSD qualifies for 0 percent hardship rate through the WPCLF for this construction project, and will utilize this program to finance the \$204,728.05 balance. Borrowing at 0 percent will save NWWSD approximately \$71,500 over the life of the loan compared to

the current market rate of 3.1 percent. NWWSD will recover debt associated with the project from a monthly unit allocation fee of \$23.06 to be paid by the owner of each property receiving a grinder pump.

All homeowners in the project area currently have private HSTS, so they have not previously been charged for sewer service. Under the sewer rates that are effective in 2016, the residential sewer bill in the project area will be \$60.45 per month, or \$725 per year, based on a usage of 5,984 gallons per month. This is 1.7 percent of the median household income of \$41,723, which falls within affordability guidelines. Homeowners will receive a \$1.00 per month credit to their sewer bills to offset electrical bills, as their home electrical system will be used to energize their individual grinder pumps. Lastly, once the project is completed, the Wood County Health District will give homeowners a Notification to Connect; requiring the installation of a sanitary sewer lateral from the residence to the grinder pump. Abandonment of the existing HSTS (disconnection, crushing and filling of the septic tank) by a licensed contractor is also required of the homeowner. The estimated expense of installation of a sanitary sewer lateral and HSTS abandonment, if both actions are performed by single contractor/time, is \$1,500. While the homeowners will bear the cost of septic tank abandonment and lateral installation, limited grant and loan funding through the Community Development Block Grant and the USDA 504 Program are available to eligible low-income home owners to defray the costs for sewer lateral connection and HSTS abandonment.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

The following environmental features will not be affected by the project. Wetlands and scenic or recreational rivers are not present in the project area. Flood elevations will not be affected because there will be no above-grade structures in or near waterways. The project is not intended to serve additional development, nor is development expected to occur in the project area; thus, farmland loss and secondary impacts will not be issues with this project. Ground water and drinking water will not be affected because no sole-source aquifers are present in the project area and the project area is served by public water. Furthermore, the project components are watertight, preventing the contamination of ground water. Indiana bats and northern long-eared bats will not be affected because no tree clearing is intended as part of this project. No aquatic species will be affected because of the use of directional drilling to avoid in-stream construction and because protective measures for surface water during directional drilling (see Surface Water and Aquatic Habitat). Therefore, there will be no effects to threatened or endangered species.

The project has the potential to adversely affect the following environmental attributes, but the impacts will be avoided, mitigated or reduced to acceptable levels, as described below.

Surface Water and Aquatic Habitat: No in-stream work is proposed with this project. Directional boring will be performed under an unnamed tributary of the Middle Branch Portage River, with sediment and erosion controls at the launch and receiving pits. Prior to construction, the contractor will submit a plan to NWWSD and Ohio EPA for avoiding “frac-outs”, which are inadvertent extrusions of the lubricating bentonite used in the direction drilling process, or for cleaning up frac-outs if they do occur. Frac-outs can damage aquatic habitat. Implementing a frac-out plan will reduce the chances of water pollution or damage to any aquatic habitat that may be present in the unnamed tributary. Thus, the project has little chance of adversely affecting water quality through the discharge of material into waterways.

The NWWSD and the contractor will obtain a Stormwater General Construction Permit and develop a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) in accordance with the permit conditions and will cover erosion and sediment controls, soil stabilization, dewatering, the prevention of pollution by fuels and other materials, and prohibited discharges that will be necessary to prevent pollution of water of the state. Additionally, the SWPPP will prohibit the placement of excess excavated material in wetlands, stream channels and floodplains; prohibit the deposition of material stockpiles, including temporary soil stockpiles within the driplines of trees; and require measures to keep mud from building up on the streets. Provided the conditions in the General Construction Permit and SWPPP are followed, the project will have no long- or short-term adverse effect on surface waters.

Cultural Properties: All excavations will occur within previously disturbed areas, which are associated with the construction of roads and underground utilities. Because of the extent of prior disturbance, there is a low probability that intact archaeological properties are present. All installations will be subsurface with the exception of the grinder pump vents, disconnect switches and alarm panels, so no architectural features will be affected. Based on this information, Ohio EPA has made a finding that the proposed project will have no effect on unrecorded archaeological sites, or properties eligible or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In the event of archaeological finds during construction, contractors and subcontractors are required under Ohio Revised Code Section 149.53 to notify OHPO of any archaeological discoveries in the project area, and to cooperate with that entity (and

with Ohio EPA) in archaeological and historic surveys and salvage efforts when appropriate.

Air Quality: Wood County is in attainment of the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for ozone (smog), oxides of nitrogen (an ozone precursor), oxides of sulfur, lead, particulate matter and carbon monoxide. The operation of mobile construction equipment for this project will produce emissions of most of these pollutants, although in quantities too small, due to the limited scope and timeframe of construction, to place Wood County out of attainment of the NAAQS. These emissions will be reduced by the use of emission control equipment and the use of fuels that produce lower emissions of particulates, oxides of nitrogen and oxides of sulfur.

Based on this, the project as designed will have no short- or long-term adverse impact on air quality.

Noise, Dust and Odors: These will be unavoidable but temporary effects of construction. Construction equipment noise and diesel odors will be controlled by the use of emissions equipment and mufflers. Dust will be suppressed as needed with water. The roadways will be frequently swept to keep dust from forming on the pavement.

Based on the above, the project will have no adverse impact on existing levels of noise, dust and odors.

Traffic Control: The detail plans require the use of typical traffic management measure to effect temporary lane closures. The length of time that driveways will be closed within the right-of-way for pipe installation will be minimized. Residents will be notified of driveway closures. Access will be maintained at all times for emergency vehicles. The project will not result in permanent traffic re-routing. Based on this the project will have no significant adverse short- or long-term impact on local traffic patterns.

Local Economy: The annual cost to homeowners for sewer service of \$725 is approximately 1.7 percent of the median household income of \$41,723 in the project area. This is considered affordable. Homeowners in the project area are responsible for additional expenses related to repayment of this project and connection to the system. However, NWWSD's efforts to secure approximately 74 percent of the project's expense in grants, finance the remainder of the project through a 0 percent loan, and organize grants and loans for eligible low-income home owners to defray the costs for sewer lateral connection and HSTS abandonment make this project to eliminate environmental and public health impacts related to failing HSTS cost effective.

Public and Governmental Oversight

NWWSD has a long history of working with the general public and local public officials when proposed projects are to be located in their community. Residents of the project area were notified by mail of an August 18, 2015 public meeting to be held in Rudolph. This meeting was followed up by an August 19, 2015 mailing discussing the meeting and providing a location on NWWSD's website to view the meeting's presentation and other project details. Additionally, notifications of public hearings for the project were published in the July 6, 2013 and July 14, 2014 editions of the Sentinel-Tribune, and residents received mailings notifying them of public meetings to be held on August 27, 2015 and September 22, 2015 to discuss the project. To date, no significant issues have been identified during these meetings. Lastly, a public notice announcing the future availability of this Environmental Assessment will be posted on NWWSD and Ohio EPA – Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance websites. The public notice for the Environmental Assessment will be open for a 30-day public comment period. Thus, there have been adequate opportunities for information dissemination and public participation.

The following agencies reviewed this project's planning information:

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Conclusion

Based on the planning documentation, associated correspondence and public participation, we find that the construction and operation of the sanitary sewers in the project area will have no adverse long-term effect on farmland, coastal zones, surface water, ground water, floodplains, wetlands, aquatic or terrestrial habitat, endangered species, state or federal wildlife areas, state-designated scenic or recreational rivers, cultural properties, air quality or the local economy. It will have no long-term adverse effects with respect to noise, dust and odors. It will have long-term water quality benefits that will be associated with the replacement of failing HSTS with municipal sewage collection and treatment, and will eliminate a human health nuisance from exposure to raw sewage in local waterways.

For further information, please contact:

R. Eric Schultz
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049

Phone: (614) 644-3713

E-mail: eric.schultz@epa.ohio.gov

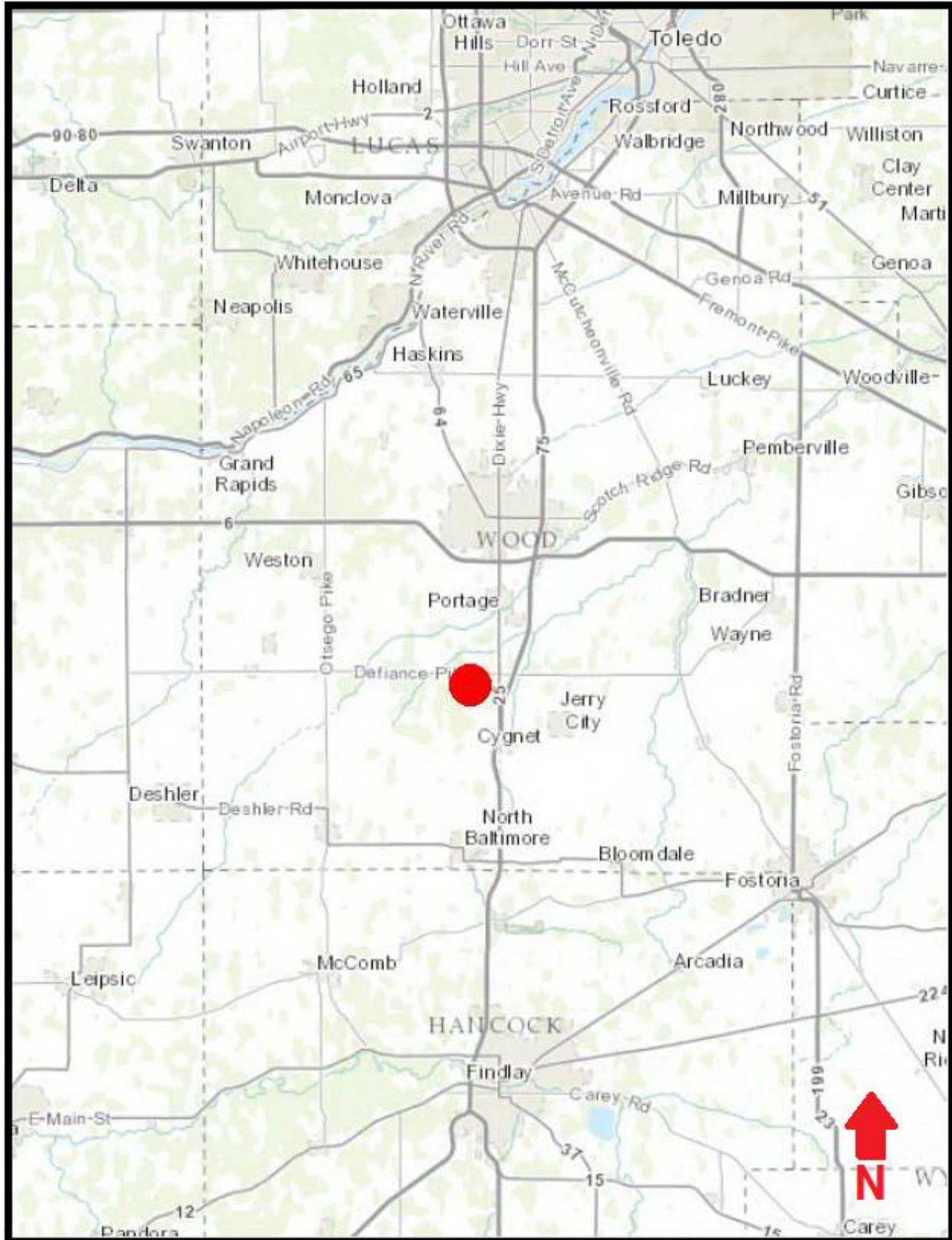


Figure 1: General project area.

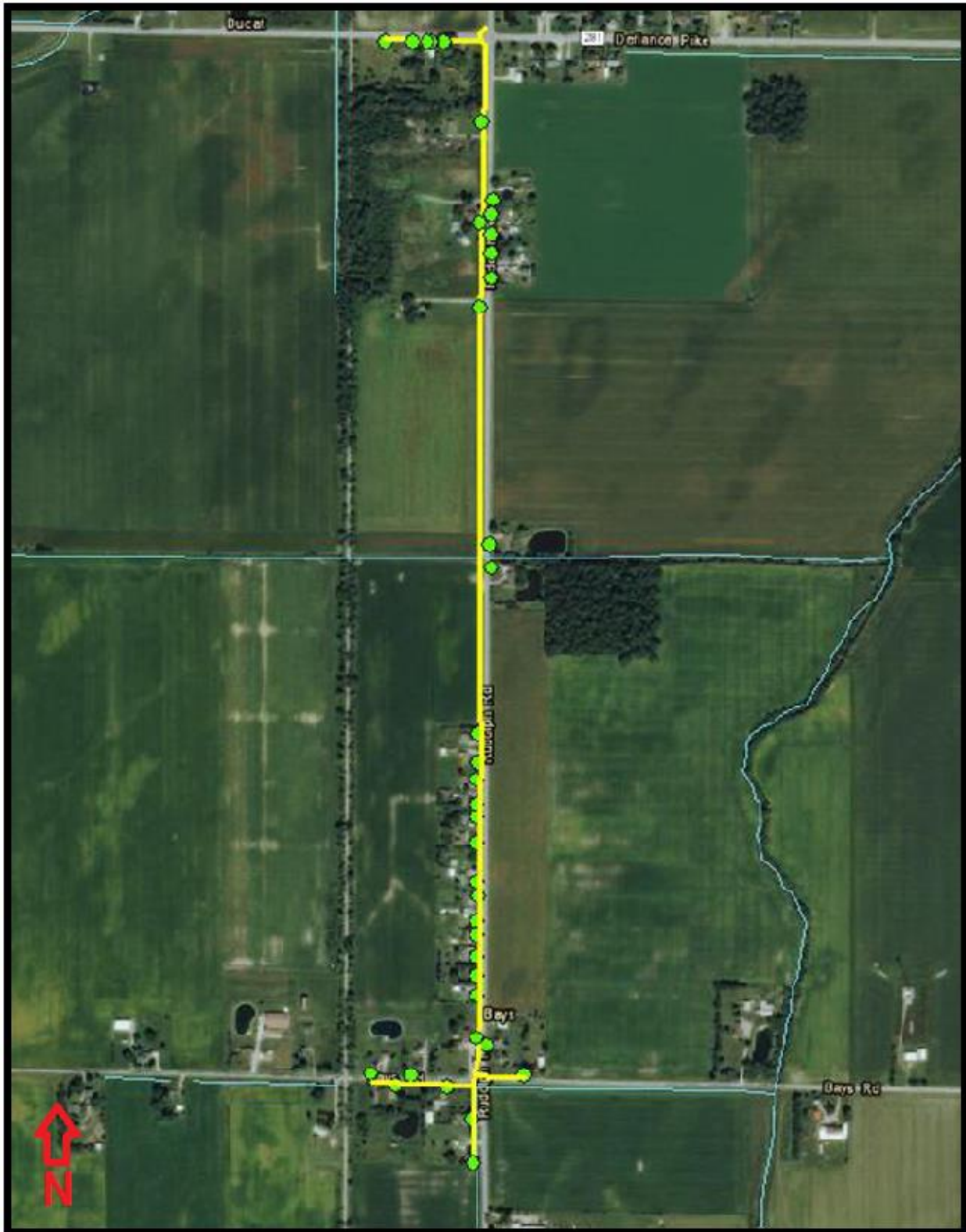


Figure 2: Project area (sewer forcemain in yellow with grinder pump locations in green).