



State of Louisiana

Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of Public Health - Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund

January 13, 2014

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TO ALL INTERESTED AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS:

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as administered by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH), Office of Public Health (OPH) in accordance with Act 39 of the 2006 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature in connection with the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (DWRLF) program, an environmental review has been performed and a *Finding of No Significant Impact* determined for the proposed action as described below:

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH WATER SYSTEM "SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN WITH ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS"

PWS Identification Number LA 1095003

Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (DWRLF) Project Number 1095003-01

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH, LOUISIANA

BACKGROUND: St. John the Baptist Parish is located along the Mississippi River approximately 30 miles west of New Orleans, Louisiana, as shown in Figure 1. Potable water is provided to residents of St. John the Baptist Parish by two water districts; St. John Water District 1 which serves residents on the east bank of the Mississippi River and St. John Water District 2 which serves residents on the west bank of the Mississippi River. District 1 includes two systems, the Ruddock/LaPlace system and the Lions system. The Ruddock/LaPlace system is a groundwater system consisting of two wells, raw water transmission line, three booster pumps, reverse osmosis treatment facility, five ground storage tanks, three elevated storage tanks and a distribution system serving the LaPlace area. The Lions system is a surface water system consisting of a surface water intake on the Mississippi River with two intake pumps, clarifiers, filters, disinfection, three ground storage tanks, two elevated storage tanks and a distribution system serving the Garyville and Reserve areas. District 2 includes the Edgard system which is a surface water system consisting of a surface water intake on the Mississippi River with two intake pumps, clarifier, filters, disinfection, two ground storage tanks, two elevated storage tanks and a distribution system serving most of the west bank of St. John the Baptist Parish. In addition, the Parish maintains the Pleasure Bend system which is a distribution system that uses water purchased from St. James Parish to serve a small remote community on the west bank of St. John the Baptist Parish. The latitude and longitude for the centermost point of the planning area is, respectively, 30°4'24.24"N and 90°31'50.88"W.

PURPOSE AND NEED: The purpose of this project is to provide the residents and customers of the water system with a reliable source of quality potable water for consumption. In order to maintain a high standard of compliance and reliability, the St. John the Baptist Water Department has identified a number of deficiencies that require corrective action. These include:

1. The existing altitude valves at four water distribution towers throughout the parish are old, non-functioning and in need of replacement;
2. The intake structure at the Lions Water Treatment Plant cannot operate at full capacity when the Mississippi River is at low stage due to unfavorable head conditions;
3. Five existing filters at the Lions Water Treatment Plant are non-functioning and in need of replacement; and,
4. The Edgard Water Treatment Plant has only one clarifier and has no backup means of clarification, which is in violation of federal regulations that require that plants designed to include clarification for processing surface water shall provide a minimum of two units each.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: This project will be executed in two phases. Phase I improvements include replacing four altitude valves which will help maintain pressure in the system, make adjustments and upgrades to the water intake structure at the Lions Pump Station which will allow it to operate at full capacity year-round, and to replace the five old filters with a new set of filters which will improve the reliability of the Lions Treatment Plant. All of the Phase I improvements consist of work on existing facilities at existing sites and qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion from the detailed environmental review requirements of NEPA. A Categorical Exclusion has been issued and work on Phase I is in progress.

Phase II of this project consists of a 14 inch potable water line bored under the Mississippi River to connect the Lions Water Treatment Plant on the east side of the river to the Edgard Water Treatment Plant on the west side. This potable water line will serve as a backup supply for the Edgard plant which will also eliminate the need for a second clarifier at the Edgard plant. It will also provide potable water to the west bank community in the event that the Edgard plant is out of service due to a storm or power outage.

DOCUMENTATION COORDINATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Coordination with the appropriate governmental agencies has been made as indicated in the Environmental Information Document (EID) prepared for this proposed project. No adverse environmental comments were issued for the proposed project. A public hearing was held at 6:00 p.m. on November 6, 2013 at St. John the Baptist Parish Council Chambers, 1801 Airline Hwy, LaPlace, Louisiana. The hearing was advertised on October 2, 2013 in the L'Observateur, a newspaper of general circulation in LaPlace, Louisiana. Any and all comments offered were addressed. The proposed project will be reviewed by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals to ensure that it complies with the State Sanitary Code for Water Supplies, Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC), Title 51, Chapter 12.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Based upon DWRLF's detailed review of the Environmental Information Document for St. John the Baptist Parish Water System, October 2013, as revised, and DWRLF's preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA), the proposed project is considered to be cost effective

and environmentally sound. Therefore, a preliminary decision not to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been made. Comments supporting or disagreeing with this decision may be submitted for consideration to the following address:

Thomas R. Griggs, P.E.
Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund
Office of Public Health
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals
P.O. Box 4489
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4489

After evaluating the comments received, DWRLF will make a final decision; however, no administrative action will be taken on this project for at least thirty (30) calendar days after release of this Finding of No Significant Impact.

Sincerely,



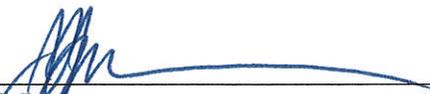
Jennifer (Meyer) Wilson,
Office of Public Health
DWRLF, Program Manager

1-15-14
Date



Jake Causey, P.E.
Office of Public Health
Chief Engineer

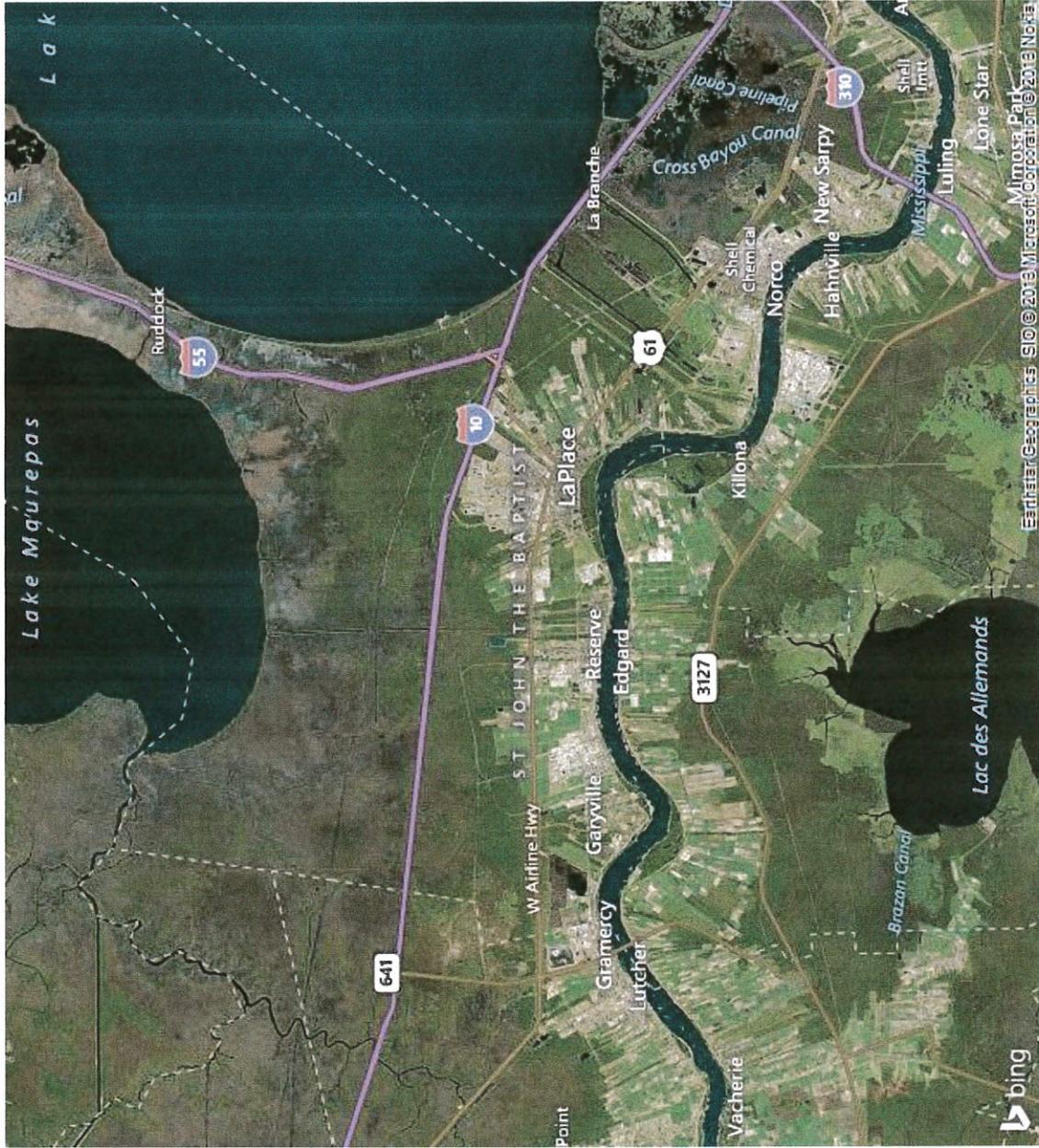
1/21/14
Date



J.T. Lane
Assistant Secretary
Office of Public Health
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

1/24/14
Date

Figure 1





State of Louisiana

Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of Public Health - Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund

January 13, 2014

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH WATER SYSTEM

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH, LOUISIANA

PWS Identification Number LA1095003

Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (DWRLF) Project Number 1095003-01

BACKGROUND: St. John the Baptist Parish is located along the Mississippi River approximately 30 miles west of New Orleans, Louisiana, as shown in Figure 1. Potable water is provided to residents of St. John the Baptist Parish by two water districts; St. John Water District 1 which serves residents on the east bank of the Mississippi River and St. John Water District 2 which serves residents on the west bank of the Mississippi River. District 1 includes two systems, the Ruddock/LaPlace system and the Lions system. The Ruddock/LaPlace system is a groundwater system consisting of two wells, raw water transmission line, three booster pumps, reverse osmosis treatment facility, five ground storage tanks, three elevated storage tanks and a distribution system serving the LaPlace area. The Lions system is a surface water system consisting of a surface water intake on the Mississippi River with two intake pumps, clarifiers, filters, disinfection, three ground storage tanks, two elevated storage tanks and a distribution system serving the Garyville and Reserve areas. District 2 includes the Edgard system which is a surface water system consisting of a surface water intake on the Mississippi River with two intake pumps, clarifier, filters, disinfection, two ground storage tanks, two elevated storage tanks and a distribution system serving most of the west bank of St. John the Baptist Parish. In addition, the Parish maintains the Pleasure Bend system which is a distribution system that uses water purchased from St. James Parish to serve a small remote community on the west bank of St. John the Baptist Parish. The latitude and longitude for the centermost point of the planning area is, respectively, 30°4'24.24"N and 90°31'50.88"W.

PURPOSE AND NEED: The purpose of this project is to provide the residents and customers of the water system with a reliable source of quality potable water for consumption. In order to maintain a high standard of compliance and reliability, the St. John the Baptist Water Department has identified a number of deficiencies that require corrective action. These include:

1. The existing altitude valves at four water distribution towers throughout the parish are old, non-functioning and in need of replacement;
2. The intake structure at the Lions Water Treatment Plant cannot operate at full capacity when the Mississippi River is at low stage due to unfavorable head conditions;
3. Five existing filters at the Lions Water Treatment Plant are non-functioning and in need of replacement; and,

4. The Edgard Water Treatment Plant has only one clarifier thus has no backup means of clarification, which is in violation of federal regulations that require that plants designed to include clarification for processing surface water shall provide a minimum of two units each.

ALTERNATIVES: The alternatives considered and analyzed for the Water System include:

1. *No Action Alternative:* The “No Action” alternative considers the future environment without implementing any of the proposed actions. If the project is does not occur the area will continue to suffer from the four deficiencies listed above. This alternative was considered ‘not feasible’ as it does not address any of the planning area’s current deficiencies.
2. *Construction of a backup clarifier at the Edgard Water Treatment Plant.* This alternative would correct the correct the lack of a second clarifier at the Edgard Treatment Plant and improve reliability by allowing the plant to continue operation with one clarifier out of service. This alternative would replace the potable water line under the Mississippi River which is part of Alternative 3. This alternative was not selected because it did not provide for a backup water supply during emergencies when the Edgard plant might be out of service.
3. *Construction of Improvements to address the current deficiencies:* This alternative includes replacement of the four non-functioning altitude valves, renovation to the intake structure at the Lions Water Treatment Plant, replacement of five existing filters at the Lions Water Treatment Plant, and correction of the clarifier deficiency at the Edgard Water Treatment Plant by installing a potable water line under the Mississippi River to connect the Lions Water Treatment Plant with the Edgard Water Treatment Plant.

The Preferred Alternative is Alternative 3 – Construction of Improvements to address the current deficiencies:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: This project will be executed in two phases. Phase I improvements include replacing four altitude valves which will help maintain pressure in the system, make adjustments and upgrades to the water intake structure at the Lions Pump Station which will allow it to operate at full capacity year-round, and to replace the five old filters with a new set of filters which will improve the reliability of the Lions Treatment Plant. All of the Phase I improvements consist of work on existing facilities at existing sites and qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion from the detailed environmental review requirements of NEPA. A Categorical Exclusion has been issued and work on Phase I is in progress.

Phase II of this project consists of a 14 inch potable water line bored under the Mississippi River to connect the Lions Water Treatment Plant on the east side of the Mississippi River to the Edgard Water Treatment Plant on the west side. This potable water line will serve as a backup supply for the Edgard plant which will also eliminate the need for a second clarifier at

the plant. It will also provide potable water to the west bank community in the event that the Edgard plant is out of service due to a storm or power outage.

Because a Categorical Exclusion has been issued for the Phase I of this project, the remainder of this Environmental Assessment will be limited to work included in Phase II.

EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL SETTINGS: The existing land use for the Phase II project area is primarily industrial and residential on the east bank and agricultural and residential on the west bank. Specific land use within the area where the waterline will be constructed can be categorized as roadway area, Mississippi River levee, Mississippi River batture and Mississippi River navigable waterway. (The Mississippi River batture is the area between the low water level in the river and the levee. This area is flooded annually during periods of high water in the river.) The climate for the planning area is humid and sub-tropical with an average temperature range from 53°F in January to 82 ° F in July . The average monthly precipitation for the planning area ranges from 3.4 to 7.4 inches, with a total annual average of 60.4 inches. The prevailing winds of the planning area are generally from the South-Southeast at an average speed of 8 miles per hour (mph). The topography of the area is gently sloped silty soils characteristic of southeast Louisiana. The major soil types found in the project area are Cancienne and Carville soils, (soil type CT; 11.1%), urban and built up land (UL; 10.9%), levees-borrow pits complex (LP; 7.8%), Cancienne silt loam (CmA; 7.0%), and Gramercy silty clay (GrA; 6.8%). The remainder of the project area is classified as Water (W; 56.5%).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: Potential short-term and long-term primary and secondary environmental impacts that can be identified for the proposed project pertain to Protected Species, Historical/Archaeological Sites, Wetlands, Floodplains, Storm Water, Coastal Zone, and Soil Stability/Erodibility. The loan will be conditioned to read that any mitigation measures required by federal cross-cutting authorities must be adopted to ensure the action will not have any significant environmental impacts.

Protected Species: This project was reviewed by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Office of Wildlife, which determined that no impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered species or critical habitats are anticipated for the proposed project. However, rare, threatened or endangered species may be encountered in areas outside their known habitat. The construction contract will include a requirement that, should plants or animals belonging to either endangered or threatened species be discovered in the area of construction or adjacent areas, all work in that area shall cease immediately and the owner shall be informed of the discovery, who will in turn, promptly notify the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (DWRLF). After consultation with appropriate state and federal agencies, the DWRLF will advise the owner of any protective measures that may be required.

Historical/Archaeological Sites: The data for the project was reviewed by the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer of the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, which deemed that no known historic properties will be affected by the project. However, numerous sites of historic or archaeological significance exist in St. John the

Baptist Parish, particularly along the Mississippi River. The construction contract will include a requirement that, should evidence of historical or archaeological sites be discovered during construction, all work in that area shall cease immediately and the owner shall be informed of the discovery, who will in turn, promptly notify the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (DWRLF). After consultation with appropriate state and federal agencies, the DWRLF will advise the owner of any protective measures that may be required.

Wetlands: Portions of this project will be built in wetland areas. Wetland areas or potential wetland areas within the planning area often occur within the Mississippi River bature. A joint permit application has been submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources for Section 404 and Coastal Use Permits.

Floodplains: Portions of this project will be constructed in the Mississippi River bature, which is a floodplain. As required, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), LA Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD), and the local Floodplain Administrator for St. John the Baptist Parish were contacted regarding the project.

Storm Water: There will be no increase in storm water runoff as a result of this project. All water main trenches will be backfilled and compacted. Existing natural grades will be restored after the installation of the new water main is complete. No significant paving will be constructed; therefore no increase in storm water runoff should be observed. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) has been notified of the project. LDEQ provided a letter of no objection with a few additional recommendations of items that may influence the project, including the requirement to obtain a Storm Water General Permit for construction areas equal to or greater than one acre and that all precautions must be observed to control non-point source pollution from the construction activities. Additionally, if the project results in a discharge to waters of the state, a Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit would be required. All of these requirements and recommendations will be adhered to during construction. A Storm Water General Permit will be obtained before the beginning of construction.

Soil Stability/Erodability: The project will not involve a large amount of earthwork. Best management practices regarding erosion control measures will be implemented during construction to minimize erosion and sediment transport. Area watercourses will not be adversely affected by siltation and sedimentation as a result of this project.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS: There are no known planned or reasonably foreseeable projects that would contribute to additional indirect effects in combination with the proposed project. The growing population warrants the proposed investment and is a natural development to better the overall quality of life for the residents of the area/parish

DOCUMENTATION COORDINATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Coordination with the appropriate governmental agencies has been made with no adverse environmental comments on the proposed project. All comments offered have been addressed. The proposed project will

be reviewed by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals to ensure that it complies with the State Sanitary Code for Water Supplies, Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC), Title 51, Chapter 12. A public hearing was held at 6:00 p.m. on November 6, 2013 at St. John the Baptist Parish Council Chambers, 1801 Airline Hwy, LaPlace, Louisiana. The hearing was advertised on October 2, 2013 in the L'Observateur, a newspaper of general circulation in LaPlace, Louisiana.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Based upon DWRLF's detailed review of Attachment 1 to the System Improvement Plan with Environmental Impacts: Environmental Information Document Phase II, 2013 Proposed Expansion Projects for St. John the Baptist Parish Water System, October 2013, as revised, and DWRLF's preparation of this Environmental Assessment (EA), the proposed project is considered to be cost effective and environmentally sound. Therefore, it is recommended that a *Finding of No Significant Impact* be issued.

LIST OF AGENCIES CONTACTED:

U.S. Department of the Interior - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries – Natural Heritage Program
Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism – State Historic Preservation Officer
U.S. Department of the Interior - National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office
U.S. Department of the Army, New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 - Marine and Wetlands Section
South Central Planning and Development Commission
U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 - Ground Water/UIC Section (Sole Source Aquifer Program)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 – Air Planning Section
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 – Marine and Wetlands Section
Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 6
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development – Floodplain Management Division
St. John the Baptist Parish – Floodplain Administrator
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality – Business and Community Outreach and Incentive Division
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

REFERENCES:

1. System Improvement Plan with Environmental Impacts for 2013 Proposed Expansion Projects for St. John the Baptist Parish Water System; May 2013, Digital Engineering, Inc.
2. Attachment 1 to the System Improvement Plan with Environmental Impacts: Environmental Information Document, Phase II, 2013 Proposed Expansion Projects for St. John the Baptist Parish Water System, January 2014, Digital Engineering, Inc.