



Mike DeWine, Governor  
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor  
Laurie A. Stevenson, Director

**May 10, 2022**

**Preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact  
To All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies**

**Fayette County  
Lakewood Hills Area Water System Project  
Loan Number: FS390024-0009**

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a water line extension project in Fayette County which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) below-market interest rate revolving loan program. The EA describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. We would appreciate receiving any comments you may have on the project. Making available this EA and seeking your comments fulfills Ohio EPA's environmental review and public notice requirements for this loan program.

Ohio EPA analyzes environmental effects of proposed projects as part of its WSRLA program review and approval process. We have concluded that the proposed project should not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. More information can be obtained by contacting the person named at the end of the attached EA.

Any comments on our preliminary determination should be sent to the email address of the contact named at the end of the EA. We will not act on this project for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice. In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. After that, the Fayette County can then proceed with its application for the WSRLA loan.

Sincerely,

*Kathleen Courtright*

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief  
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

### **Project Identification**

Name: Lakewood Hills Area Water System Project

Applicant: Fayette County  
133 South Main Street, Suite 401  
Washington Court House, OH 43160

Loan Number: FS390024-0009

### **Project Summary**

Fayette County has requested \$1,277,039 from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for a water line extension project. Currently, the subdivision of Lakewood Hills operates with residential homes and a few small businesses each connected to an individual groundwater well. This project will extend water service from the City of Washington Court House three miles west on US Route 22 to keep the Lakewood Hills area connected to a safe and reliable supply of drinking water.

Construction for this project will remain in previously disturbed rights-of-way alongside existing public roadways. Two planned stream crossings will be horizontally bored to avoid impacts to aquatic habitat. The contractor shall commit to minimizing dust, sedimentation and erosion, and maintaining traffic through the duration of construction.

### **History and Existing Conditions**

Lakewood Hills is an unincorporated subdivision of about 40 homes located along US Route 22, about three miles west of the corporation line of the City of Washington Courthouse. There are an additional 25 homes in the area that are not a part of the subdivision that will be included in this project. Additionally, along US 22 there are also an additional 15 homes and four small businesses that will be included.

Currently, each home in Lakewood Hills and the vicinity has its own well located on the property to serve its own water needs. Recently some property owners have experienced water supply problems such as the need to lower their pumps in the wells or have had their wells go dry. The residents are concerned as to whether this is evidence of a worsening condition and are questioning the sustainability of the aquifer.

### **Population and Flow Projections**

Although some excess capacity was built into the system design, there is no significant future development expected in this area. The homes and businesses that are currently within the service area are expected to be the only users. It is estimated that the total demand for all connectable homes and businesses is between 15,000 and 20,000 gallons per day.

### **Alternatives**

- *No Action:* Doing nothing, the “no action” alternative, would leave local residents without a reliable source of potable water as they continue to use their individual groundwater wells. Therefore, this is not a feasible alternative.
- *Stand-alone System:* Fayette County could construct a stand-alone system that utilizes groundwater wells, treatment, storage, and a distribution network for the subdivision of Lakewood Hills. This alternative would involve high construction costs as well as impose the high cost of water treatment on local residents. The unreliable and potentially depleted aquifer as well as issues surrounding the disposal of process wastewater make this a difficult option to pursue.
- *Regionalization:* Fayette County can regionalize to supply water to Lakewood Hills. The county would purchase water at a bulk rate from the City of Washington Court House and provide it to the community through the construction of approximately three miles of new water line connected to the city’s existing water line already stubbed outside city limits along US Route 22.

**Selected Alternative**

The selected alternative for this proposed project is the construction of a water line extension to regionalize the subdivision of Lakewood Hills with the existing water system of Washington Court House. Compared to other alternatives, regionalization is more cost effective and operationally efficient. This alternative is both cheaper to build, and to operate, thus making it more affordable to users.

Fayette County already operates two public water systems so the financial, operational, administrative, and technical support is already in place to support this new system. The project will be very similar to Fayette County’s Culpepper Area System that was constructed in 2017 to provide water service to approximately 50 customers and has been operating successfully since. The plan is to construct a master meter vault at the current terminus of the city’s existing water line. From there a 6-inch water line will run down the south right-of-way of US 22 to Stanton Jasper Road where a 4-inch branch will break off to serve the community, which is located several hundred feet down the road. A distribution network will be constructed to provide water to each home. Similar to Culpepper, the county will construct all public portions of the system up to and including setting the individual meters for each customer.

Maps of the project location are located in the exhibits below.

**Implementation**

*Project Costs*

Fayette County plans to borrow \$1,277,039 from the WSRLA. During the 30-year loan period Fayette County will save approximately \$309,223 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 1.66%, compared to the market rate of 2.96%. Interest rates are set monthly and may change for the requested June loan award.

*Project Schedule*

The anticipated loan award will occur in June 2022. Construction is expected to begin immediately and be completed by January 2023.

**Public Participation**

Information regarding this project was provided to local residents during a township trustee meeting held in December. Community members were encouraged to attend and provide input. Two letters have been sent to those impacted by the planned water line and feedback has been encouraged and has been received throughout the process. Ohio EPA is unaware of any public opposition to the project.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: <https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements> and will provide it upon request to interested parties. Information supporting this Environmental Assessment (EA) is available from the project contact named below.

### **Environmental Impacts**

Construction of this project could affect environmental features, but the effects will be reduced or mitigated to acceptable levels as explained below.

#### **Air Quality**

Fayette County is in attainment for the six regulated criteria air pollutants (carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, lead, particulate matter, and ozone). The contractor will prevent unnecessary creation of dust from construction activities and shall prevent dust attributable to the operations from entering the atmosphere. Dust on unsurfaced streets or parking areas and any remaining dust on surfaced streets shall be controlled with water as needed. Because of this approach, there will be no significant adverse short-term or long-term impacts on local air quality.

#### **Archaeological and Historical Resources**

Construction of this project will occur within previously disturbed rights-of-way and existing roadways. As no new disturbance is expected to take place, archaeological and historical resources are not expected to be disturbed.

In the event of archaeological finds during construction, Ohio Revised Code Section 149.53 requires contractors and subcontractors to notify the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of any archaeological discoveries in the project area, and to cooperate with the Office in archaeological and historic surveys and salvage efforts when appropriate. Work will not resume until a survey of the find and a determination of its value and effect has been made, and Ohio EPA authorizes work to continue.

#### **Terrestrial Habitat and Endangered Species**

Three federally listed species occur in Fayette County: the endangered Indiana bat, the threatened northern long-eared bat, and the threatened eastern massasauga rattlesnake. No habitat suited to the eastern massasauga in the project area. The Indiana and northern long-eared bats have similar summer maternity and roosting habitat preferences (trees with large crevices or loose, sloughing bark higher than ten feet above the ground). If necessary, tree and vegetation removal will occur from October 1 through March 31 when bats are presumed absent from the area. Based on this information, the project will have no significant adverse short-term or long-term effect on terrestrial habitat or endangered species.

#### **Farmland Protection**

Based on the review of the project planning and design, no prime farmland losses are expected as a result of this project.

#### **Floodplains**

According to project planning and design, no construction is scheduled to occur within designated flood

hazard zones.

#### Ground Water Resources

To avoid adverse impacts to ground water resources, the construction contract includes specifications for appropriate and safe dewatering of deep excavations and management of ground water.

#### Safety, Noise, Traffic, and Aesthetics

The contractor shall develop a traffic plan prior to commencing construction which shall include all proper warning signs and lane closures and a commitment to minimize both the extent and duration of the disruption of traffic and disturbance to the neighborhood during construction. For these reasons, the project will not adversely affect noise, traffic, public safety, or aesthetics.

#### Surface Water Resources

Although two streams are located within the project area, construction will occur via horizontal directional drill to avoid impacts to aquatic habitats. An Ohio EPA General Storm Water NPDES Permit for Construction Activities shall be obtained if necessary and the contractor shall minimize soil from eroding or otherwise entering onto all paved areas and into natural watercourses, ditches, and public sewer systems. Designated Wild and Scenic Rivers will be unaffected by this project as there are none located within the project's vicinity.

#### Wetlands

According to a review of project planning and design and the Ohio Wetlands Inventory, this project will contain no in-wetland work and therefore will have no impacts to wetland areas.

#### Land Use

Construction will occur in a previously disturbed area. No change to land use or topography will occur.

#### Energy Use

This project will have little to no effect on local or regional energy supplies as the county plans to utilize the existing Washington Court House water distribution system.

#### Local Economy

The current Fayette County residential water bill is approximately \$278/year. Projected residential water bills for new customers with the implementation of this project are expected to increase to approximately \$404/year, which is approximately 0.9% of median household income (MHI) of Fayette County, or \$47,308.

#### Conclusion

Based upon Ohio EPA's review of the planning information and the materials presented in this Environmental Assessment, we have concluded that there will be no significant adverse impacts from the proposed project as it relates to the environmental features discussed previously. This is because these features do not exist in the project area, the features exist but will not be adversely affected, or the impacts will be temporary and mitigated.

The project will provide residents with a safe, stable, and reliable supply of potable water.

#### Contact information

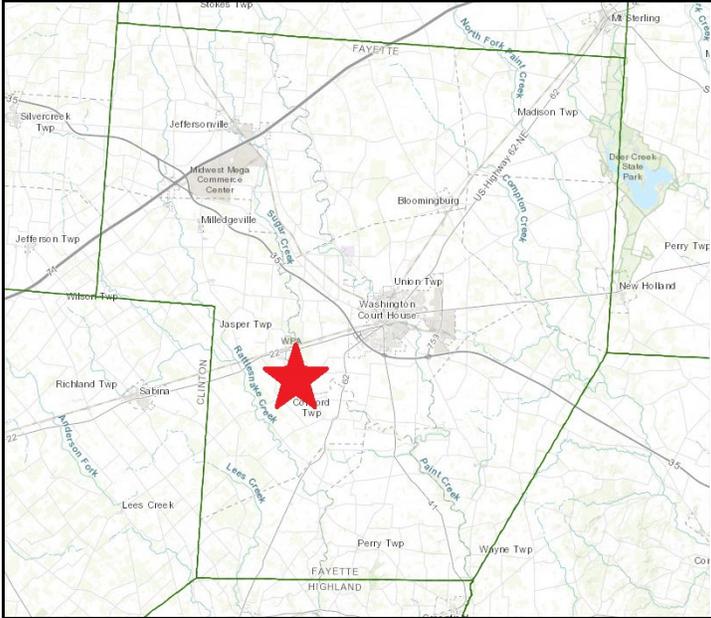
Kristin Parrish

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**Exhibit 1: Project location map**



**Exhibit 2: Project location map**



**Exhibit 3: Project location map**

**Lakewood Hills PWS  
Proposed Layout**

EXHIBIT C

1 inch = 1,000 feet

