FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

SECTION 594 OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM
VILLAGE OF GROVER HILL WASTEWATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
VILLAGE OF GROVER HILL, PAULDING COUNTY, OHIO

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Buffalo District has assessed the environmental impacts of the following proposed project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969:

Section 594 Ohio Environmental Infrastructure Program
Village of Grover Hill Wastewater System Improvement Project
Paulding County, Ohio

In Section 594 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999, Congress directed the USACE to establish a pilot program to provide environmental assistance to non-federal interests in Ohio. This program may include design and construction assistance for water-related environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development projects, including projects for wastewater treatment and related facilities, combined sewer overflow, water supply, storage, treatment, and related facilities, mine drainage, environmental restoration, and surface water resource protection and development (Public Law 106-53).

The requirements for utilizing this authority include:

- Projects designed and constructed under this authority must be publicly owned.
- USACE will develop, in consultation with appropriate federal and state officials, a facilities or resource protection and development plan, including appropriate engineering plans and specifications.
- The non-federal partner(s) must establish legal and institutional structures as are necessary to ensure the effective long-term operation of the project by the non-federal interest.
- The non-federal partner(s) must provide 25 percent of design and construction costs. The non-federal cost share may be credited for design work performed by the non-federal partner, up to six percent of total construction costs, and for land, easements, rights-of-way, and relocations.
- The non-federal partner(s) is/are responsible for 100 percent of operation and maintenance costs for projects constructed with assistance provided under this authority.

The proposed project entails the installation of the following specific improvements:

Under the recommended plan, each septic tank that is currently active (178 tanks), as well as approximately 20 additional tanks that are currently unused, would be replaced with new plastic septic tanks. The new tanks would include two new plastic access ports per tank, along with an effluent filter at each tank to limit sediment and debris migration into the SDGSS. The exception being the school’s septic system. Based upon preliminary observations and feedback
from the school maintenance staff, no improvements are necessary at this time. Septic tanks located on undeveloped lots would be removed but not replaced. The remaining (second) tap in each new tank would be capped watertight and marked for future reinstatement if necessary. Septic tanks for these lots could be installed at a later date if required.

   Recommended wastewater treatment plant improvements include addressing the wastewater receiving, aeration basin, RAS/WAS, disinfection, aerobic digesters, laboratory, and electrical systems. Additionally, a new geotextile sludge dewatering system is recommended to provide long-term sludge disposal alternatives.

   To move ahead with the proposed project, the village worked with the Maumee Valley Planning Organization (MVPO) to conduct the ecological surveys and assessments necessary under NEPA and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

   The No Action alternative was considered as per the requirements of NEPA. Under this alternative, existing conditions would continue with no improvements in the wastewater collection systems. This alternative was determined to be not be feasible as it would be non-complaint and continue to contaminate the surrounding environment.

   The MVPO completed an environmental assessment for the proposed project. Internal review of this assessment by USACE and the project’s anticipated environmental impacts has found it to be technically and procedurally sufficient in addressing those factors important to the USACE funding decision. Based on the USACE Buffalo District’s review of the project, it is concluded that no areas of environmental controversy are evident, all applicable and relevant environmental protection measures will be met, and implementation of the project will be completed in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner.

   The USACE Buffalo District has analyzed the proposed project and has concluded that the disbursement of Section 594 program funding would not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. If you have information that may alter my decision in this regard, please contact my office in writing with your comments within the 30 day comment period for this project. If no comments or information have been received from public review that alter my finding, this Finding of No Significant Impact will be signed and a copy saved in the administrative record for the project. Thank you for your interest in this project.

   DATE: ___________________  Eli S. Adams
   Lieutenant Colonel, Corps of Engineers
   District Commander
Environmental Assessment

Section 594

Village of Grover Hill Wastewater System Improvements Project

Paulding County, Ohio

Prepared By: Maumee Valley Planning Organization
1300 E. Second Street Suite 200 Defiance, Ohio 43512

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Buffalo District
Buffalo, New York
June 2020
Executive Summary

The Village of Grover Hill, located in Paulding County, Ohio is proposing to design and construct a wastewater collection system that serves all residents. The village is requesting $750,000 in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Residential Public Infrastructure Grant (RPIG) funds. Village residents have separate private wells and wastewater is discharged to individual on-site treatment systems that are in failing condition and inadequate based on observations. The proposed project will completely rehabilitate the Village’s entire collection system that serves all residents. Improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, located on E. Wayne Street just northeast of the Village, including septage receiving station improvements, diffuser replacements in the aeration basin and aerobic digester, RAS/WAS piping and pumping improvements, and installation of a new geotextile solids dewatering system. Additional improvements include collections system cleaning, purchase of 1-honey wagon and tractor, replacement and lining of manholes, and the rehabilitation of one lift station. Individual septic tanks will also be installed at each property. The Village is committed to upgrading its infrastructure to ensure the current quality of life, to promote health and safety, and to meet current engineering standards.

Village residents have maintained their own wells on their properties. The current number of residential wastewater connections is 132; the current monthly fee is $40.00, and the projected fee is $50.00. The sewer system is a small diameter gravity Class I 0/060 mgd extended aeration plant. The average annual daily flow measured from January 2012 to July 2016 was 57,500 gpd resulting in an average daily flow of 325 gpd/home, or 143 gpd/capita, which is greater than the 100 gpd/capita in the wastewater facility standards articulated from 10 State Standards.

The total estimated cost of the project is $2,415,000 with $1,665,000 secured from the Army Corp of Engineers, Ohio Public Works Commission, and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. The Village is requesting $750,000 in funding through the Residential Public Infrastructure Grant Program to finalize this project.

The Village of Grover Hill has a total population of 402 and 182 households. An income survey completed in November 2019 demonstrated an LMI of 64.96%. Grover Hill’s median household income of $40,469 is considerably lower than the State of Ohio at $49,429.
# Environmental Assessment

## Village of Grover Hill Wastewater System Improvements Project

### Section 594

**Village of Grover Hill**

**Wastewater System Improvements Project**

**Paulding County, Ohio**

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Appendix A: Wastewater Collection and Treatment System Evaluation Report and PHASE I: Environmental Assessment

Appendix B: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)

Appendix C: Department of Housing and Urban Development Guidelines

Appendix D: Coordination Letters and Endangered Species List
The brief and concise nature of this document is consistent with the 40 CFR requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to reduce paperwork and delay by eliminating duplication with existing environmental documentation, incorporating pertinent material by reference, and by emphasizing interagency cooperation. The majority of data collection and analysis in this document was performed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Project Background

This Environmental Assessment (EA) examines the potential environmental impacts of the wastewater collection system improvements project as proposed by the Village of Grover Hill, Ohio. The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

1.2 Purpose, Need, and Authorization

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide replacement of the existing wastewater treatment plant that serves all residents in the Village. This project is large in the scope of work on what will be replaced and rehabilitated. The existing wastewater treatment plant has a series of improvements needed with this project. Two hundred and twenty-two concrete septic tanks that are small in diameter and have four-inch gravity sewers laid at less than minimum grade. This upgrade will help allow for the transportation of solids at a more effluent rate. The septic tanks have also revealed heavily corroded effluent baffles with only a limited remaining life left. The failure of these baffles has resulted in the discharge of solids and grease to the sewers, causing blockages and backups, creating safety concerns for residents. It is recommended that all concrete tanks be replaced with new plastic tanks containing internal baffles as well as effluent baffles with efficient filters. In addition to this, a single lift station receives all flow from the collection system and pumps it to the wastewater treatment plant. The pumps within the station were replaced in late 2016, but the force main piping and valves in both the wet well and valve are highly corroded and will require replacement. The wet well and valve vault are highly corroded and will require replacement. This needs to be rehabilitated to resist further deterioration. Finally, the existing bypass pump connection does not appear to be operable and there is no emergency generator connection at the control panel.

The proposed project is a partnership agreement between the Village of Grover Hill and the Corps established under the authority of Section 594 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1999 (Public Law 106-109), as amended, which provides authority to the Corps to establish a program to provide environmental assistance to Non-Federal entities in Ohio. This law provides design and construction assistance for water related environmental infrastructure projects to Non-Federal interests in Ohio, including projects for wastewater treatment plants.
(WWTP) and related facilities, water supply, water storage, water treatment, water distribution facilities and surface water resource protection and development.

This Environmental Assessment is prepared pursuant to the NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Corps implementing regulation, ER 200-2-2.

### 2.0 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The alternatives that were provided by Wessler Engineering who is the contracted engineer for the project, is broken up by two sets of alternatives: The Collection System and the Water Treatment Plant. The list of alternatives and the description for each one is outlined in the Engineer’s Evaluation Report which is attached in Appendix A.

This first set of alternatives primarily focus on the collection system and its rehabilitation. The second set of alternatives will focus on the water treatment plant. This section will outline every alternative offered in place of the main project.

#### 2.1 Collection System Alternative

Wessler Engineering evaluated the collection system for their report during the spring and summer of 2017. Most of the Village’s septic tanks were surface inspected. They used a sample of ten tanks and internally inspected them.

**2.1.1 Alternative 1 – No Action**

The most common but not preferable alternative is to make no new improvements to the Village’s collection system. Without making any new additions or upgrades, the Village would likely be noncompliant with their Ohio EPA NPDES permit at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

**2.1.2 Alternative 2 – Collection System Rehabilitation and Partial Septic Tank Replacement**

This alternative would have each septic tank receive an internal video inspection and the highest priority structures, estimated at 20% of all tanks based upon the sample video inspection, would be removed and replaced with new plastic tanks of a size and capacity equal to the existing tanks and also include anti-flotation collar to counteract groundwater influences while empty. The new tanks would also include two new plastic access ports per tank, along with an effluent filter at each tank to limit sediment and debris migration into the SDGSS (Small Diameter Gravity Sewer System). Based on preliminary observations, the school’s septic system needs no improvements. However, septic tanks located on undeveloped or clear lots would be removed but not replaced and the remaining lateral tap would be marked and capped. This alternative would not include replacement of the missing effluent baffles in the many of the remaining septic tanks, which would result in a need for increased pumping of the septic tanks and cleaning of the SDGSS. A complete cleaning and video inspection of the existing system is included in this alternative and is necessary to restore full system capacity.

In addition to above, a new 1,600-gallon honey wagon trailer with a double-disc pump and a new tractor, will be included to provide for reliable and consistent solids removal from the septic tanks and limit solids deposition within the SDGSS.
All thirteen existing manholes would be rehabilitated to address corrosion concerns. Eight manholes require being raised to grade, and each manhole requires a new bench wall, channel, frame, and cover. Each manhole will be cleaned, the concrete sub-structure restored, and then lined using corrosion resistant coating to limit future corrosion.

Finally, under this alternative the rehabilitation of the Main Lift Station includes the replacement of the wet well’s force main piping and supports, cleaning and concrete repair/lining of the wet well with a corrosion resistant coating, replacement of the piping and valves within the valve vault, grouting of the valve floor, and the addition of a check valve on the valve vault drain. Electrical improvements include additional manual transfer switches and emergency bypass generator connections, as well as a telemetry system to notify Village staff in the event of a pump station.

The estimated construction cost of this alternative work is $677,000. Annualized Operations and Maintenance (O&M) costs are estimated at $9,850 per year.

2.1.3 Alternative 3 – Collection System Rehabilitation and Full Septic Tank Replacement

Alternative 2 and 3 are the same, except for this alternative each septic tank that is currently active would be replaced with new plastic septic tanks. These new tanks would include two new plastic access ports per tank, along with effluent filters at each tank to limit sediment and debris migration into the SDGSS. As mentioned before in Section 2.1.2, the school’s septic system needs no improvements at this time. In addition to this, as mentioned before in Section 2.1.2, septic tanks located on undeveloped lots would be removed but not replaced. The remaining tap would be capped watertight and marked for future reinstatement if necessary. Septic tanks for these lots could be installed later if required.

The estimated construction cost for the replacement of each existing septic tank and rehabilitating the collection system as identified in the previous alternative is $1,652,000. The annualized operations and maintenance (O&M) costs are estimated at $9,850 per year.

2.1.4 Alternative 4 – Replacement: Vacuum Sewer System

This alternative was a replacement that was examined and is the implementation of a vacuum sewer system. A vacuum sewer system operates using differential air pressure and gravity to transport sewage from pipes to collection pits, to a central collection tank, and lastly to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Please refer to Appendix A for more information regarding what a vacuum sewer system is and the design and budget of one.

The estimated construction cost for a vacuum sewer system replacement is $2,345,000. The twenty-year annualized O&M costs are estimated at $20,000.

2.1.5 Alternative 5 – Replacement: Low Pressure Sewer System

Alternative 5 has an addition to a vacuum sewer system from alternative 4. This alternative consists of the implementation of a low-pressure sewer system to replace the Village’s current gravity system. Advantages of pressure systems are that they are typically constructed with smaller mains than those of a gravity system. A disadvantage to this system though is that hundreds of pumps that will eventually require maintenance to ensure service. Please refer to Appendix A for more information regarding what a low-pressure system is and the budgetary estimate for this.

The estimated construction cost for a new low-pressure sewer system is $2,825,000. The twenty-year annualized O&M costs are estimated at $20,000.
2.1.6 Alternative 6 – Replacement: Gravity Sewer System

The replacement of the current SDGSS with a new traditional gravity sewer system was examined by the engineer. A preliminary design for the gravity system replacement determined gravity sewers can be implemented at average depths of twelve to thirteen feet adequately maintain appropriate slope. Gravity sewer systems generally require less maintenance than SDGSS, vacuum, and low-pressure sewers due to minimal components and equipment, making them an especially good alternative for communities with limited staff and resources. For more information on this alternative, please refer to Appendix A.

The estimated construction cost for a gravity sewer system replacement is $5,173,000. The annualized operations and maintenance (O&M) costs are estimated at $1,250 per year.

2.2 Wastewater Treatment Plant

As mentioned in Section 2.0 this is the second set of alternatives that the engineer provided. The improvements to the wastewater treatment plant are relatively confined in scope. The costs listed in this section are exclusive of a 25% contingency and contractor soft costs including mobilization, demobilization, bonds, and insurance which have been estimated at $17,900.

2.2.1 Alternative 1 – No Action

This is the most common but not preferable alternative for the existing wastewater treatment plant. There are negative impacts during wet weather with effluent quality of solids transporting through the treatment plant. The Village also lacks the proper laboratory equipment to operate the plant reliably and efficiently. As a result of this, it is highly not recommended to do no action.

2.2.2 Alternative 2 – Septage Receiving

This alternative would limit the transfer of trash and other inorganic materials to the aerobic digestor, it is recommended that the Village resume using the septage receiving station. Leaks within the wet well and valve vault should be repaired to prevent the pumping of groundwater, prior to use. The estimated cost for these improvements is $6,000.

2.2.3 Alternative 3 – Aeration Basin

This alternative is for new diffusers that are necessary to replace for those missing. The new diffusers will more evenly distribute the aeration and mixing within the basin. The estimated cost for these improvements is $8,000.

2.2.4 Alternative 4 – RAS/WAS Air and Piping Improvements

A new small positive displacement blower dedicated to clarifier sludge withdrawal, or new air piping and valves, is recommended to maintain constant sludge withdrawal can be provided by the existing blowers. For more information on RAS/WAS Air and Piping Improvements please refer to Appendix A. The estimated cost for these improvements is $15,000.

2.2.5 Alternative 5 – Aerobic Digestors

This is like the aeration basin alternative. New diffusers are needed to restore full aeration and mixing to the digestor. Prior to replacement of the diffusers, it will be necessary to clear basin of accumulated solids. The estimated cost for these improvements is $10,000.
2.2.6 UV Disinfection

This alternative is an existing tablet disinfection system that provides inconsistent disinfection as evidence by multiple e. coli violations in the plant effluent. A new ultraviolet disinfection (UV) disinfection system could be installed on the existing effluent sewer located between the secondary clarifiers and the existing effluent meter. For further description of a UV Disinfection please refer to Appendix A. The budget costs for the proposed equipment is $26,000 and estimated construction costs are $45,000.

2.2.7 Solids Handling

There were three solids handling alternatives evaluated and the results were outlined in the Engineer’s Evaluation Report.

2.2.7.1 Alternative 1 – Truck Hauling

The existing belt filter press is in disrepair, all solids are currently hauled offsite by Haviland Plastic Products – Energy Division. Truck Hauling offers the lowest estimated annual cost of $2,880 and requires only minimal labor from the Village. Long-term viability of this service is unknown and additional alternatives should be considered.

2.2.7.2 Alternative 2 – Belt Filter Press

The existing belt filter press is capable of solids dewatering and landfill disposal of dewatered sludge at current flows. However, repair of the existing belt filter press is estimated to cost ($6,500) with annual O&M costs, not including labor, adding ($900-$1,000/yr.). This alternative is not recommended because of maintenance and operation.

2.2.7.3 Alternative 3 – Dewatering Bags

This method was proven for the dewatering and disposal of solids which includes the use of geotextile dewatering bags. To limit handling and ease of disposal of solids, the bags are regularly mounted within a typical 10-cy or 20-cy roll-off dumpster. For more information on Dewatering Bags, please refer to Appendix A.

2.2.8 Convert Tertiary Settling Basin to EQ

Conversion of the existing tertiary basin to an equalization basin will require the addition of an aeration grid like the existing Aeration Basin. The engineer has provided a detail description of this alternative which can be referred in Appendix A. The estimated cost for these improvements is $20,000.

2.2.9 Laboratory Equipment

Equipment is recommended to improve process control testing and facilitate informed process control decisions. The equipment that would be included is a wastewater centrifuge (Raven), optical DO probe and meter (YSI ProODO), Hach DR 900 Multi-parameter colorimeter and related reagents and sample bottles. The estimated cost for these items is $5,000.

2.2.10 Miscellaneous

2.2.10.1 Liner Repair

The aeration basin, aerobic digester, and tertiary settling basin each have plastic liners. While each seem to be reasonably good condition, and no leaks were evident, there were several locations on each basin
that require repair due to apparent mower or equipment strikes. The estimated cost to repair the visible liner defects is $5,000.

2.2.10.2 Belt Filter Press Demo

The recommendation for this alternative is for the Village of Grover Hill to work the Ohio Water Development Authority, the agency that funded the BFP project, to discuss selling the BFP and making payment on the currently deferred loan amount. As an additional benefit, the removal of this equipment from the BFP building would provide storage space for the recommended septic tank pumping equipment and the backup generator. The cost for all of this is estimated at $5,000.

2.2.10.3 Plant Operations

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency’s compliance assistance unit has offered to assist the Village in preparing SPO’s to promote improved plant operations.

2.2.11 Electrical Improvements

The engineer has referenced a 2002 as-built drawings, the electrical feed to the blower building is located prior to a manual transfer switch that connects to the trailer mounted diesel-powered generator. It is not required by 10 State Standards according to the engineer, but, based upon the extended power outage that occurred in 2017 and a seemingly increased frequency of severe storms, it was recommended that a manual transfer switch and emergency generator connection be added to the blower building electrical feed. The estimated cost for this work is $20,000.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND CONSEQUENCES

3.1 Location

The affected area is located within the Village of Grover Hill, Ohio in Paulding County, Ohio. Figure 1 below shows the overall project location. The highlighted portion represents the boundary of all residents and businesses affected by the wastewater treatment plant.

Figure 1: Project Location
3.2 Land Use

The land use around The Village of Grover Hill is primarily residential, commercial, and rural space. The land use primarily around the wastewater treatment plant is rural and open space. There is no significant development anticipated as a result of this project. The proposed construction project is to completely rehabilitate the Village of Grover Hill’s entire collections system that serves all residents. The improvements to the wastewater treatment plant include septage receiving station improvements, diffuser replacements in the aeration basin and aerobic digestor, RAS/WAS piping and pumping improvements, and installation of a new geotextile solids dewatering system. Additional improvements include collections system cleaning, purchase of 1-honey wagon and tractor, replacement of lining of manholes, and the rehabilitation of one lift station. Finally, the individual septic tanks at each property will be installed. All these improvements will take place within the Village’s boundaries. There will be no impacts to land use, or no land use will be affected or require changing.

3.3 Climate

The Village of Grover Hill, Ohio experiences seasonal weather patterns with temperature and climate changes different every season. Summer in northwest Ohio is typically hot and humid and winter is cold and snowy. Spring in this region is usually cold at the beginning of the season and warmer toward the end, this is also a wetter time of the year. Fall can start hotter with the season gradually cooling off, rain and snow can happen. Over the last few years, temperature changes in northwest Ohio can go from the 80’s to 90’s in the summer to below freezing and sometimes below 0 in the winter. Fall and Spring can be unpredictable with temperature changes as September and October can sometimes be 70 or 80 degrees and drop quickly to 40 or 50 degrees. However, no significant adverse impacts to climate or climate change would occur with or during the construction of this project.

3.4 Terrestrial Habitat

No new land would be disturbed during the construction of this project. The project will exist on the current grounds of the existing treatment plant and wastewater lines and septic tanks. The removal of grass dirt may occur around the existing areas of the project during construction, but it will be minimal. Areas would be returned to pre-construction conditions upon completion of construction activities through soil grading and grass seeding.

Without this proposed project, there is a potential that the current septic tanks could overflow because of the severity of the pipes backing up. This would result in local environmental contamination from different toxins and bacteria. This could pose a health risk to both humans and wildlife in natural environment.

3.5 Floodplains

In order to determine the area’s potential floodplain impact, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) were reviewed and will be shown below as Figure 2: FIRM Map. Based on this map and FEMA’s Flood Map Service Center, there are no flood plains around the Village and the wastewater treatment plant. According to the engineer’s assessment too the Village and area is an area of minimal flooding. In Appendix B the flood map from FEMA will be attached. There are no anticipated impacts to floodplains with this project.
3.6 Prime and Unique Farmland

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) requires Federal agencies to minimize the conversion of prime and unique farmland to non-agricultural uses. Most of the project is within previously disturbed areas. The construction of this project will take place within the Village of Grover Hill’s boundaries, which is already developed and disturbed areas. Maumee Valley Planning Organization (MVPO) does an environmental review for the Ohio Department of Administrative Services for every project that receives grant funds, in the environmental review there is a section that MVPO researches with the Department of Housing and Urban Development on Farmlands. The HUD guidelines for Farmlands will be attached in Appendix C of this assessment. There is no anticipated impact to Prime and Unique Farmland anticipated.

3.7 Aquatic Habitat/Water Quality

The Village of Grover Hill, Ohio is in the Maumee River Watershed which flows into Lake Erie to the northwest of Grover Hill and this project location. The Maumee River flows from Fort Wayne, Indiana to the west to Lake Erie to the east. The Maumee River sits to the North of this project and is classified as a scenic river by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The Maumee River sits over 17 miles to the north of the Village of Grover Hill where the project will take place.

The Maumee River has tributaries such as the Auglaize River that is closer to Grover Hill than the Maumee River. The Village of Grover Hill sits about 9 miles west from the Auglaize River. This project is not anticipated to negatively affect any of the waterways or environment in this region. If any discharge or sewage is exposed the proper steps and procedures would be followed.

3.8 Wetlands

National Wetland Inventory Maps (NWI) were reviewed by the proposed project area and identified three man-made ponds as freshwater wetlands and the West Branch Prairie Creek as a riverine wetland. There is no anticipated impact on wetlands for the construction of this project. Below is Figure 3 which is a map of the National Wetlands Inventory.
3.9 Wild and Scenic Rivers

As mentioned in Section 3.7 Aquatic Habitat/Water Quality, the only scenic river in this region is the Maumee River. This river is designated a scenic river by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The river sits over 17 miles to the north of this project and there is no anticipated impact on the river from this project.

3.10 Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste (HTRW)

A Phase 1 Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste Environmental Assessment was conducted by Wessler Engineering, the engineer for this project. The purpose of this assessment was to identify the potential presence of HTRW contamination located in the project’s construction work limits.

The Phase 1 assessment found that no evidence was recognized or found that would show contamination or hazardous waste associated with this project. Maumee Valley Planning Organization follows Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines as previously mentioned in Section 3.6 Prime and Unique Farmland. The guidelines are also laid out for Site Contamination. The guidelines for Site Contamination from HUD will be in Appendix C.
3.11 Cultural Resources

Maumee Valley Planning Organization coordinates with the Ohio Historic Preservation Office for every project before grant funds are released for a project. The coordination is made in accordance with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and the associated regulations at 36 CFR Part 800. The letter that is provided by this agency states that no further coordination is necessary based on the current scope of work.

3.12 Threatened and Endangered Species

Maumee Valley Planning Organization coordinates with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) and Ohio Department of Natural Resources during the environmental review process. The U.S Fish and Wildlife Services indicates that the only species in Paulding County that is an endangered species is the Indiana Bat. However, the coordination letter that was sent from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources indicated to Maumee Valley Planning Organization that no species or plants would be threatened during the construction of this project. The letter does indicate that the Indiana Bat is present and certain types of trees should not be cut down to disturb or threaten them. The coordination letter and list of endangered species and plants from USFWS will be attached in Appendix D for referral.

3.13 Air Quality

According to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Air Quality website, Paulding County and the Village of Grover Hill Air Quality map, the only impacts on air is the construction equipment that will occur during the construction period. Contractors would operate all equipment in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations. Any impacts would be short-term, localized, and only occur during construction phase activities.

3.14 Noise

Noise associated with the construction of this project would be limited. The noise with the construction of this project will be short-term and would only occur during daylight hours. Maumee Valley Planning Organization researches and follows Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines for Noise Control. The HUD guidelines will be attached in Appendix C of this assessment. Other than the short-term construction equipment noises, no impacts would be significantly affected.

3.15 Environmental Justice and Protection of Children

Maumee Valley Planning Organization researches and follows Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines for Environmental Justice. Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 requires federal actions to address environmental justice in minority populations and low-income populations. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2019 population estimate for Paulding County was 18,672 and does not contain significant minority populations. The 2019 population for Grover Hill according to the U.S. Census Bureau was 376 and does not contain significant populations. No impacts to minority or low-income populations or children are anticipated to occur.

3.16 Aesthetics

The project area is primarily rural, consisting of residential properties. A temporary disturbance of local aesthetics would be anticipated during the construction of this project, however, after construction, the areas where the project took place would be restored to its original conditions. No significant impacts are expected with this project.
3.17 Transportation and Traffic

There are no major transportation routes that run through Grover Hill, Ohio. The only State Routes that run through the Village is 637 and 114. It is not anticipated that any modifications to transportation routes would be necessary. Construction would follow standard traffic controls to minimize traffic disruptions and avoid public safety problems. The impacts anticipated are minimal and temporary.

3.18 Health and Safety

The existing wastewater collection system and treatment plant are inept to current regulations and guidelines. From backed up pipes, out-of-date and corroded equipment, many health, and safety concerns are posed to the Village and its residents. Improvements to the wastewater collection system and treatment plant are necessary to prevent overflow and strained pipes and to have updated infrastructure that follows state and federal guidelines.

3.19 Cumulative Effects

The Army Corps must consider the cumulative effects of the proposed project on the environment as stipulated by the National Environmental Policy Act. Cumulative Effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over time (40 CFR Part 1508.7 Council on Environmental Quality [CEQ] Regulations).

The cumulative effects analysis is based on the potential effects of the proposed project when added to similar impacts from other projects in the region. An inherent part of the cumulative effects analysis is the uncertainty surrounding actions that have not yet been fully developed.

Temporal and geographical limits for this project must be established in order to frame the analysis. These limits can vary by the resources that are affected. This project that is improvements to a wastewater collection system and water treatment plant would have minimal and insignificant negative impacts on the environment. The long-term beneficial effects will result in an upgraded wastewater system that meets state and federal regulations and guidelines. The other beneficial effect would be the health and safety of the residents this wastewater system serves.

The availability of federal funds through programs, such as the 594 Program, to assist communities with installation and construction of water-related environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development projects in Ohio is an additional benefit to the area. The significance of this action on health, safety, and potable water quality would be positive. Given that the current program remains in place for the foreseeable future. A small cumulative effect on health and safety based on past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions is expected.

4.0 STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

This project will be in full compliance with all local, state, and federal statutes as well as Executive Orders prior to the issuance of a FONSI. Maumee Valley Planning Organization coordinates with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, U.S Fish and Wildlife Services, Ohio Historic Preservation Office, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for environmental review. Further descriptions of these agencies will be addressed in Section 5.0 Required Coordination.
5.0 REQUIRED COORDINATION

5.1 Agencies Contacted

As mentioned previously in Section 4.0, the agencies that are contacted for direct coordination is the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, U.S Fish and Wildlife Services, and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. Coordination was completed prior to the publication of the Environmental Assessment. Maumee Valley Planning Organization coordinates with these agencies before every project’s assessment is published.

Maumee Valley Planning Organization coordinated with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources on this project. The results from this coordination were the National Heritage Database which indicates if endangered species or plants will be threatened in the project area. No records were found of a one-mile radius of the project site. The letter discusses endangered species that are in the vicinity and to avoid disturbance of them. This list includes Indiana Bat, club shell & pondhorn mussel, greater redhorse fish, Blanding’s turtle, Kirtland’s snake. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources recommends that this type of project will not likely impact these specific species. The letter recommends that certain trees be avoided specifically to the Indiana Bat.

Maumee Valley Planning Organization submitted two letters to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) with the respect to the longevity of this project. Both letters were Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and the associated regulations at 36 CFR Part 800 Please refer to Appendix D for coordination letters. The letter received on May 31, 2019 had to be updated based on the project specifications. The letter received by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office on February 27, 2020 represented the most current project specifications. The letter concluded with no further coordination required for this project unless the scope of work changes or archaeological remains were discovered during construction.

Maumee Valley Planning Organization coordinated with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and received a letter back discussing the importance of discharge fill materials into waters in the United States and the permits that must be obtained by the Ohio EPA and U.S Army Corps of Engineers. The Ohio EPA recommended that as work progressed and contracts were awarded, a continuation of diligent assessment of the proposed construction site would impact streams and wetlands. In addition to this, if the earth was disturbed or fill activity would occur, please contact the U.S Army Corps of Engineers and the Ohio EPA 401 section to discuss potential permitting requirements.

The final attachment in Appendix D is the U.S Fish and Wildlife Services list of endangered species by county in the State of Ohio. This list is attached with every environmental assessment to recognize the importance of every species and plant that is endangered and to avoid them during the construction of a project.

5.2 Public Review and Comments

The EA and FONSI will be made available for public review and comment for a period of 30 days, as required under the National Environmental Policy Act. A Notice of Availability will be published in the local newspaper, West Bend News, advising the public of this document’s availability for review and comment. Maumee Valley Planning Organization will coordinate with the West Bend News for publishing. The Village of Grover Hill, Ohio is responsible for the payment of this notice. A copy of the EA will also be placed at Maumee Valley Planning Organization in Defiance, Ohio.
6.0 CONCLUSION

The Village of Grover Hill, Ohio is requesting $750,000 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Residential Public Infrastructure Grant (RPIG) funds to rehabilitate the entire collection system that serves all 376 residents. The village residents have separate private wells that wastewater is discharged to individual on-site treatment systems that are failing and inadequate. This proposed project will completely rehabilitate the entire collections system that is serving all of Grover Hill’s residents.

In addition to this, the Wastewater Treatment Plant, located in the village is in need of improvements to the septage receiving station, diffuser replacements in the aeration basin and aerobic digestor, RAS/WAS piping and pumping improvements, and installation of a new geotextile solids dewatering-system. Additional improvements include collections system cleaning, purchase of 1-honey wagon and tractor, replacement and ling of manholes, and the rehabilitation of one lift station. Finally, individual septic tanks will also be installed at each property.

Most of the construction would take place on previously disturbed land. Positive health and safety impacts would be realized immediately with project implementation. The effects associated with construction would be insignificant.

The Village of Grover Hill committed to upgrade its infrastructure, this will benefit the quality of life, the health and safety of the community and its residents and meet the proper standards and guidelines. The proposed project is anticipated to have long-term and beneficial impacts on this community and its residents. No significant adverse impacts have been identified because of implementation of the proposed improvements project.