



TA00

Los Alamos County NEPA Cerro Grande Fire

October 2, 2001

▲
OCT 2001
RECEIVED

Mr. James P. Bearzi, Director
New Mexico Environmental Department
Surface Water Quality Bureau
Harold S. Runnels Building
1190 St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-0110

RE: Request for Project Review - Los Alamos/Repair and Replacement of Pueblo Canyon Sewer Pipeline

Dear Mr. Bearzi:

URS Group, Inc. (URS) has been retained by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through Los Alamos County (LAC) to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the repair and replacement of the sewer pipeline in Pueblo Canyon. An EA is being prepared to consider the potential for environmental effects of the proposed action.

On behalf of LAC, and in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, URS requests that your agency review the proposed action and provide comments and any available information on resources under your agency's jurisdiction within the project area. If you have comments, concerns, or applicable data with regard to this proposed project, your input would be appreciated by October 28 so that it may be incorporated in the draft EA. A cultural resources survey would be conducted in support of the proposed undertaking. Additionally, issues such as visual resources, air quality, water resources, threatened and endangered species, and socioeconomics would be considered.

As part of the Cerro Grande Fire Assistance Act, LAC has applied for funding from FEMA to repair and relocate the sewer pipeline within Pueblo Canyon, east of Diamond Drive to prevent damage due to flood water. The Cerro Grande fire destroyed the vegetative cover of portions of the Pueblo Canyon watershed. Subsequently, the flood attenuation capabilities of the watershed have been severely diminished.

A rainfall event on July 2, 2001 over-topped North Road. In Pueblo Canyon, downstream from Diamond Drive, a portion of the sanitary sewer line was washed out and damaged. Repair and reconstruction of the North Road and construction of a temporary Flood Water Retention Structure has been proposed, under a separate project. A majority of the proposed project would be conducted on LAC land. A map showing the area of the proposed sewer pipeline project is attached.

URS Corporation
One Park Square
6501 Americas Parkway, NE, Suite 900
Albuquerque, NM 87110-5311
Tel: 505-855-7500
Fax: 505-855-7555



7565



Description of Sewer Pipeline Replacement

The Pueblo Canyon Sewer line replacement project includes a portion of an existing 12-inch diameter line that runs in Pueblo Canyon east of Diamond Drive. The proposed sewer line repair and replacement project starts approximately 3.1 miles upstream of the existing WWTP and runs from Manhole H to Manhole 46, a length of approximately 14,170 feet. In addition, lateral sewer lines drop from developed areas on both the north and south sides above the canyon floor and connect to the main sewer. The project area is expected to be approximately 35 acres.

Three different construction methodologies have been assumed for various lengths of the sewer line replacement. The methodologies include:

- (a) Standard trenching, backfilling, and compacting for the 12-inch diameter HDPE sewer line installation. The overall length of sewer line to be replaced using this methodology is estimated to be 4,723 lineal feet. This installation approach has been assumed for reaches in which an alternate alignment is available that is outside the stream bed alignment.
- (b) Standard trenching, backfilling, and compacting of a casing pipe for the 12-inch diameter HDPE sewer line installation. A casing pipe would be installed and the HDPE sewer line installed inside the casing pipe. The overall length of sewer line to be replaced using this methodology is estimated to be 2,362 lineal feet. This installation approach has been assumed in order to provide 5 to 10 feet of cover below the flow line of the existing stream bed and because the canyon topography does not permit a major realignment for the proposed sewer line. The proposed sewer line alignment in this approach is in an area where the pipeline may be subject to scouring and washing during a storm event and the welded steel casing would minimize damage to the proposed line.
- (c) Boring and casing pipe installation for the 12-inch diameter HDPE sewer line. A casing pipe would be installed by boring. The HDPE sewer line would then be installed inside the casing pipe. The overall length of sewer line to be replaced using this methodology is estimated to be 7,085 lineal feet. This approach has been assumed in order to provide 5 to 10 feet of cover below the flow line of the existing stream and because the canyon topography does not permit a major realignment for the proposed sewer line. The proposed sewer line installation, using this methodology, is in an area where it is more practical than a cut and cover installation.

Other construction activities supporting the sewer line installation include the following:

1. Portions of the lateral sewer lines connecting to the main line would be replaced using a pier and welded steel elevated sewer. Similar construction is currently in place at Manhole 21. Approximately 35 feet of sewer line lateral would be replaced at each tie-in location.
2. Use of gabion protection would be required at areas where manholes are exposed and where there is a probability of streambed washing close to the proposed sewer line.
3. Approximately 50 new manholes would be installed with the new sewer line.
4. Approximately 50 manholes would be demolished and removed. The existing sewer line would be grouted and left in place.



Pueblo Canyon downstream from North Road includes land owned by LAC and the DOE, all of which is open to the public. Present land use includes various recreational activities such as hiking and bicycle riding. There is good access into Pueblo Canyon near Acid Canyon from nearby residential areas in Los Alamos, and trails and dirt roads down the length of the canyon. Sewer lines from the Los Alamos townsite are buried beneath the narrow canyon floor downstream from the Acid Canyon confluence. Additional lateral sewer lines connect to the main line down the length of the canyon. The sewer line extends more than three miles to the WWTP. A majority of the sewer line was installed in the 1960s with periodic section replacement due to damage.

The attachment includes a detailed description for the proposed project; however, specific information is subject to change as the project is currently in the design phase.

The construction schedule is expected to be expedited, beginning in March of 2002 with completion prior to the 2002 monsoon season. The construction schedule is expected to be phased such that construction would occur sequentially in four separate sections along the pipeline. One phase would not begin until completion of the previous phased section. It is also expected that all relocation would be done in previously disturbed areas, either within the stream bed or along the access road.

Please direct comments and information directly to me. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (505) 855-7517 or michael_ratte@urscorp.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Ratte'.

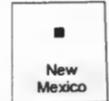
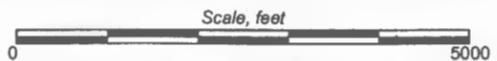
Michael Ratte
Project Manager/Meteorologist

Enclosures



EXPLANATION

USGS 7.5-min base maps
 Puye (1993), Guaje Mountain (1984), Frojoles (1984), and White Rock (1984), NM



Quad Locations



**Sewer Pipeline Repair
 and Replacement Project**