

Environmental Studies

Environmental studies have been performed to identify impacts of the proposed project. Results of the studies are described below.

Waters and Wetlands: The proposed project will cross multiple unnamed streams, North Deer Creek, and the North Canadian River. No wetlands were identified within the proposed project area, so wetland impacts are not expected. The proposed stream and river crossings will incorporate water quality protection best management practices to prevent erosion and keep sediment and unwanted materials out of streams. As proposed, the project can be permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act with a Nationwide General Permit. No significant, permanent adverse impacts to waterbodies are expected.

Threatened and Endangered Species: Habitat surveys were conducted for federally listed threatened and endangered species, as well as habitat for protected bird species. Due to the proximity to the existing highway and development of the area, high-quality preferred habitat for threatened and endangered species was not observed within the proposed project area. There was low-quality potential habitat for several protected species, including several bird species as well as the American Burying Beetle. As such, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was conducted, and avoidance and minimization measures, like construction timing near potential habitat, will be implemented. As such, there will likely be no significant adverse impacts to protected species.

Cultural Resources: A cultural resources survey was conducted, which considers the potential to impact significant historic and archaeological resources. No significant cultural artifacts or materials were found during the survey. One cemetery named Dale Cemetery was identified adjacent to the project area. Dale Cemetery is proposed to be avoided, so no impacts to the cemetery are expected. No additional investigations of cultural resources are required.

Hazardous Materials: An Environmental Site Assessment was conducted to determine the potential impact from hazardous materials or contaminants. No areas were identified that could pose an environmental risk to the proposed project. No additional investigations of hazardous materials are required.

Socioeconomic Impacts: Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice requires that ODOT identify any disproportionate adverse impacts of their federally-funded projects on disenfranchised populations, like low-income or minority communities. An

environmental justice screening review was conducted, and no disenfranchised communities located within the area were identified that would be disproportionately impacted by the proposed project. The proposed project will remain primarily within existing right-of-way, and where new right-of-way is required, no relocations are proposed. Access to homes and businesses will remain open during construction. Short-duration, temporary closures will likely be required during construction; however, alternative access will be provided through detours through adjacent roads.