



Meadows Sewer District Wastewater Project Update

Newsletter

No. 1, September 2023

Recent increases in federal funding present an opportunity for communities to invest in wastewater improvements including septic upgrades, community systems, and sewer extensions. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (USDA-RD) have grant and loan programs to help pay for wastewater infrastructure that better meet the needs of rural areas. A team of EPA, USDA, and technical assistance providers are working with 11 communities across the south to offer technical assistance services to communities to identify affordable solutions to areas where there are failing systems or where onsite replacements are problematic.

For the Hollister area in Halifax County, a collaborative effort is underway between representatives of EPA, USDA-RD, Halifax County, the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe, NC Division of Wastewater Infrastructure, and technical assistance provider Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP). This pilot will help the community get the information and resources needed to identify the right type of wastewater system(s) for its needs and to position it to apply for federal and state funding. This is the first step toward getting safe, effective, and affordable wastewater solutions for Hollister. The goal of this newsletter is to provide quarterly updates to the community on progress made towards wastewater solutions as part of this initiative.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO DATE?

- A team has collected information on options for meeting wastewater needs within Hollister/Meadows Sewer District area (see map below for boundaries). Costs for construction and ongoing operating fees are a major consideration for coming up with affordable and sustainable solutions. The options being considered are:
 - Collecting and pumping wastewater off-site to a new community decentralized (or cluster) wastewater treatment and dispersal system within the community
 - Collecting and pumping wastewater to an existing municipal system outside the community
 - Upgrading existing on-site septic systems.
- This pilot initiative has been discussed at several community meetings including:
 - General information provided at the 58th Annual Haliwa-Saponi Powwow (April)
 - Project planning meeting attended by representatives of Halifax County, Haliwa-Saponi Tribe, SERCAP, NC-Division of Wastewater Infrastructure, USEPA and USDA-RD (June)
 - Community engagement/listening Session co-sponsored by Haliwa-Saponi Tribe and Halifax County with about 100 attendees (July).

- SERCAP and a Haliwa-Saponi representative made a field visit in August to White Stone, Virginia's community/decentralized collection and wastewater treatment plant and drainfield (below), with elements similar to options being considered for serving the Hollister/Meadows Sewer District.



WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

A Special Evaluation for Rural Communities and Household (SEARCH) grant application to USDA-RD is being prepared by Halifax County. Funding will support preparation of an updated Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) and Environmental Assessment (EA) necessary for receiving Federal and State funds to implement wastewater management solutions chosen by the community. An agreement with an engineering firm is being finalized, who will conduct scientific and engineering reviews and identify the most affordable options. This work will extend into 2024 and provide a solid foundation for decision-making.

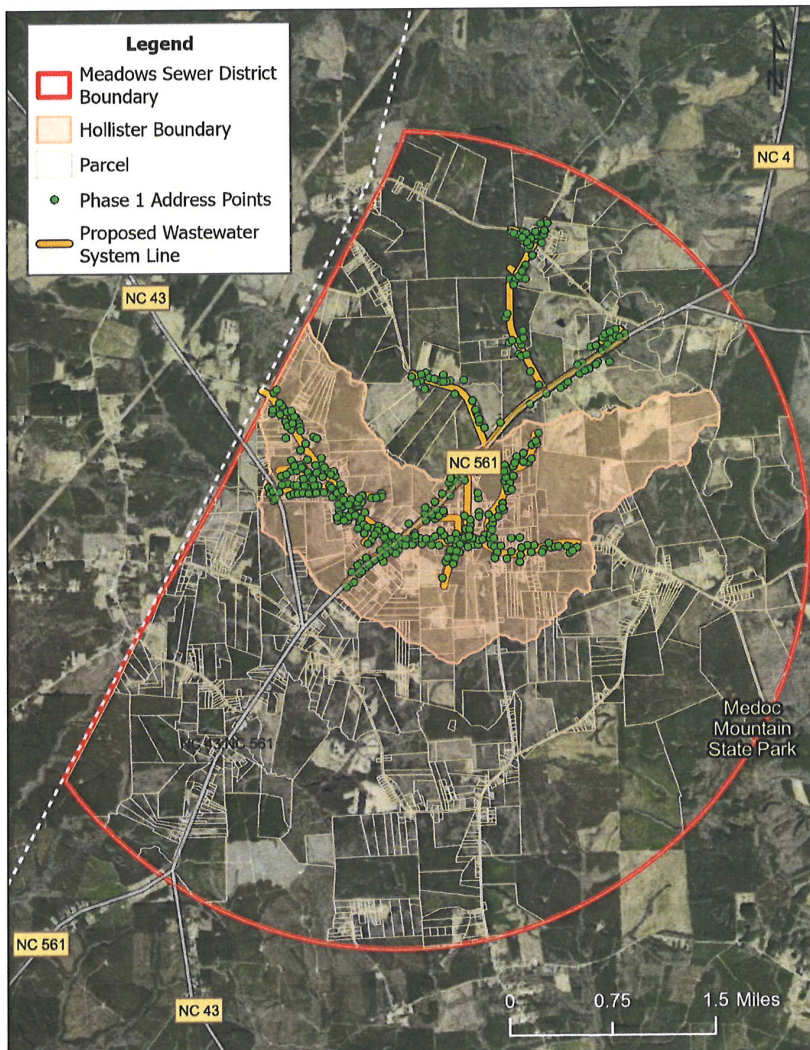
WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- The team is planning additional site visits to community wastewater systems with similarities to options being considered for the Hollister community.
- As more information is developed towards solutions, community understanding, involvement and support will be crucial as the project moves forward. Input from residents representing various parts of the community will be needed.

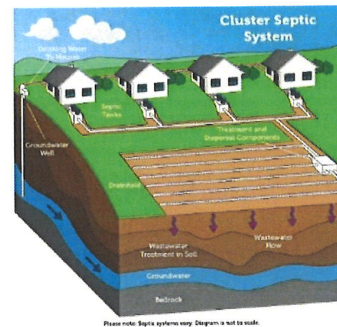
Service Area and Phase 1 Address Points

A phased approach is being proposed, starting with residences highlighted in Phase 1 with other residences added at a later time.

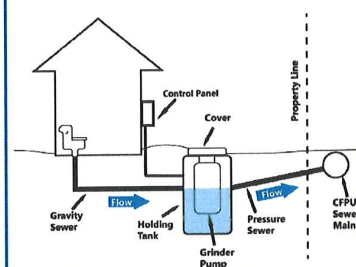
**Phase 1 could expand if connection to existing municipal system option is selected (this will be determined as part of the PER)*



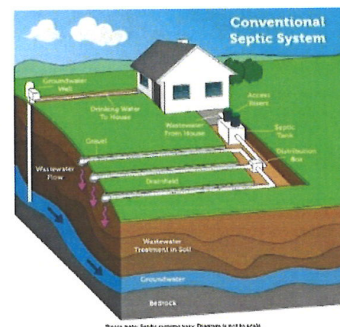
Various Options



Community cluster systems pump wastewater from septic tanks to a treatment plant and drainfield within the community.



Homes that may connect to a municipal sewer system may have grinder pumps installed to connect to the sewer line.



Septic system upgrades and repairs will be considered for those outside of Phase 1.



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Local Point(s) of Contact:

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- Renee Perry, Halifax County, 252-583-1131, perryr@halifaxnc.com
- Steven Berkowitz, SERCAP, 919 -602-7138, sberkowitz@sercap.com

For more information, email WaterTA@epa.gov or visit epa.gov/water-infrastructure/water-technical-assistance