Does the project include water service too?

No. In most cases water and sewer lines are required to be separated by as much as 10 feet. It would be almost like doing 2 projects and would add too much cost to the project. Wastewater service projects are also much easier to find funding for due to the associated health issues.

Will the new sewer service line run from my existing septic tank or will it hook directly from my house?

Each connection will require a grinder pump station near the home/cabin. In many cases the existing septic tank will be removed and a grinder station will be placed in the same location. This is the least disruptive way to install a grinder station. In other cases it may be necessary to make adjustments to the house sewer. Wastewater is pumped from the grinder station to the main line. Once it reaches the main line a series of pumps will move it to the wastewater treatment plant.

Will there be a lot of blasting and tree removal?

Most of the pipe in the Jackfish Bay Sewer Project was installed via directional drilling. Directional drilling is a method of construction that allows pipes to be installed underground with minimal disruption to the surface. Pipes can be installed through rock, under roads and beneath trees without impacting the surface. This project will utilize directional drilling technology wherever feasible.

Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Randy Jenniges  
SEH Project Manager  
rjenniges@sehinc.com  
320-229-4378

Sara Lindberg  
SEH Project Engineer  
slindberg@sehinc.com  
218-322-4513

Dale Olson  
Koochiching County Environmental Services Department (ESD)  
dale.olson@co.koochiching.mn.us  
218-283-1157

If I’m thinking of subdividing my lots, should I do it now or wait until later?

If you are looking at subdividing lots within the project area you should contact an SEH representative. The sanitary sewer design will provide service to the additional lots provided you have completed the preliminary plat stage of the subdivision process. One thing to keep in mind is that the Koochiching County Shoreland Ordinance allows for smaller lot sizes in areas with sewer service.
The project cost is estimated at $15,000,000.

Since then the County has been aggressively seeking engineering design which was completed early in 2011. The County committed funds for the dumping site, and an RV dumping site. A dumping station for island barge service, a houseboat future expansion to the islands. The project also includes no, the islands are not included as part of this project.

However, the project design does incorporate aspects for future expansion to the islands. The project also includes a dumping station for island barge service, a houseboat dumping site, and an RV dumping site.

Are the islands included?

No, the islands are not included as part of this project. However, the project design does incorporate aspects for future expansion to the islands. The project also includes a dumping station for island barge service, a houseboat dumping site, and an RV dumping site.

What is the project schedule?

The project cannot move forward until funding is received. The County committed funds for the engineering design which was completed early in 2011. Since then the County has been aggressively seeking funding for construction.

What is the project cost?

The project cost is estimated at $15,000,000.

How much is this going to cost me?

The cost depends on the amount of funding received. The County’s goal is to complete the project in a similar fee manner to the Jackfish Bay sewer project. Once funding is found, the County will establish an assessment policy and calculate the cost on a per parcel or parcel type basis. Estimated costs will then be back to the public for additional discussion.

The monthly cost components to the users will include:

- Special Assessment Payment (County Tax Rolls)
- Operation and Maintenance Costs (Sewer District monthly fee)
- Capital Debt Repayment (Sewer District monthly fee)

Commercial Users:
The project cost for commercial users will likely be dependent on the number of Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs), which is a typical residential household. Operation and maintenance costs for commercial users will likely be based on water usage.

What is a special assessment?

A special assessment is a charge imposed for an improvement that benefits the property. Road improvements often times fall under a special assessment. The special assessment is added to the property tax until the project has been paid for. Sewer lines, water lines and roads are some examples that usually receive a special assessment. They increase the salability and value of the property.

What are my options for paying this special assessment?

Residential and commercial properties can a) opt to pay the entire assessment right away, b) pay part of the assessment right away and place the rest on a payment schedule on their property tax statement, or c) have the entire assessment placed on their property tax statement.

How long will this special assessment be added to my taxes?

The special assessment period is yet to be determined. The Jackfish Bay project was for 20 years and it is anticipated that this project will be similar. However, depending on funding and the cost of the project it may be necessary to spread the assessment out over a longer term.

What if my lot is vacant? Would there be a special assessment?

The assessment policy has not yet been established. For the Jackfish Bay project, the assessment for vacant parcels was deferred until a dwelling was built. At that time the property owner was charged a connection fee. Ultimately, this will be a policy decision by the County Board when considering the financing options, but it is likely that all parcels will be charged something.

If this special assessment is put on my property taxes and in the future I decide to sell my home, what do I have to do?

Special assessments are transferred at the time of sale; however, the terms of sale differ between mortgage lenders, real estate agents, and title companies. Typically, the seller is required to pay off any outstanding assessments prior to the sale.

If you are considering selling your home or business you should consult with your mortgage holder and real estate agent about the assessment.

What if my current sewage treatment system is non-compliant? Do I have to make repairs now or can I wait?

The County is giving some leeway for repair of non-compliant systems. They understand the financial difficulties that would go with installing a new system now, then be required to hook up to a sewer line not too far down the road. However, if your system is leaking and is an Imminent Threat to Public Health (ITPH), it needs to be fixed.

What if I recently put in a brand new, compliant system?

You will be still required to hook up to the sewer line. One of the main reasons for the project is the inability for on-site systems to function properly in the rocky lake area. Many of those that do work properly only do so for a certain amount of time. A sewer line increases the value of the property whether there’s an existing septic system or not. Mandatory hook-up is required to make the project feasible.

What is this project about?

The project includes extending sanitary sewer service to about 162 residential and 8 commercial establishments from where the existing Jackfish Bay sanitary system ends to Sha Sha Point. The line would run along Hwy 11 east and include the Voyageurs National Park Visitors Center.

What are the islands included?

No, the islands are not included as part of this project. However, the project design does incorporate aspects for future expansion to the islands. The project also includes a dumping station for island barge service, a houseboat dumping site, and an RV dumping site.

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