

from agricultural runoff. An additional 1.6 million acres of wetland restoration and an additional 600,000 acres of filter strips and wetland buffers protecting wetland water quality would be seen.

#### Natural Vegetation

Native and introduced grass species would continue to be planted on eligible cropland producing residual benefits to water quality and soils. Cropland enrolled and planted to tree practice acreage would continue to cleanse runoff water, silt, and pollutants, protecting and improving streams while simultaneously providing food and shelter for wildlife. The Longleaf Pine CPA would continue to see enrollment of additional tree planting acres and thus provide additional positive benefits to water, soils, and wildlife in that region.

#### Wildlife

Areas devoted to permanent vegetation, wildlife habitat, and wetlands would continue to provide critical elements for species as more CRP acreage is enrolled. Enrollment targeted toward wildlife habitat enhancement would continue to provide critical resources and establish corridors between fragmented habitats. Continued benefits from the availability of wildlife-based recreation would be a positive impact under this alternative. Wetland restoration would continue to benefit waterfowl and upland game bird species and provide valuable habitat. Wetland buffers would continue to provide additional habitat and protection from human disturbance. Continued enhancement of wildlife habitat could produce positive impacts on T&E species.

#### Socioeconomic

No adverse impact on farm employment at the regional or state level would occur. However, there could be possible adverse impacts at the county or community level. There is insufficient research to support a definitive conclusion as to the magnitude of either of those impacts. A minimal impact of CRP on cropland supply would be seen. On a national and regional level, the effect of CRP land rent appears to be insignificant. At the State, county, or township level, the impact may be adverse and nominal to moderate in magnitude. There would be no change in recreational benefits.

Landowners would benefit from environmental improvements and stable income stream. Local communities would benefit from enhanced recreation and lower costs to residents and industry from air and water

improvements. There could be potentially adverse impacts to tenant farmers and new farm startups.

#### C. Environmental Targeting Alternative

##### Soils

States with CREP Agreements would see additional soil erosion reduction in areas targeted if approved practices consist of permanent vegetative cover and approved soil conservation practices. Under most targeting scenarios, erosion could increase as other objectives are emphasized. Minor benefits on soil erosion could be accomplished if multiple regions, States, and watersheds are targeted to specifically address soil erosion by utilizing collaborative decision making of all interested parties and an ecosystem driven conservation initiative. Because of location, gross sheet and rill erosion may be less. Associated soil benefits of wetlands would increase as the FWP is opened to all States. Overall enrollment in general sign-up acreage would decrease under this alternative. As this enrollment declines, national benefits of soil erosion reduction would be significantly less.

##### Water Quality

States with CREP Agreements would see additional water quality benefits in areas targeted if approved practices consist of water quality enhancement conservation practices. Moderate positive impacts on water quality could be accomplished if multiple regions, States, and watersheds are targeted to address water quality impairments by using collaborative decision making of all interested parties and an ecosystem driven conservation initiative. This idea could be most beneficial when addressing effects in the Gulf of Mexico and the Chesapeake Bay Region. TMDL-listed streams would likely decrease based on the specific environmental targeting of those watersheds in the National Environmental Target Area (NETA) that have been identified as contributors to the large-scale water quality impairment problem. Overall enrollment in general CRP sign-up acreage would decrease under this alternative. As this enrollment declines, so would the positive impacts these acres play at maintaining good water quality.

States with CREP Agreements would see additional groundwater quality benefits if areas targeted are known groundwater source areas and if approved practices consist of water quality enhancement conservation practices. No real national impacts to

groundwater quality can be accomplished if multiple regions, States, and watersheds are targeted to address groundwater quality impairments. This would be due to the fact that groundwater issues tend to be more localized and could therefore be better addressed through the CREP Agreements. TMDL-listed streams could decrease based on the specific environmental targeting of those watersheds in the NETAs that have been identified as having common groundwater quality problems. Overall enrollment in general CRP sign-up acreage would decrease under this alternative along with the subsequent positive impacts on groundwater quality and quantity.

States with CREP Agreements would see additional water quality benefits in areas targeted which would provide aquatic species with the optimal conditions for species success but only if approved practices consist of water quality enhancement conservation practices that have been proven to directly benefit aquatic species and their associated habitat. Minor national benefits to aquatic species could be accomplished by targeting water quality issues in multiple regions, States, and watersheds that are impaired severely. Overall, enrollment in General CRP sign-up acreage and associated benefits to aquatic species would decrease under this alternative.

#### Floodplains, Riparian Areas, and Wetlands

Beneficial impacts to floodplains as described under the No Action Alternative would possibly be seen in States with CREP Agreements. Positive benefits to floodplains could be accomplished by targeting floodplain and related resource issues in multiple regions, States, and watersheds. Overall enrollment in general CRP sign-up acreage and associated benefits to floodplains and riparian areas would be decreased under this alternative. However, the beneficial impacts to riparian areas as described under the No Action Alternative would be seen in States with CREP Agreements. Positive benefits to riparian areas can be accomplished by targeting riparian areas and related resource issues in multiple regions, States, and watersheds.

#### Natural Vegetation

Beneficial impacts to wetlands as described under No Action Alternative in States with CREP Agreements. Benefits to wetlands could be accomplished by targeting wetlands and related resource issues in multiple regions, States, and watersheds. Overall,