

The proposed action will have little or no effect on wetlands. With on farm improved irrigation efficiencies some reduction in tail water run-off will occur, but with the sandy soils in the watershed most of the run-off has gone to groundwater and not surface water. Wetland restoration, creation and enhancement will increase a total of about 24 acres as operator's contracts are developed. A 2 acre-foot depletion will be offset by a debit from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation account.

No wilderness areas are in the watershed.

There is potential habitat for the threatened Ute ladies' tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) and Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*), but none have been identified within the watershed, the determination of "may affect, but not likely to adversely affect" was arrived at with section 7 consultation. The habitat will not be adversely impacted. There are no known resident threatened or endangered animals within the watershed area.

The proposed action will increase vegetative cover suitable for wildlife as a result of the application of conservation practices that include vegetative components. Fish habitat will not be affected.

The proposed action will not disproportionately affect any protected groups.

No significant adverse environmental impacts will result from installation of the proposed action.

Alternatives

Based on the above summary of effects (as discussed in the EA), I have determined the alternative which I have selected, will not have significant effect on the human environment. For that reason, no environmental impact statement needs to be prepared.

The planned action is the most practical means of reducing the agricultural contribution of nitrate to the groundwater. Because no significant adverse environmental impacts will result from the installation of the on farm conservation measures, no other alternatives, other than the no action alternative, were considered.

Consultation—Public Participation

On June 17, 1996, the North Platte Valley Conservation District, and the Lingle-Fort Laramie Conservation District Boards of Supervisors, filed an application for PL 83-566 assistance in developing a plan for the Goshen County, Lingle-Ft. Laramie Water Quality Project. The State of Wyoming

Governor's Office referred the application to the Wyoming Board of Agriculture for ranking and approval. On September 18, 2000, the board gave the project a ranking of high and approved the request to be submitted to the NRCS. Acceptance was acknowledged by the State Conservationist, and appropriate agencies and Sponsors were notified. The town of Torrington and the Goshen County Commissioners were later added to the list of Sponsors.

The Sponsors held two interagency and two public meetings to determine the extent of the problem. The Sponsors requested that NRCS analyze alternative solutions and prepare a preliminary investigation report. In September 2000, a preliminary investigation report was completed for the Lingle-Ft. Laramie Water Quality Project.

Numerous newspaper articles, newsletters, and radio public service announcements, have been aired in order to provide public information. Public meetings with the news media in attendance were held to gain public input and inform the public.

On October 24, 1996, an interagency meeting was held to determine concerns of the other agencies.

June 14, 2000, a public scoping meeting was held to determine public concerns and opinions. A public response analysis was completed on the responses.

On October 18, 2000, another public meeting was held to review the alternatives developed and obtain further public input.

On June 11, 2001, the Sponsors met to review the Draft Plan-EA.

On July 25, 2002, the Sponsors held a public meeting to begin the Public/Interagency review of the Draft Plan-EA. Written comments were requested from agencies, organizations, and groups identified in the planning process as interested. The comments were reviewed and responses prepared on each comment. The comments and responses are contained in the Final Plan Environmental Assessment.

Written comments were requested from 70 agencies, organizations, and groups identified in the planning process.

Agency consultation and public participation to date have shown no unresolved conflicts with the implementation of the selected plan. Section 7 consultation has been completed and incorporated.

Conclusion

The Environmental Assessment summarized above indicates that this federal action will not cause significant

local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. Therefore, based on the above findings, I have determined that an environmental impact statement for the Lingle-Ft. Laramie Water Quality Project Plan is not required.

Additional Information or questions can be directed to: George W. Cleek IV, Assistant State Conservationist, USDA-NRCS, 100 East B Street, Room 3124, Casper, WY 82601-1969, Phone: 307-261-6457, E-mail: george.cleek@wy.usda.gov.

Dated: January 22, 2003.

Lincoln E. Burton,
State Conservationist.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Upper Knapps Creek Watershed Natural Stream Restoration Demonstration Project, Pocahontas County, WV

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service.

ACTION: Notice of a finding of no significant impact.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR part 1500); and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regulations (7 CFR part 650); the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is not being prepared for the Upper Knapps Creek Watershed Natural Stream Restoration Demonstration Project, Pocahontas County, West Virginia.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Lillian V. Woods, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 75 High Street, Room 301, Morgantown, West Virginia 26505, telephone (304) 284-7545.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental assessment of this federally assisted action indicates that the project will not cause significant local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. As a result of these findings, Lillian V. Woods, State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement are not needed for this project.

The project purpose is to restore natural channel geometry and profile to