

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Forest Service****Deschutes Provincial Interagency Executive Committee (PIEC), Advisory Committee**

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Deschutes PIEC Advisory Committee will meet on June 9, 1998 at the Madras Fire Department Convention Hall located on the corner of Adam and J Street off of Hwy 97 in Madras, Oregon. A combined field trip and business meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and finish at 4:30 pm. Agenda items include: (1) Fuels Management Issues (2) PAC Rechartering (3) Working Group Update (4) Public Forum from 9:00 to 9:20 am at the Madras Fire Hall. All Deschutes Province Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mollie Chaudet, Province Liaison, USDA, Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District, 1230 N. E. 3rd, Bend, Oregon 97701, 541-383-4769.

Dated: May 7, 1998.

Sally Collins,

Deschutes National Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 98-13030 Filed 5-14-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Natural Resources Conservation Service****Colfax Watershed, Richland County, North Dakota; Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact**

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of finding of significant no 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 National 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 Colfax Watershed, Richland County, North Dakota.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Scott Hoag, Jr., State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 220 East Rosser Avenue, P.O. 1458,

Bismarck, North Dakota 58502-1458, (701) 250-4421.

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, Scott Hoag, Jr., State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement are not needed for this project.

The project purposes are for flood control, agricultural water management, and watershed protection. The planned works of improvement include a 300 linear foot dike with overflow, 8,800 linear feet of floodway with pipe drop inlet and grade stabilization structure, 3,000 linear feet of floodway and dike, 12,000 linear feet of floodwater diversion, and 22,500 linear feet of floodway renovation. Associated Land Treatment Measures will be planned and installed on a minimum of 50 percent of the watershed above the structural measures. Seven thousand acres of cropland and 500 acres of grassland are expected to be benefited through the proposed project.

The Notice of a Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency and to various Federal, State, and local agencies and interested parties. A limited number of copies of the FONSI are available to fill single copy requests at the above address. Basic data developed during the environmental assessment are on file and may be reviewed by contacting Scott Hoag, Jr., State Conservationist, 220 East Rosser Avenue, P.O. box 1458, Bismarck, North Dakota 58502-1458.

No administrative action on implementation of the proposal will be taken until 30 days after the date of this publication in the **Federal Register**.

Scott Hoag, Jr.,

State Conservationist.

(This activity is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.904, Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention, and is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials)

Introduction

The Colfax Watershed is a federally assisted action authorized for planning under Public Law 83-566, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act. An environmental assessment was undertaken in conjunction with the development of the watershed plan. This assessment was conducted in consultation with

local, State, and Federal agencies as well as with interested organizations and individuals. Data developed during the assessment are available for public review at the following location: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 220 East Rosser Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58501.

Recommended Action

Proposed is the implementation of both structural and associated land treatment measures (ALTM) to reduce flood damages and protect the watershed. The structural components include a 300 linear foot dike with overflow, 8,800 linear feet of floodway with pipe drop inlet and grade stabilization structure, 3,000 linear feet of floodway and dike, 12,000 linear feet of floodwater diversion, and 22,500 linear feet of floodway renovation. The ALTM will be planned and installed on a minimum of 50 percent of the watershed above the structural measures. Seven thousands acres of cropland and 500 acres of grassland are expected to be benefited through the proposed project.

Effect of Recommended Action

The recommended action will protect the watershed hydrologically by improving the soil cover condition, water quality, and reduce overland flow quantities and velocities. Existing floodways will be restored, or built to the extent the peak flood flow rates for a 10 year, 24 hour flood event can be handled.

The proposed action will have little or not effect on wetlands. Only 2.2 acres are expected to be impacted to the point of requiring mitigation. The land treatment applied on 7,500 acres, will improve rainfall infiltration on both cropland and grassland. Sedimentation rates will be reduced from high value low residue crop fields. Integrated crop management will reduce the availability of nutrients and pesticides from entering the Wild Rice River.

The proposed project still encourage and promote farm units in the watershed to manage their natural resources in a safe and productive manner. This action will tend to sustain agricultural diversity and productivity for land users in the watershed. The reduced threat of flooding will provide social and economic benefits to watershed residents.

An initial site leads inventory of cultural resources as they relate to the planned components has been completed. This inventory concludes that no significant adverse impacts will occur to cultural resources in the

watershed should the plan be implemented. The NRCS has consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office on the effects of the planned measures. There is no effect foreseen on significant cultural resources. However, construction of floodways, dikes, grade stabilization structures and diversions have the potential for seriously disrupting individual sites. Therefore, caution shall be exercised in planning and installing any such measures to avoid serious disruption of cultural resource sites.

Significant cultural resources identified during implementation will be avoided or otherwise preserved in place to the fullest extent practical. If significant cultural resources cannot be avoided or preserved, pertinent information will be recovered before construction. If there is a significant cultural resource discovery during construction, appropriate notice will be made by NRCS to the State Historic Preservation Officer and the National Park Service. Consultation and coordination have been made, and will continue to be used, to ensure the provisions of Section 106 of Public Law 89-665 have been met and to include provisions of Public Law 89-523, as amended by Public Law 93-291. NRCS will take action as prescribed in the NRCS GM 420, Part 401, to protect or recover any significant cultural resources discovered during construction.

No threatened or endangered species are known to exist in the watershed.

One of the primary objectives of the project is to reduce agricultural flooding. Approximately 7,000 acres of prime farmland will be protected from frequent flood events. An estimated 20 miles of farm to market roads, and 40 bridges and culverts will be protected by reduced quantities and velocities of flood waters. Flood damages to farmstead buildings for machinery and crop storage will be reduced.

Water quality will be improved in the Wild Rice River by reducing sediment delivery rates, implementing nutrient and pest management systems, and improved soil health and cover. Sediment control basins, along with buffer and filter strips adjacent to the proposed floodways and diversions will significantly reduce non-point source pollutants runoff. Associated land treatment measures (ALTM) will promote total resource management systems on 7,500 acres of land in the watershed. These systems, in addition to addressing management of the soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources will also address the social and

economic resources of the watersheds land users.

Fish and wildlife habitats may be temporarily disturbed in some areas of the watershed during the construction phase. These resources will be restored or enhanced when the project is completed. Improvements in soil health, water quality, and plant diversity should result from the implementation of this project. The value of woodland habitat will not decline. An estimated 2.2 acres of seasonal partially drained wetlands will be lost due to project impacts. These wetland values will be properly mitigated for using the Hydro Geologic Model (HGM).

No wilderness areas are in the watershed.

Scenic values will be complimented with the diversity added by associated land treatment measures. During installation of structural features the scenic values will be temporarily decreased at specific construction locations in the watershed.

No significant adverse environmental impacts will result from installations except for minor inconveniences to local residents during construction.

Alternatives

A total of 7 alternatives were evaluated to address the problems and opportunities the local sponsoring organizations and watershed residents identified in the planning stages. The first 6 alternatives were formulated using varied combinations of floodwater diversions, dikes, and floodways with grade stabilizations structures. Each of these alternatives provided similar flood protection and land treatment benefits with varying economic, social and environmental impacts. The seventh alternative was the "no action" alternative.

It was determined by the sponsoring local organizations and watershed residents that alternative 6 is the recommended plan.

Consultation—Public Participation

Formal agency consultation began with the initiation of the notification of the State Single Point of Contact for Federal Assistance (Office of Intergovernmental Assistance) in March 1992. The Governor and the State Soil Conservation Committee were also notified of the application for Federal Assistance. Agencies were again notified when planning was authorized in October 1993.

Scoping meetings were held in September 1992 and June 1993, and interdisciplinary efforts were used in all cases. An Interagency Watershed Committee (IAWC) was utilized

throughout the planning process. The process involved five Federal agencies (FSA, FS, F&WS, COE, and EPA), five State agencies (Department of Health, State Soil Conservation Committee, Game and Fish Department, State Water Commission, and State Historical Society), two county agencies (Richland County Soil Conservation District and Richland County Water Resource District), and the City of Colfax and the Red River & Western Railroad in part or all of the scoping and planning processes.

Specific consultation was conducted with the State Historic Preservation Officer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and North Dakota Department of Health. All of these agencies comments were used in the development of this plan.

The environmental assessment was transmitted to all participating and interested agencies, groups, and individuals for review and comment in March 1998. Three public meetings were held during the planning process to keep all interested parties informed of the study progress and to obtain public input into the plan and environmental evaluation. The last public meeting was held March 1998, in the City of Colfax, during the interagency review process.

Agency consultation and public participation to date have shown no unresolved conflicts with the implementation of the selected plan.

Conclusions

The Environmental Assessment summarized above indicates that this Federal action will not cause significant local, regional, or national, impacts. Therefore, based on the above findings, I have determined that an environmental impact statement for the Colfax Watershed is not required.

Dated: May 7, 1998.

Scott Hoag Jr.,

State Conservationist.

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BILLING CODE 3410-16-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Notice of Proposed Change to Section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Kentucky

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Kentucky, U.S. Department of Agriculture.