

**United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Programmatic Environmental Assessment
For the State of Oregon**

The United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) has prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) to evaluate the environmental consequences associated with implementing the Oregon Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Under the authority of the Conservation Reserve Program, CREP addresses agriculture-related environmental issues by establishing conservation practices (CPs) on agricultural lands using funding from federal, state, and tribal governments as well as non-government sources. CREP addresses State designated high priority conservation issues in defined geographic areas such as watersheds.

The goal of the Oregon CREP is to enhance riparian habitat on agricultural lands along streams within the boundaries of a water quality management area plan and along streams that support listed fish species under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), as well as address stream water quality issues (primarily temperature).

The objectives of the Oregon CREP include:

1. Restoration of 100 percent of the area enrolled for the riparian forest practice to a properly functioning condition in terms of distribution and growth of woody plant species.
2. Reduction of sediment and nutrient pollution from agricultural lands adjacent to riparian buffers by more than 50 percent.
3. Establishment of adequate vegetation on enrolled riparian areas to stabilize 90 percent of stream banks under normal (non-flood) water conditions.
4. Reduction of the rate of stream water heating to ambient levels by planting adequate vegetation on all riparian buffer lands.
5. Provision of a contributing mechanism for farmers and ranchers to meet water quality requirements established under federal law and under Oregon's agricultural water quality laws.
6. Provision of adequate riparian buffers on 2,000 stream miles to permit natural restoration of stream hydraulic and geomorphic characteristics which meet habitat requirements of salmon and trout species.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the Oregon CREP plans to enroll up to 100,000 acres located along streams inhabited by salmonids (salmon and trout) and other fish species listed under Federal law as threatened or endangered species as well as any stream located within the boundary of a water quality management area plan. Streams on reservation and tribal trust lands are eligible regardless of the presence of fish listed under the ESA. The Oregon CREP also plans to restore up to 5,000 acres of the total 100,000 acres of cropped wetlands which are either hydrologically connected to eligible streams or located in coastal estuaries; up to 25 percent of the 5,000 acres of shall be coastal estuary wetlands.

The total program cost is estimated at \$250 million. Of this, CCC will provide 80 percent and the State of Oregon or other non-Federal sources will provide 20 percent of the total cost. CCC will pay applicable land rental costs, 50 percent of the cost of establishing conservation practices, an annual maintenance incentive, and a portion of the costs of providing technical assistance. The State of Oregon will pay an additional 25 percent of the cost of establishing conservation practices, all the costs of the annual monitoring program, and a portion of the technical assistance costs.

Eligible CRP practices will be:

1. CP 21 (Filter Strip)
2. CP 22 (Riparian Buffer)
3. CP 23 (Wetland Restoration)
4. CP29 (Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer)
5. CP30 (Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer)

Reasons for Finding of No Significant Impact

In consideration of the analysis documented in the PEA and the reasons outlined in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), the Proposed Action would not constitute a major Federal action that would significantly affect the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. The determination is based on the following:

1. The Proposed Action as outlined in the PEA would restore vegetative cover and wetlands, and would provide riparian buffer areas to create wildlife habitat, decrease soil erosion, improve water quality, and reduce the severity of flooding within Oregon's Water Quality Management Plan Areas. Positive long term effects to surface waters, biological resources, and soils are expected to result from implementation of the CREP.
2. Potential beneficial and adverse impacts of implementing the Proposed Action have been fully considered within the PEA. No significant adverse direct or indirect effects were identified, based on the resource analyses provided in the PEA.
3. The Proposed Action would not involve effects to the quality of the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial.
4. The Proposed Action would not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.
5. The Proposed Action does not result in cumulative significant impacts when considered with other actions that also individually have insignificant impacts. Cumulative impacts of implementing the Proposed Action were determined to be not significant.
6. The Proposed Action would not have adverse effects on threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat in accordance with and through implementation of mitigation measures identified within the Biological Opinion.
7. The Proposed Action does not threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Determination

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and FSA's environmental regulations at 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 799 implementing the regulations of the Council on

Environmental Quality, 40 CFR parts 1500-1508, I find the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, no environmental impact statement will be prepared.

Approved:


Signature

9-23-09
Date

Anthony M Meuwisen
Name

Acting SED
Title