



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Rescinding the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Wood River Watershed, Custer County, Dawson County, Buffalo County, Hall County, and Merrick County, Nebraska

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ACTION: Notice; rescission.

SUMMARY: NRCS, in cooperation with the Central Platte Natural Resources District, is issuing this notice to advise Federal, State, and local government agencies and the public that USDA NRCS is rescinding the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Wood River Watershed in Buffalo, Custer, Dawson, Hall, and Merrick Counties, Nebraska, which was published in the Federal Register on February 9th, 2023. The measures proposed in the Lower Wood River Watershed Plan were determined to serve a drainage area that exceeds the statutory limit of 250,000 acres. No other feasible alternatives were identified during the planning process. NRCS is rescinding the NOI because the project has been terminated and an EIS is no longer necessary.

DATES: The NOI to prepare an EIS published in the Federal Register on February 9, 2023 at 88 FR 8400, is rescinded as of [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Melissa Baier, USDA-NRCS-NE Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources and Easements; telephone: (402) 437-4065; email: melissa.baier@usda.gov.

Individuals who require alternative means for communication should contact the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and text telephone (TTY)) or dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay service (both voice and text telephone users can initiate this call from any telephone).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NRCS, in cooperation with the Central Platte Natural Resources District, is issuing this notice to advise the public that USDA-NRCS will not be preparing an EIS for the Lower Wood River Watershed Floodwater Reduction Project in Buffalo, Custer, Dawson, Hall, and Merrick Counties, Nebraska. NRCS issued the NOI to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register on February 9th, 2023, at 88 FR 8400.

The primary purpose for this watershed planning effort was to provide flood prevention or flood risk reduction measures to the communities and agricultural lands in the Wood River Watershed located in south-central Nebraska. Watershed planning is authorized by the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954, (Pub. L. 83-566), as amended, and the Flood Control Act of 1944 (Pub. L. 78-534).

The watershed planning process evaluated several alternatives including levees, diversion channels, detention cells, and dams. One feasible alternative was identified and carried forward for final analysis. The proposed action included construction of a diversion channel to divert floodwater from the Wood River and convey it south to the Platte River.

Planning activities for the Lower Wood River Watershed have been terminated because the project area does not conform to the statutory limits of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954, (Pub. L. 83-566), as amended. The preferred alternative works of improvement included a diversion channel that captured a drainage area of approximately 323,400 acres, which exceeds the maximum watershed acreage of 250,000 acres allowable for Flood Prevention (Flood Damage Reduction)

projects as defined in Pub. L. 83-566. Planning did not identify any other feasible alternatives that meet the statutory limitations of Pub. L. 83-566.

Questions concerning this notice of rescission should be directed to USDA NRCS through the contact provided above.

Robert Lawson,
Nebraska State Conservationist,
Natural Resources Conservation Service.

[FR Doc. 2026-05783 Filed: 3/24/2026 8:45 am; Publication Date: 3/25/2026]