



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Record of Decision on Rattlesnake Creek Watershed Final Plan-Environmental Impact Statement, Stafford County, Kansas

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

ACTION: Notice of availability; record of decision.

SUMMARY: NRCS announces the availability of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Rattlesnake Creek Watershed Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final Plan–EIS) in Stafford County, Kansas. NRCS has selected the “Augmentation Wellfield and Groundwater Use Reduction Alternative” as the preferred alternative. This alternative includes constructing an augmentation wellfield, retiring 2,500 acre-feet of water rights, and implementing an adaptive management strategy to improve water availability for the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge while supporting long-term agricultural water management in the watershed.

ADDRESSES: The ROD and Final Plan–EIS are available on the NRCS project website at: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/state-offices/kansas/rattlesnake-creek-watershed>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dean Krehbiel, (785) 832-4500, dean.krehbiel@usda.gov. Individuals with disabilities who require alternative means for communication should contact the USDA Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and text telephone (TTY mode)) or dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Service (both voice and text telephone users can initiate this call from any telephone).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The ROD identifies NRCS’s selected alternative for the Rattlesnake Creek Watershed project, as described in the December 2025 Final Plan-EIS for Stafford County, Kansas. NRCS reached its decision after

reviewing the Final Plan–EIS, which is available on the NRCS project website listed in the Addresses section of this notice and was announced on January 23, 2026, through a notice of availability (91 FR 2930). The Final Plan-EIS evaluated the proposed action, the no-action alternative, and other alternatives. NRCS has selected the proposed action alternative, titled “Augmentation Wellfield and Groundwater Use Reduction Alternative.” This alternative includes constructing an augmentation wellfield, retiring 2,500 acre-feet of water rights, and implementing an adaptive management strategy to improve water availability for the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge while supporting long-term agricultural water management in the watershed.

The ROD documents the basis for NRCS’s decision on the selected alternative, including the mitigation measures that will be implemented and the environmental, social, and economic factors considered under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NRCS concludes that the selected alternative provides the most balanced approach to meeting project objectives while minimizing adverse effects.

NRCS reviewed and considered all substantive comments received on the Final Plan–EIS following publication of the notice of availability on January 23, 2026 (91 FR 2930). While the comments did not require changes to the Final Plan–EIS, a summary of the comments and NRCS’s responses, along with supporting materials, is available on the NRCS project website listed in the Addresses section above.

This notice is issued in accordance with the polices set forth under NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4332).

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Natural Resources Conservation Service.