

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

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**Proposal Name:** Big Creek Watershed NRCS Watershed Program

**Proposal Tracking #:** NRCS WFPO ID: OPR.NW00.05.7010; CEQ ID: EAXX-005-53-000-1726840403

**Agency Name:** Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Unit Name:** NRCS Arkansas State Office

### Documentation Informing the FONSI

This Finding of No Significant Impact incorporates the Environmental Assessment and relies on documentation in the associated proposal record.

### Activities Approved

I have decided to approve Alternative 4 as the agency's Preferred Alternative to implement coordinated structural and nonstructural flood-damage-reduction measures in the communities of Joiner, Turrell, and Gilmore as described in the ["Proposal Information"](#) section of the Environmental Assessment.

The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 4) combines the measures evaluated under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. In Joiner, the approved activities include dredging and constructing approximately 0.36 miles of Channel 1 along State Highway 118 W; connecting existing Ditch No. 7 to a new 0.51-mile Channel 2 and a new 0.1-mile Channel 3 along Magnolia Street; constructing one detention pond with approximately 10.1 acre-feet of maximum stormwater detention capacity within the perimeter formed by Magnolia Street, Legion Street, and U.S. Highway 61; installing seven pipe culverts to facilitate flow across Magnolia Street, Cooney Street, and Letson Road; and dry floodproofing nine structures totaling approximately 24,025 square feet.

In Turrell, the approved activities include dredging and widening approximately 0.42 miles of existing Channel 1 and connecting it with Cypress Bayou near Eureka Street; constructing a new 0.45-mile Channel 2 along State Route 77; constructing ten drainage ditches totaling approximately 1.44 miles; constructing a new 0.78-mile Channel 3 along State Route 77; constructing a new 0.45-mile Channel 4 connecting Cypress Bayou to the improved drainage system; installing a series of pipe culverts; and dry floodproofing seventeen structures totaling approximately 31,341 square feet.

In Gilmore, the approved activities include constructing a new 0.5-mile Channel 1 along the southern side of the community adjacent to Old Highway 63; constructing a new 0.13-mile Ditch 1 connected to Channel 1; constructing a new 0.46-mile Channel 2 connected to Channel 1; constructing a new 0.46-mile Channel 3 along the eastern side of Gilmore connected to Ditch 1; constructing roadside drainage ditches D2, D3, and D4 totaling approximately 0.38 miles along Oliver Street, Park Road, and Acwin Street; installing a series of pipe culverts to facilitate flow across John Street and Acwin Street; and acquiring one structure of approximately 1,360 square feet to enhance community resilience.

In total, the Preferred Alternative includes approximately 55,366 square feet of dry floodproofing as well as the acquisition of one structure.

The design criteria for the approved activities include compliance with NRCS engineering standards, achievement of hydrologic and hydraulic performance criteria for the 1-percent annual exceedance probability event, incorporation of best management practices to avoid and minimize environmental effects, and implementation consistent with applicable federal, state, and local permitting requirements and long-term operation and maintenance responsibilities.

The Preferred Alternative does not threaten the violation of Federal, State, Tribal, or local requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. Approval is contingent on completion of final design; availability of funding; acquisition of required rights-of-way, easements, and other property interests; establishment of operation and maintenance responsibilities; and receipt of all applicable federal, state, and local permits and authorizations before construction. Applicable requirements may include Clean Water Act Section 404 authorization, Arkansas water-quality authorization, and construction-stormwater coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

### **Determination of No Significant Impacts**

I have determined no significant impacts are anticipated for the activities approved based on the discussion provided under the “[NEPA: Consideration of Reasonably Foreseeable Impacts](#)” section, and as informed by other analysis and determinations provided in the “[Environmental Review](#)” section of the Environmental Assessment.

In reaching this determination, I considered the tradeoffs between implementing the Preferred Alternative and taking no action. The Preferred Alternative would result in localized, short-term construction effects, including temporary ground disturbance, erosion, sedimentation, turbidity, noise, vegetation clearing, and access limitations. These effects will be avoided or minimized through final design, permitting, best management practices, seasonal restrictions and surveys where applicable, and compliance with agency requirements.

Under the No Action Alternative, chronic flood-related effects would continue or worsen over the long term. Existing drainage limitations and flood hazards would continue to affect homes, businesses, roads, cropland, access, public health and safety, and local economic activity. Compared with those consequences, the Preferred Alternative would provide long-term flood-damage-reduction benefits in Joiner, Turrell, and Gilmore, increase community resilience, improve access during storm events, and support continued economic activity. I therefore determined that the short-term adverse effects of implementation are outweighed by the long-term benefits of the approved activities and the adverse consequences of taking no action.

I also considered the irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources associated with the Preferred Alternative. Implementation would result in permanent modification of certain floodplain, wetland, and surface-water features and would require commitments of land and financial resources, construction energy, and human effort. These commitments are limited to the resources necessary to construct, operate, and maintain the approved measures and are not expected to result in a loss of long-term productivity for the human environment. Instead, the project is expected to improve floodplain management, protect agricultural land and

infrastructure, and increase community resilience. Accordingly, I determined that the long-term benefits of the Preferred Alternative outweigh the irreversible and irretrievable commitments required to implement the project, which informed my decision to proceed with the action.

Based on the analysis in the Environmental Assessment and the commitments incorporated into this decision, the Preferred Alternative is not expected to significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is therefore not required.

### **Anticipated Implementation of Authorized Activities**

I intend to implement the approved activities dependent upon funding received for the design phase and construction phase. Construction phase funds will be requested after the design phase is completed. Design phase is 2 years and construction phase is 3 years.

### **Signature and Authorization Date**

Amanda J. Mathis

State Conservationist

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_