



Natural Resources Conservation Service
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C. 20013

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FROM
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HEALTHY FORESTS
RESERVE PROGRAM (HFRP)

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. I have determined, based upon the reasons provided below, that there will be no significant individual or cumulative impacts on the quality of the human environment as a result of implementing the HFRP, particularly when focusing on the significant adverse impacts which NEPA is intended to help decision makers avoid and mitigate against. Therefore, an EIS need not be prepared

The HFRP authorizes activities that encourage agricultural producers and forest land owners to restore or enhance forest ecosystems to promote recovery of threatened or endangered species, improve biodiversity, and increase carbon sequestration on a site-specific level. NRCS has in the past and will continue to document the results of an environmental evaluation on a site-specific level and, as stated in the EA, will consult with the appropriate organizations to avoid, reduce or mitigate adverse impacts on protected resources. NRCS will comply with requirements protecting unique geographic features and other resources, as well as NRCS policies protecting natural and cultural resources. Thus, any adverse effects that may result from this program will occur at a much lower threshold than the EIS threshold.

Because of steps NRCS will take to work with other agencies to avoid, mitigate and reduce any potential adverse effects, there is no threat of a violation of any Federal, State or local law or other requirements for the protection of the environment resulting from the proposed rule to implement HFRP. There is no impact on public health or safety identified in this EA or otherwise expected. Furthermore, there is no effect identified that might be considered highly controversial or uncertain or that might involve unique or unknown risks. The proposed action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions other than the future implementation of the types of conservation practices used to accomplish the purposes of this program.

Implementation of the HFRP rule is not sufficiently related to other actions that either individually or cumulatively is likely to result in the type of significant impacts that NEPA is intended to address. To the extent other NRCS HFRP activities may result in significant effects to the quality of the human environment, a State or area-wide EA or EIS may be prepared separately from this National EA.

Based on the information presented in the attached HFRP EA, I find that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment that requires preparation of an EIS.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce I Knight".

BRUCE I KNIGHT
Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

DATE:

4/13/06