



Natural Resources  
Conservation  
Service

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**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)  
Supplemental Watershed Plan No. 14 and Environmental Assessment  
Mill Ditch Improvements  
American Fork-Dry Creek Watershed, Utah County, Utah**

**I. AGENCY ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY – United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

In accordance with the NRCS regulations (7 CFR Part 650) implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NRCS has completed an environmental review of the following proposed action. The proposed action includes piping approximately 6,000 feet of Mill Ditch/Meredith in the existing alignment and replacing the aging diversion structure on the American Fork River.

Data developed during the assessment are available for public review at the following location:

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building  
125 South State Street, Room 4010, Salt Lake City, UT 84138

**II. NRCS Decision to be Made**

As the delegated Responsible Federal Official for compliance with NEPA, I must make the following decision: I must determine if the agency's Preferred Alternative (Rehabilitation Alternative) will or will not be a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The Final Supplemental Watershed Plan No. 6 and Environmental Assessment (Plan-EA) accompanying this finding has provided the analysis needed to assess the significance of the potential impacts from the Preferred Alternative. The decision on which alternative is to be implemented and the significance of that alternative's impacts are under part VI of this finding.

**III. Purpose and Need for Action**

The purpose of the project is to provide more efficient delivery of the full interest in the water rights of the irrigation company to the end user without interruption and to address safety and operational issues by improving the irrigation system, including the diversion structure on the American Fork River. The project is needed to conserve irrigation water lost to seepage and evaporation and to improve safety and reduce potential flooding issues due to open, unlined irrigation ditches and aging infrastructure.

**IV. Alternatives Considered in the Final Plan-EA**

Alternative plans considered in the Plan-EA included:

- No Action Alternative
- Rehabilitate Diversion Structure
- Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment
- Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in New Alignment Through Golf Course
- Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in New Alignment Along the Highland Trail



Alternatives that were analyzed in detail in this Plan-EA include the No-Action Alternative and the Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment. The other alternatives were eliminated from consideration for failing to meet the purpose and need for the project, cost, and other environmental and logistical issues.

The No Action Alternative consisted of operational and maintenance (O&M) activities, such as routine cleaning of the channels, upkeep on the culverts and diversion structure, debris and vegetation removal, etc. No improvements would be made to the Mill and Meredith Ditches and they would remain open ditches, both in the concrete-lined and unlined portions as currently constituted. The diversion structure on the American Fork River would continue to be operated and maintained in its current condition, with no improvements, either structural or technological, to be made.

The Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment would replace the diversion structure in its current location and install pipe in the Mill Ditch and the Meredith Ditch in their respective alignments. It would replace the aging diversion structure with a new one that will better meet the demands for water in northern Utah County and would enhance its safety and operation. Piping would eliminate the safety and flooding concerns associated with an open channel and would meet the purpose and need by conserving irrigation water lost to seepage and evaporation.

This alternative consisted of piping approximately 6,000 feet of Mill Ditch/Meredith in the existing alignment and replacing the aging diversion structure on the American Fork River.

#### Phase I - Pipeline Alignment for Mill Ditch

During the analysis of Alternative 5, a slight modification of a portion of the proposed alignment of Mill Ditch in Phase I would allow for the existing Mill Ditch to remain in place and a new pipeline to be installed immediately adjacent to and south of the existing unlined channel. This modification would require obtaining an easement outside of the prescriptive easement but it would require less vegetation and tree removal than piping the ditch in its current alignment (which is tree lined in this section). There is plenty of room in most of this alignment to place the pipe between the existing ditch and the steep slope to the south. In some locations, special care would be needed to maintain the slope stability to the south. In order to maintain slope stability, the pipe could be installed under the existing ditch for short sections eliminating the need of excavating through steep slopes. The existing unlined channel of the Mill Ditch would remain in place and would be used in those occasional times of high river flows when downstream facilities cannot handle the full flow (which would be in addition to the overflow ditch previously discussed that runs parallel to the Meredith Ditch). This alternative will not require rerouting of storm drainage from Canyon Road near the east end of the Cedar Hills Golf Course. This will also allow a 250-foot section of the upper Mill ditch to continue as a water feature for the Cedar Hills Golf Course. This section of ditch will remain live with the water source coming from high spring runoff overflows or water shares owned by Cedar Hill City. It will be dry in times of low water.

#### Phase II - Pipeline Alignment for Meredith Ditch

For Phase II, Meredith Ditch would be piped in its existing location. This would allow the new facility to remain in the same location and a prescriptive easement with the same beginning and ending flowlines for equivalent hydraulic operations. Piping would eliminate the safety and flooding concerns associated with an open channel and would also eliminate water loss associated with



seepage and evaporation. Piping in place would not affect the overflow ditch (that portion of Mill Ditch located downstream of the Mill Ditch/Meredith Ditch connection). This channel would remain in place and likely be operated in the same manner as previously.

#### Phase III – Diversion Structure

The American Fork Diversion Structure would be replaced in its existing location with a new structure that would operate in a similar manner but would include structural, operational, and technological improvements. The new structure would not suffer from the same structural and operational deficiencies and would protect against the concerns of downstream flooding and water losses during irrigation season due to failure of the aging structure.

The Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment Alternative is the NRCS Preferred Alternative and the National Economic Development (NED) Alternative.

### **V. Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

To determine the significance of the action analyzed in the Final Plan-EA, NRCS is required by NEPA Regulations at 40 CFR Section 1508.27 and NRCS regulations at 7 CFR Part 650 to consider the context and intensity of the proposed action. Based on the Final Plan-EA, review of the NEPA criteria for significant effects, and based on the analysis in the Final Plan-EA, I have determined that the action to be selected, Preferred Alternative (Rehabilitation), would not have a significant effect upon the quality of the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) on the proposed action is not required under section 102(2)(c) of the NEPA, CEQ implementing regulations (40 CFR Part 1500-1508, Section 1508.13), or NRCS environmental review procedures (7 CFR Part 650).

This finding is based on the following factors from CEQ's implementing regulations at 40 CFR Section 1508.27 and from NRCS regulations at 7 CFR Part 650:

- 1) The Final Plan-EA evaluated both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. As a result of the analysis (discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of the Final Plan-EA and incorporated by reference), the Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment does not result in significant impact to the human environment.
- 2) The Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment Alternative does not significantly affect public health or safety. This alternative would improve public safety by enclosing certain open canals.
- 3) NRCS regulations (7 CFR Part 650) and policy (Title 420, General Manual, Part 401), require that NRCS identify, assess, and avoid effects to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, and ecologically critical areas. As analyzed in Sections 4.2 and 4.6 of the Final Plan-EA, the project would have no anticipated significant effects to historic or cultural resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas from the Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment Alternative. This alternative would have an adverse effect on historic or cultural resource; namely, the Pleasant Grove Main Ditch (e.g., replacement of the American Fork Diversion Structure). The consulting parties are preparing to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to stipulate that the treatment would be successfully completed prior to the initiation of project construction; thereby mitigating for the adverse impact. This alternative would also not have any adverse impacts on other unique resources.



- 4) The Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment Alternative effect on the human environment are not highly controversial.
- 5) The Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment Alternative is not considered highly uncertain and does not involve unique or unknown risks.
- 6) The Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment Alternative will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, nor does it represent a decision in principle about future considerations.
- 7) The Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment Alternative does not result in significant adverse cumulative impacts to the human environment, as discussed in Chapter 4 of the Final Plan-EA.
- 8) The Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment Alternative will not cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources, as addressed in Section 4 of the Final Plan-EA. NRCS follows the procedures developed in accordance with a nationwide programmatic agreement between NRCS, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, which called for NRCS to develop consultation agreements with State Historic Preservation Officers and federally recognized Tribes (or their designated Tribal historic preservation officers). The Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment Alternative will have an adverse effect on historic properties; namely, the Pleasant Grove Main Ditch (Site 42UT1133), resulting from the replacement of the American Fork Diversion Structure and pipeline installation. The consulting parties will execute a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to mitigate the adverse effects, stipulating treatment measures that would be successfully completed prior to Phase III construction. The Utah SHPO concurred with the determination of **Adverse Effect** in a letter dated July 19, 2018.
- 9) The Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment Alternative would not adversely affect endangered or threatened species or habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- 10) The Replace Diversion Structure and Install Pipe in Existing Alignment Alternative is consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local laws and requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Based on the information presented in the attached Final Plan-EA, I find in accordance with 40 CFR Section 1508.13 that the selection of NRCS's Preferred Alternative is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment requiring preparation of an EIS. Therefore, I have made the decision that a Finding of No Significant Impact is approved for the proposed action.

BECKY ROSS  
State Conservationist - acting

09/11/2019

Date