

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

NRCS Watershed Operations Program Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report (PIFR)

The Acadiana Planning Commission (APC) is issuing “Request for Qualifications” (RFQ) statements from consulting firms interested in developing three (3) Preliminary Investigation and Feasibility Reports (PIFR) under PL-566 Watershed Planning.

All questions regarding the RFQ shall be directed to:

Project Manager

Sean Reed

Acadiana Planning Commission

Email: sreed@planacadiana.org

Phone: (337) 735-7398

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report (PIFR) is to provide reasonable assurance that a feasible plan can be developed that addresses Public Law 83-566 purpose and that there are no apparent insurmountable obstacles.

Local government sponsors will from time-to-time request Watershed Planning assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). NRCS requires a PIFR as its initial step in the Watershed planning process and will utilize the contracted firm to assist those requesting units of government in the completion of that document.

The PIFR is designed to give both the local sponsor and the NRCS State Conservationist a decision document that will assist in deciding the feasibility of pursuing further Watershed Planning. It will also be shared as a notice of intent for watershed planning to the public, local, and state entities of Government, along with facilitating the initial process of interagency consultation required under the National Environmental Planning Act (NEPA) as part of Watershed planning.

2.0 SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Consultant hereby agrees to furnish the following types of services, hereinafter simply referred to as the “Services” as described below:

After an NRCS State office has received a written letter of request to initiate a potential PL 566 watershed project, a PIFR is required. A PIFR is a brief study, using existing data and field information. The purpose of the PIFR is to provide reasonable assurance that a feasible watershed

project plan can be developed that addresses a Public Law 83-566 purpose and that there are no apparent insurmountable obstacles. The PIFR is used by the State Conservationist to make the determination if a potential project should be advanced for planning funding. This report may be completed fully or only up to the point that an issue is revealed that may make the project not feasible. A partially completed PIFR can be used to document the agency's findings and determinations and communicate to sponsors those barriers that must be overcome to proceed with a PL 566 planning effort.

Maps or figures should be included at scales and sizes where all text and meaningful information is visible and clear. Although the examples provided in this guide are small, developers of PIFRs are encouraged to include maps and figures at scales and extents that will convey the intended information.

An environmental evaluation (EE) using an interdisciplinary science-based approach will be conducted as a part of the PIFR. The EE will assist the Responsible Federal Official (RFO) in determining whether a Plan-EA or Plan-EIS should be prepared or whether the proposed actions are covered by categorical exclusions.

The PIFR:

- Is a brief study, using existing data and field information.
- Will determine if the proposed project meets the program criteria.
- Will consider all locally identified rural development needs of the communities in the watershed,
- Is a summary of the results of planning done to date,
- Should include the extent and magnitude of problems, goals, alternatives for solving the identified problems, the estimated cost, and any effects of proposed alternatives,
- Will have enough detailed information for the potential sponsor to understand the merits of the project,
- Will indicate if it is possible for any unresolved conflicts to be resolved in the watershed project plan development phase,
- Will address the maximum watershed or sub-watershed area, not to exceed 250,000 acres,
- Will address no structure providing more than 12,500 acre-feet of floodwater detention capacity or more than 25,000 acre-feet of total capacity,

Eligible Project Purposes

1. Flood Prevention (Flood Damage Reduction)

Flood prevention or flood damage reduction measures are installed to prevent or reduce damage(s) caused by floodwater. Mitigation measures reduce or prevent floodwater damages by reducing runoff, erosion, and sediment; modifying the susceptibility of improvements in

the floodplain to damage; removing damageable property from the floodplain; or reducing the frequency, depth, or velocity of flooding. Measures may also include actions that prevent encroachment into the floodplain.

2. Watershed Protection

Watershed protection consists of onsite treatment of watershed natural resources concerns its primary purpose is reducing offsite floodwater, erosion, sediment, and agriculture-related pollutants. Watershed protection plans may include ecosystem restoration type activities. Any practice or combination of practices listed in Title 450, National Handbook of Conservation Practices (NHCP), may be considered for inclusion in the systems of practices included in a watershed protection project plan. Project measures for watershed protection include land treatment practices installed by land users to conserve and develop soil, water quality and quantity, woodland, fish and wildlife habitats, energy, or recreation and scenic resources.

Public Law 83-566 requires that the SLO must “obtain agreements to carry out recommended soil conservation measures and proper farm (conservation) plans from owners of not less than 50 percent of the lands situated in the drainage area above each retention reservoir to be installed with Federal assistance.” USDA policy requires installation of land treatment practices necessary to ensure that at least 50 percent of the land upstream from any retention reservoir is adequately protected before beginning construction of the retention reservoir.

3. Public Recreation

Public recreation developments may be included in a watershed project plan when the SLO agrees to operate and maintain a reservoir or other area for public recreation. Project measures must include only minimum basic facilities needed for public health and safety and access to and use of the area. Minimum basic facilities may include picnic areas, sanitary facilities, fishing piers, shelters, cooking grills, parking areas, swimming beaches, access roads, water, and trails. Also included are practices to provide needed access, water, and power.

4. Public Fish and Wildlife

Fish and wildlife development areas may be included in a watershed project plan when the SLO agrees to operate and maintain a reservoir or other area for public fish and wildlife access. Measures installed for public use of areas developed to improve the habitat or the environment for the breeding, growth, and development of fish and wildlife may be included in a watershed project plan.

5. Agricultural Water Management

Agricultural water management includes drainage, ground water recharge, irrigation, water conservation, water quality improvement, and agricultural (including rural communities) water

supply.

6. Municipal and Industrial Water Supply

Municipal and industrial (M&I) water supply includes measures necessary to provide storage capacity in reservoirs to increase the availability of water for present and future municipal and industrial use. Needed outlet works and pipelines to convey water from the reservoir to the existing or proposed treatment facilities or water system are also considered project measures.

7. Water Quality Management

Water quality management measures provide water storage capacity in reservoirs for regulation of stream flow to improve water quality in streams.

8. Watershed Structure Rehabilitation

Watershed structure rehabilitation authorizes financial assistance to local organizations to cover a portion of the costs of rehabilitating dams originally constructed as part of a project carried out under any of the following four authorities—Public Law 83-566, Public Law 78-534, the pilot watershed program authorized under the Department of Agriculture Appropriation Act of 1954, or the Resource Conservation and Development Program authorized by the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981.

Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report Outline

- Summary
- Applicable Agency Authority and Authorized Purposes
- Potential for 20% Agricultural (Rural) Benefits
- Project Overview
- Resource Information
- Proposed Project Purpose and Need Statement
- Resource Concerns and Opportunities
- State, Tribal, Federal Stakeholder Engagement
- Potential Alternatives
- Facilitating Factors
- Obstructing Factors
- Environmental Document
- Sponsors
- Potential Cooperating Agencies
- Potential Stakeholders
- Recommendation

Please see Attachment I for PIFR Guidance Template.

The consultant will also provide an unrestricted license to APC for the use, duplication, and creation of derivative works for all reports, data, images and media that are part of these deliverables.

In addition to the services listed above, it will be the responsibility of the Consultant to provide copies of all underlying data, data sources, and analysis.

3.0 COMPENSATION AND WORKFLOW

As part of the proposal, the consultant will submit a detailed rate schedule and proposed workflow for each Task outlined above. Successful applicants will provide an estimated number of hours per task/subtask and should have a detailed budget for the entire program.

4.0 CONTRACT TIME

The Consultant agrees to begin the aforementioned services January 02, 2024, and achieve all deliverables by September 30, 2024.

5.0 ELECTRONIC DELIVERABLES

The Consultant(s) hereby agrees to produce paper and electronic deliverables. The Consultant(s) is responsible for contacting the Project Manager to determine any other acceptable formats, requirements, restrictions or should questions arise. Four (4) bound copies of the final report shall be delivered to the Acadiana Planning Commission upon completion of the project. An electronic copy of the Deliveries shall be made on a thumb drive and labeled with media-compatible indelible ink on separate lines as follows:

NRCS Watershed Operations Program
Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report (PIFR)
“Electronic Deliverables”
Consultant Firm Name

6.0 ITEMS TO BE PROVIDED BY ACADIANA PLANNING COMMISSION

The APC will provide the following services to the Consultant to facilitate the successful completion of the PL-566 Watershed Planning project, specifically focusing on the production of three PIFRs:

- Conduct an initial orientation meeting with the consultant to provide a detailed overview of the project objectives, guidelines, and expectations.
- Provide technical support and resources necessary for conducting thorough preliminary investigations, including access to relevant data, maps, and other essential information related to the PL-566 watershed area.
- Assist the consultant in understanding and complying with all relevant regulations, standards, and guidelines governing watershed planning projects, ensuring that the produced reports adhere to legal and environmental requirements.
- Manage the financial aspects of the project, including budget allocation, fund disbursement, and financial reporting. Provide necessary financial documentation and transparency to the consultant as required.
- Monitor and track project timelines, milestones, and deadlines. Provide regular updates to the consultant regarding project progress and any necessary adjustments to the schedule to ensure timely completion.
- Maintain detailed records of project activities, expenses, and communications. Prepare regular progress reports and submit them to the consultant, highlighting achievements, challenges, and next steps.
- Collaborate with the consultant to address any challenges or issues that may arise during the project, providing expertise and guidance to overcome obstacles and ensure the successful completion of the preliminary investigation feasibility reports.

7.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Consultants submitting responses to this RFQ will be evaluated according to a maximum score of 100 points. The points are to be determined by an evaluation of the application package in terms of relevant experience related to the following:

1. Firm and Individual Watershed Planning Experience and Qualifications (see below) (20 Points)

2. Expertise in the various components listed under 2.0 Scope of Services (10 points)
3. Past performance on Watershed Studies in Louisiana and neighboring states (10 points)
4. Knowledge and experience working with other similar public entities (10 Points)
5. Projects of similar type, scale, scope, and complexity executed for clients of similar size, population, planning capability/capacity, and with similar plans (25 Points)
6. Proposed workflow for this project (10 Points)
7. Proposed Budget and Fee Schedule (15 Points)
8. Certified Disadvantage Business Enterprises (2 Bonus points)¹
9. Veterans and Hudson Program participants (2 Bonus points)²

Bidder Qualifications:

Bidders should describe their capacity for and meet the following qualifications to be considered for this project:

- Demonstrated knowledge of, and ability to successfully implement current planning procedures and policies of the NRCS National Watershed Planning Program resulting in the development of at least 1 NRCS authorized Watershed Plan-EA/EISs for the purpose of agricultural water management within the past 3 years.
- A minimum of five years of experience and demonstrated working knowledge of applicable Executive Orders, and other laws and regulations. (e.g. National Historic Preservation Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, etc).
- A minimum of five years of demonstrated experience working with Irrigation Districts in the successful development of irrigation system improvement plans.
- A minimum of five years of demonstrated experience with Public Affairs to include government relations, stakeholder engagement, media communication, information dissemination, and strategic communications.
- Demonstrate staff capacity in the appropriate subject matters sufficient to carry out all activities identified under the Program Description in accordance with all relevant USDA/NRCS policies and procedures.
- Demonstrate staff capacity in the generation of Environmental Evaluations.

¹ See Section 16 for program and certification guidelines.

² See Section 17 for program and certification guidelines.

Professional services are procured in accordance with Acadiana MPO and Acadiana Planning Commission's Consultant Selection Process as approved by the Louisiana DOTD and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and EDA. A copy of the selection process document is available upon request.

Selection of the most highly qualified respondent(s) will be made based on demonstrated competence and qualifications as scored using the criteria listed above.

The APC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any and all formalities outlined in the RFQ and in the selection process, and generally to make the award that, in its judgment, will best meet the objectives stated in this RFQ. The APC also reserves the right to request additional information and/or proposal clarifications from any or all respondents to assist in its evaluation process.

The Consultant Selection Committee will be responsible for performing the above-described evaluation and will present a short list of the three (if three are qualified) highest-rated Consultants to the APC's evaluation committee. The APC Board will make the final selection.

Expenses incurred by the respondents in replying to the RFQ or in making any appearance before the Selection Committee are at the respondents' own expense and risk.

All dates in the RFQ are subject to change, and notice of any changes will be provided to all respondents.

8.0 CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

The first PIFR will be completed and submitted by March 31, 2024, with the subsequent PIFRs due every 90 days thereafter.

9.0 INSURANCE

During the term of this contract, the Consultant(s) shall meet insurance requirements established by the APC. This coverage shall include professional liability, workman's compensation insurance, general liability and automobile liability. The required amounts will be dependent on the contract amount.

A copy of the certificate of insurance shall be furnished to the APC within ten (10) days of the notice of award.

10.0 AUDIT

Both pre-award and post-project audits, as well as interim audits, may be required. For audit purposes, the selected Consultant will maintain accounting records for a minimum of five years after final contract payment.

11.0 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

The Consultant(s) should be aware of the following provisions under which the RFQ will be evaluated and processed along with the resulting deliverables when the project is completed.

1. **Rights of Negotiation** – The APC reserves the right to waive any and all irregularities in submittals, and to negotiate with any party.
2. **Cancellation of RFQ** – The APC reserves the right to cancel the RFQ at any time. All costs incurred by the Proposer in preparing and responding to this solicitation are the sole responsibility of the Proposer and shall not be reimbursed by the APC.
3. **Further Process** - The APC reserves the right to interview only those respondents it determines shall provide the most advantageous services and to negotiate with one or more respondents to contract terms acceptable to the APC.
4. **Nondiscrimination** - The APC notifies all possible Proposers that no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied any benefits of, or otherwise discriminated against in connection with the award and performance of any contract on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, sex, age, ethnicity, sexual identity, or on any other basis prohibited by law or executive order. Consultants and their subcontractors will be subject to related Federal laws and executive orders for work related to this project.
5. **Distribution of Proposals** - All documentation, information or data provided by the Proposer as part of its submission (whether in writing and/or digital format) shall become the property of the APC. The APC is subject to Louisiana Public Record Law.
6. **Public Disclosure** - The APC may publish the names of all Proposers on its Website. Proposals will be distributed to members of the APC's evaluation team. The APC reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to use without limitation any and all information and data submitted in response to the RFQ or derived from further investigation of any submittal.
7. **Notice Conflicts of Interest** - The Proposer shall identify any group, individual or organization that they may have worked for, or currently work for, that has had ownership, lease, development, related or similar interest in the APC and shall disclose such potential conflicts of interest to the APC. The APC reserves the right to reject any proposal or Proposer who it feels has a conflict of interest.

- 8. News Release** - Proposer shall make no new/press release pertaining to this RFQ or anything contained or referenced herein without prior written approval from the APC.
- 9. Application Law** - This RFQ and any contract or agreements resulting herein are subject to all applicable Federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations and executive orders.
- 10. Acknowledgement** - The Consultant shall acknowledge that the work completed as part of the project is a collaborative effort with the APC in future statement of qualifications, advertisements, and presentations when the PIFR is cited.

12.0 SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

All submittals must be in accordance with the requirements of this advertisement. Any proposers failing to submit any of the information required, or providing inaccurate information, will be considered non-responsive.

Proposals shall be submitted prior to 4:00p.m. CST on Friday, November 27, 2023. Proposals may be delivered by hand or courier services to our physical location at:

Acadiana Planning Commission
Attn: Sean Reed, Project Manager
101 Jefferson Street, Suite 201
Lafayette, LA 70501
Phone: 337-806-9368

Or mailed through the U.S. Postal Services to:

Acadiana Planning Commission
P.O. Box 3705
Lafayette, LA 70502

Proposer is solely responsible for ensuring that its courier service provider makes inside deliveries to our physical location. APC is not responsible for any delays caused by the proposer's chosen means of delivery.

Proposer is solely responsible for the timely delivery of its proposal. Failure to meet the proposal opening date and time shall result in the rejection of the proposal.

13.0 SELECTION PROCESS AND CALENDAR

Below is the schedule for the RFQ process:

- November 8, 2023: RFQ Issued
- November 14, 2023, 4:00pm CST: Deadline for written questions regarding RFQ
- November 17, 2023: Responses to all received questions issued
- November 28, 4:00pm CST: RFQ responses due
- December 4, 2023: Possible follow-up interviews scheduled, as needed
- December 14, 2023: Consultant selection announced
- January 4, 2024: Expected Start Date

14.0 Disadvantaged Business Enterprises

The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program was created to remedy past and current discrimination against DBE firms. The intention is to level the playing field for socially and economically disadvantaged individuals wanting to do business with the local, state, and federal government. The DBE Compliance Programs Section, Certification Unit, certifies businesses capable of performing services and/or products which can be credited toward DBE goals. The certification process ensures that only qualified small business firms that are independently owned and controlled by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals are certified for this program. The first step in the certification process is to complete and submit a DBE application. If a Proposer is not a certified DBE as described herein, but plans to use certified DBE(s), Proposer shall include in their proposal the names of their certified DBE subcontractor(s), a description of the work each will perform, and the dollar value of each subcontract.

All eligible vendors are encouraged to become certified. Qualification requirements and online certification are available at [UCPHome \(la.gov\)](http://www8.dotd.la.gov/UCP/UCPHome)

To verify a certified DBE use the search criteria accessed at the State of Louisiana Unified Certification Program available: <http://www8.dotd.la.gov/UCP/UCPSearch.aspx>

16.0 Veteran and Hudson Initiative Programs Participation

The State of Louisiana Veteran and Hudson Initiatives are designed to provide additional opportunities for Louisiana-based small entrepreneurships (sometimes referred to as LaVet's and SE's respectively) to participate in contracting and procurement with the state. A certified Veteran-Owned and Service-Connected Disabled Veteran-Owned small entrepreneurships (LaVet) and a Louisiana Initiative for Small Entrepreneurships (Hudson Initiative) small entrepreneurship are businesses that have been certified by the Louisiana Department of Economic Development. All eligible vendors are encouraged to become certified. Qualification requirements and online certification are available at <https://smallbiz.louisianaeconomicdevelopment.com>

If a Proposer is not a certified small entrepreneurship as described herein but plans to use certified small entrepreneurship(s), Proposer shall include in their proposal the names of their certified Veteran Initiative or Hudson Initiative small entrepreneurship subcontractor(s), a description of the work each will perform, and the dollar value of each subcontract.

During the term of the contract and at expiration, the Contractor will also be required to report Veteran-Owned and Service-Connected Disabled Veteran-Owned and Hudson Initiative small entrepreneurship subcontractor or distributor participation and the dollar amount of each.

In RFQ's requiring the compliance of a good faith subcontracting plan, the APC may require Proposers to submit information on their business relationships and arrangements with certified LaVet or Hudson Initiative subcontractors at the time of proposal review. Agreements between a Proposer and a certified LaVet or Hudson Initiative subcontractor in which the certified LaVet or Hudson Initiative subcontractor promises not to provide subcontracting quotations to other Proposers shall be prohibited.

If performing its evaluation of proposals, the State reserves the right to require a non- certified Proposer to provide documentation and information supporting a good faith subcontracting plan. Such proof may include contracts between Proposer and certified Veteran Initiative and/or Hudson Initiative subcontractor(s).

If a contract is awarded to a Proposer who proposed a good faith subcontracting plan, the using agency, the Louisiana Department of Economic Development (LED), or the Office of State Procurement (OSP) may audit Contractor to determine whether Contractor has complied in good faith with its subcontracting plan. The Contractor must be able to provide supporting documentation (i.e., phone logs, fax transmittals, letter, e-mails) to demonstrate its good faith subcontracting plan was followed. If it is determined at any time by the using agency, LED, or the OSP Director that the Contractor did not in fact perform in good faith its subcontracting plan, the contract award or the existing contract may be terminated.

The statutes (La. R.S. 39:2171 *et. seq.*) concerning the Veteran Initiative may be viewed at: <http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/Law.aspx?d=671504>.

The statutes (La. R.S. 39:2001 *et. seq.*) concerning the Hudson Initiative may be viewed at: <http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/Law.aspx?d=96265>.

The rules for the Veteran Initiative (LAC 19:VII. Chapters 11 and 15) and for the Hudson Initiative (LAC 19:VIII Chapters 11 and 13) may be viewed at: <http://www.doa.la.gov/pages/osp/se/secv.aspx>.

A current list of certified Veteran-Owned and Service-Connected Disabled Veteran- Owned and Hudson Initiative small entrepreneurship may be obtained from the Louisiana Economic Development Certification System at: <https://smallbiz.louisianaeconomicdevelopment.com>

Additionally, a list of Hudson and Veteran Initiative small entrepreneurship, which have been certified by the Louisiana Department of Economic Development and who have opted to register in the State of Louisiana LaGov Supplier Portal: https://lagoverpvendor.doa.louisiana.gov/irj/portal/anonymous?guest_user=self_reg.

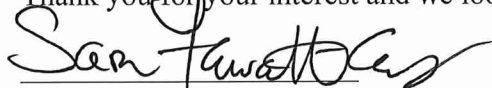
This may be accessed from the State of Louisiana Procurement and Contract (LaPAC) Network: <https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/OSP/LaPAC/vendor/VndPubMain.cfm>.

When using this site, determine the search criteria (i.e. alphabetized list of all certified vendors, by commodities, etc.) and select Smalle, VSE, or DVSE.

17.0 REVISIONS TO THE RFQ

The APC reserves the right to revise any part of the RFQ by issuing an addendum to the RFQ at any time. Issuance of this RFQ in no way constitutes a commitment by the APC to award a contract. The APC reserves the right to accept or reject, in whole or part, all Qualification Statements submitted, and/or cancel this announcement if it is determined to be in APC's best interest. All materials submitted in response to this announcement become the property of the APC, and selection or rejection of a submittal does not affect this right. The APC also reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive administrative informalities contained in the RFQ.

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to reviewing your submission.



Sara Fawcett-Gary, Interim CEO/Transportation Director

November 8, 2023

ATTACHMENT I

NRCS Watershed Operations Program

Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report (PIFR)

Guidance and Template

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)

- 7 CFR 622 §622.2, Scope

Title 390 – National Watershed Program Manual (NWPM)

- 500.10 A. (ii), Watershed Program Information Assistance
- 500.20 Request for NRCS Planning Assistance
- 500.21 Planning Authorization
- 501.20 Preliminary Investigation

General Instructions

This template guidance is used to document the results of a preliminary investigation, after an NRCS State office has received a written letter of request to initiate a potential PL 566 watershed project. A PIFR is a brief study, using existing data and field information. The purpose of the PIFR is to provide reasonable assurance that a feasible watershed project plan can be developed that addresses a Public Law 83-566 purpose and that there are no apparent insurmountable obstacles. The PIFR is used by the State Conservationist to make the determination if a potential project should be advanced for planning funding. This report may be completed fully or only up to the point that an issue is revealed that may make the project not feasible. A partially completed PIFR can be used to document the agency's findings and determinations and communicate to sponsors those barriers that must be overcome to proceed with a PL 566 planning effort.

Maps or figures should be included at scales and sizes where all text and meaningful information is visible and clear. Although the examples provided in this guide are small, developers of PIFRs are encouraged to include maps and figures at scales and extents that will convey the intended information.

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Abbreviations

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations (<https://www.ecfr.gov/>)

NECH – National Environmental Compliance Handbook

NWPH – National Watershed Program Handbook

NWPM – National Watershed Program Manual

USC – United States Code ([US Code on House.gov](https://www.house.gov/legislation/usc/))

References

- NRCS National Environmental Compliance Handbook, Title 190, Part 610, May 2016
- NRCS National Watershed Program Manual, April 2014
- NRCS National Watershed Program Handbook, April 2014
- DM 9500-013 – Guidance For Conducting Analyses Under The Principles, Requirements, And Guidelines For Water And Land Related Resources Implementation Studies And Federal Water Resource Investments, January 2017
- Principles and Requirements for Federal Investments in Water Resources, March 2013

Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report Outline

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- Potential Stakeholders
- Recommendation

Summary

Description:

The summary should be no more than two (2) pages and briefly introduce the project effort and generally summarize the contents of the full report:

- Who is requesting assistance (Sponsors) and who (types of landowners) would be involved with the project if it were to be implemented?
- What PL-566 project purpose(s) and resource concerns would be addressed through the project?
- Where is the project be located?
- How would the project be compatible with the PL-566 program?
- Why is this project significant?
- Summary of the potential alternatives discussed.

Applicable Agency Authority and Authorized Purposes

The table below, provides documentation that the project is eligible for federal assistance and will meet statutory requirements.

Describe the potential project watershed area; how does the area meet the requirements outlined in NRCS's National Watershed Program Manual (See 506.50 NWPM Glossary - TTT. Watershed).									
Response:									
Will the project area exceed 250,000 acres in size? ^{1,2}								<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
If over 250,000 acres will it be divided into sub-watersheds in one plan?								<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Potential Project Area Size: _____ acres									
Will any single structure provide more than 12,500 acre-feet of floodwater detention capacity, or have a 25,000 acre-feet of total capacity?								<input type="checkbox"/> YES ³	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
How many recreational developments will be included in the project area?									
• One development in a project area less than 75,000 acres								<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
• Two developments in a project area between 75,000 and 150,000 acres								<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
• Three developments in a project area greater than 150,000 acres								<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Which authorized purposes will the project address? (Indicate only one purpose as primary):									
								Primary	Other
• Flood prevention								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Watershed Protection								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Public Recreation								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Public Fish and Wildlife								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Agricultural Water Management								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Municipal or Industrial Water Supply								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Water Quality Management								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the project produce substantial benefits to the general public, to communities, and to groups of landowners?								<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO ³
Can the project be installed by individual or collective landowners under alternative cost-sharing assistance?								<input type="checkbox"/> YES ³	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Will the project have strong local citizen and sponsor support through agreements to obtain land rights, permits, contribute the local cost of construction, and carry out operation and maintenance.								<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO ³
Will the project take place in a Special Designated Area? (if yes, check applicable area below.)								YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Appalachia	<input type="checkbox"/>	Delaware River Basin	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehanna River Basin	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tennessee Valley	<input type="checkbox"/>		

1- For specific appropriations, the 250,000 acres is waived except for watershed projects with the flood prevention purpose.

2- Watersheds exceeding 250,000 acres can be broken up into smaller sub-watersheds.

3- The project will not meet the statutory requirements.

References:

16 USC 18 - §1004, Conditions for Federal assistance

7 CFR 611 - 11, Eligible Watershed Projects

Title 390, NWPM – 500.3 Eligible Purposes

Potential for 20% Agricultural (Rural) Benefits

Description:

PL-566 requires that projects have 20% agricultural (rural) benefits. At a minimum the PIFR should document that there are potential agricultural or rural benefits associated with the potential projects purpose(s). It should also be documented if there are no discernable agricultural (rural) benefits.

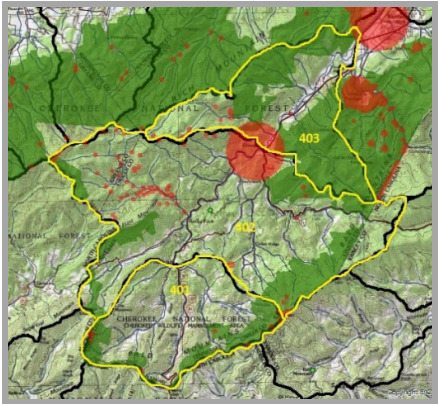
Example:

The Bear Creek project will have the authorized purpose of Watershed Protection. The watershed project will have agricultural benefits that may include improved water for cropland irrigation and for livestock. Rural benefits associated with the project are estimated to include reduced treatment costs for removal of contaminants in raw water.

References:

16 USC 18 - §1002, Definitions

Title 390, NWPM – 506.50 Glossary, MMM. Rural or Rural Communities

Project Overview														
Proposed Project Name	<p>Description: The proposed project name should be the name of the watershed where the project will be located. The USGS has named all watersheds and the USGS name for the watershed is the name that is recommended be used for the initial naming of the watershed project.</p> <p>Example: Lower Cheyene Watershed</p>													
State	State Name													
County/Parish	County (Parish) Name													
Congressional District	Congressional District(s)													
USGS Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) and Watershed Name	<p>Description: Refer to the USGS map for watersheds defined in the United States – Link to USGS HUCs – recommend using a HUC that fits the boundaries of the proposed project area, 10 or 12 digit HUC.</p> <p>Example:</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Map of South Indian Creek Watershed, Unicoi County, TN The three 12 HUC sub-watersheds that compose South Indian Creek watershed are delineated by yellow lines.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Lower South Indian Creek</td> <td>060101080403</td> <td>12,428 acres</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Upper South Indian Creek</td> <td>060101080402</td> <td>28,145 acres</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rice Creek</td> <td>060101080401</td> <td><u>11,226 acres</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Watershed Drainage Area</td> <td></td> <td>51,799 acres</td> </tr> </table>		Lower South Indian Creek	060101080403	12,428 acres	Upper South Indian Creek	060101080402	28,145 acres	Rice Creek	060101080401	<u>11,226 acres</u>	Total Watershed Drainage Area		51,799 acres
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Rice Creek	060101080401	<u>11,226 acres</u>												
Total Watershed Drainage Area		51,799 acres												
General Coordinates of the Watershed	<p>Description: Provide the latitude and longitude of the approximate center of the watershed</p>													

Project Setting

Description: The project setting briefly describes the general and unique characteristics of the potential project affected area.

Reference: Title 190 – NECH 610.69

Example:

Chandler County has a total area of 185 square miles and is located in the northeastern part of Tennessee. North Carolina forms the western boundary of the county. Carver, the county seat, is approximately 15 miles south of Smith City and 120 miles west of Asheville.

Northeastern Tennessee has a moderate climate featuring cool, but not cold, winters and warm summers. High temperatures in the area in July average in the upper 80s °F; high temperatures in January average in the mid-40s °F, while the average low is around 30s °F. The growing season in this mountainous part of the state is 130 days. This county receives ample precipitation, usually more than 52 inches each year.



The County is within the special designated area of Appalachia. NRCS has formal and informal agreements with officials in these areas to coordinate and keep them informed of progress during planning and operations.

The majority of the total land area, about 95,094 acres, or 89 percent is undeveloped land. There are approximately 5,456 acres of pasture; 24,000 of prime farmland and 55,000 acres of forest. Geologically, the area is characterized by shale and sandstone formations. These formations have a depth of 2000 to 4000 feet .. (THIS NEEDS TO BE REFINED-expanded).


Over 17,000 acres of Lindahem National Forest (USDA Forest Service) lie within Chandler County. The Mimms trail runs through Chandler County.



South Indian Creek watershed streams are predominantly high-quality streams. See Appendix A for named streams within the South Indian Creek watershed and streams designated as Tennessee Exceptional Waters. Localized stream reaches may have water quality impairments not captured in this preliminary investigation feasibility report.

A significant portion of the Chandler County undeveloped land is either susceptible to flooding, has soil limitations, and/or has excessive slope. The natural factors that shaped the developed lands also limit the development potential of the undeveloped land. The predominant developed land use is residential.

Potential Project Area - Size	Description: Proposed watershed project area; to include a map (project boundary and aerial photography) and the acreage of the project area. The map should not include any other project specific details.
Resource Information	(Use the CPA-52 and guidesheets as a reference for content in the following sections.)
Soils	Description: Narrative description of the soil resources in the proposed project area.
Water	Description: Narrative description of the water resources in the proposed project area.
Air	Description: Narrative description of the air resources in the proposed project area.
Plants	Description: Narrative description of the plant resources in the proposed project area.
Animals	Description: Narrative description of the animal resources in the proposed project area.
Energy	Description: Narrative description of the energy resources in the proposed project area.
Human	<p>Description: Narrative description of the human resources in the proposed project area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics: Describe the demographics in the proposed project area. Demographic information is available through the Census (https://data.census.gov/) as well as the EPA (https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen) (Detailed information from the Census or EPA web sites may optionally be included in the Appendix. • Transportation: Describe transportation routes and infrastructure rights-of-ways (interstates, highways, railways, powerlines, gas pipelines etc.) within the proposed project area that might be impacted by the project. • Recreation: Describe the recreational opportunities with-in, and/or adjacent to, the proposed project area.

Resources of Special Concern																													
Clean Water Act	Description: Narrative description of any federal permits and or mitigation that may be required.																												
Clean Air Act	Description: Narrative describing the general air quality and any known types of air pollutants and particulate matter that impact air quality. If applicable, include any known agricultural emissions/sources.																												
Coastal Zone Management	Description: Describe any coastal zone management designated areas that will be impacted by the potential project and any consolation or coordination requirements. If coastal zone management is not applicable to your state, use “NA.”																												
Coral Reefs	Description: Describe and coral reefs that may be impacted directly or indirectly by the potential project. If coral reefs will not be impacted, use “NA”.																												
Cultural Resources	Description: General description of the cultural, archeological, and historically significant resources in the proposed watershed project area. Include only general archeology maps and/or data. This section can include existing archeological maps in the public domain, online National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and other public information. The section should also include a statement that the State Historic Preservation Office will be consulted during the planning process.																												
Endangered & Threatened Species	Description: A narrative describing the federal and state threatened and endangered (T/E) species that may be impacted within, and near, the proposed project area. Federal T/E species information can be obtained through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service endangered species website. For those states with State designated T/E species consult the NRCS State Biologist and/or the State environmental/conservation/natural resources office (detailed information from T/E information websites may optionally be included in the Appendix - screen shots as shown below should not be included in this section.)																												
	<div><div><div><div><div><div></div><div><div>U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service</div><div>ECOS Environmental Conservation Online System</div><div>Conserving the Nature of America</div></div></div><div><div>Search: <input type="text"/></div><div>Clear</div></div></div><div><div><div><div><div>ECOS</div><div>Species Reports</div><div>Species County Report</div></div></div><div><div>Listed species believed to or known to occur in Hinsdale, Colorado</div><div><div>The following report contains Species that are known to or are believed to occur in this county. Species with range undefined past the state level are not included from this report. If you are looking for the Section 7 range list for Section 7 Consultations, please visit the eDRC application.</div></div></div></div><div><div>1/3 Species Listings</div><table><tr><th>Group</th><th>Name</th><th>Population</th><th>Status</th><th>Lead Office</th><th>Recovery Plan</th><th>Recovery Plan Action Status</th></tr><tr><td>Insects</td><td>non-native butterfly (Danaus cleopatra)</td><td>Whenever found</td><td>Candidate</td><td>3</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Mammals</td><td>Long-eared myotis (Myotis grisceus)</td><td>Whenever found</td><td>Species of Concern</td><td>4</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Mammals</td><td>New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (Zapus luteus)</td><td>Whenever found</td><td>Endangered</td><td>2</td><td>Recovery Outline from Mexican meadow jumping mouse (Zapus luteus) Recovery Plan</td><td>Implementation Progress</td></tr></table></div></div></div></div></div>	Group	Name	Population	Status	Lead Office	Recovery Plan	Recovery Plan Action Status	Insects	non-native butterfly (Danaus cleopatra)	Whenever found	Candidate	3			Mammals	Long-eared myotis (Myotis grisceus)	Whenever found	Species of Concern	4			Mammals	New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (Zapus luteus)	Whenever found	Endangered	2	Recovery Outline from Mexican meadow jumping mouse (Zapus luteus) Recovery Plan	Implementation Progress
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Environmental Justice	Description: A narrative describing the historically underserved, limited resource and tribal communities in the proposed project area or potentially impacted by the proposed project.
Essential Fish Habitat	Description: A narrative describing designated essential fish habitat in the proposed project area or potentially impacted by the proposed project. If essential fish habitat is not applicable to the proposed project, use “NA.”
Floodplain Management	Description: A narrative describing the principal floodplain land uses including any local floodplain ordinances.
Invasive Species	Description: List State and/or Federal designated invasive plants and animals known to exist in the proposed project area or that will be potentially impacted by the proposed project.
Migratory Birds/Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act	<p>Description: Narrative description of any migratory bird/bald & golden eagle populations that are known to exist in, or that periodically visit, the proposed project area or that will be potentially impacted by the proposed project.</p> <p>Example: Bald and golden eagles are known to visit the proposed project area each spring between March and May. High population densities are known to occur near the Reelfoot Lake and within the Mississippi River Corridor.</p>
Natural Areas	<p>Description: Identify any federal, state, or locally designated natural areas in or near the proposed project area.</p> <p>Example: Three state designated natural areas are known within a 25-mile radius of the watershed: Tim’s Ford Natural Area, Walls of Jericho Natural Area and Standing Falls Natural Area.</p>
Prime and Unique Farmlands	<p>Description: Describe prime and unique farmlands (sometimes called “Important Farmlands”) in, or downstream of the project area.</p> <p>Example: Fifty percent of the farmland in the proposed project area, 2,561 acres, is designated as prime farmlands.</p>
Riparian Area	Description: Describe riparian areas/corridors within the proposed project area or potentially impacted by the proposed project. Consider both vegetated and non-vegetated areas.
Scenic Beauty	Description: Describe areas within the proposed project area, or potentially impacted by the proposed project, that are considered to be high quality visual landscapes and/or portray a unique sense of place identifiable to everyone who lives there or passes through.

Wetlands	Description: A narrative describing the wetland areas in the proposed project area or wetland areas potentially impacted by the proposed project.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Description: <i>This section applies to federal and state designated rivers identified as wild and scenic. List known designated rivers in the proposed project area or receiving waters downstream of the proposed project, designated as wild and scenic, that may be impacted by the proposed project.</i>

Proposed Project Purpose and Need Statement

Description:

Statement of Need and Purpose of the Proposed Action establishes why NRCS is proposing to take action that may result in potentially significant environmental impacts. It should provide an easily defensible rationale explaining to the public and decisionmakers that the action is necessary and worthwhile and that the project is warranted. It should also demonstrate the problems that could or will result if the project is not implemented.

The purpose of the proposed action should be clearly identified. A discussion of the underlying need for action to which NRCS is responding should be provided. This assists in justifying why potential impacts may be acceptable based on the project's importance.

The purpose of the action and the underlying need will define and shape the alternatives. If the statement of purpose and need for a proposed action is narrow, the EA or EIS will most likely include a narrower range of alternatives. If, on the other hand, the statement is stated too broadly, it may become more difficult to justify why some alternatives have been eliminated from consideration. All alternatives being considered should clearly address how the alternatives meet the underlying need and fulfill the purposes of the action. Note: The purpose of the action should describe the specific objectives of the proposed action (e.g., decrease the occurrence of flooding through a community), while the underlying need should consider the broader social or natural resource need to which the agency is responding (e.g., protection of life and property).

Examples:

Town of Oneida Water Supply

The purpose of the proposed project is to increase the available water supply for the rural Town of Oneida and its customers (inside and outside town limits). It is anticipated that the PL 566 project purpose will be Agricultural Water Supply.

The current water supply is insufficient for human and animal consumption/use, public facilities (schools, hospitals, etc.), businesses and industry. As a result of insufficient water supply, the Town of Oneida and Scott County cannot attract new industries and businesses, and existing industries do not have enough water to expand their operations. Unemployment has increased as water availability decreased.

The Town of Oneida and its rural water customers have a fragile water supply that often fail to meet its current capacity needs. Ground water contamination, restrictions on water withdrawal from nearby streams and rivers, frequent droughts, and limitations on purchase of water from neighboring utilities are driving the demand to increase their water source.

The Town has already addressed water conservation within their customer area and upgraded the water treatment plant. However, the amount of water made available by these measures cannot satisfy the current or future demand.

Other concerns arise from the water supply deficit: human and animal health/safety, economic and social, water conservation, water quality improvement, and environmental effects on T&E species, aquatic life, recreation, and cultural sites.

Mary's Creek Watershed

The purpose of the proposed dam rehabilitation for Mary's Creek Dam #9 is to maintain present level of flood

control benefits and to comply with current performance and safety standards of the State and NRCS. The dam lies about 20 miles east of the New Madrid Fault causing it to be vulnerable to moderate to severe earthquakes as well as floods. For these reasons, and because the area downstream of the dam, which was mostly agricultural cropland when the dam was constructed in 1962, now includes homes and highly travelled roads; the dam has been reclassified from “Low Hazard” to “High Hazard”.

The entire watershed, including bottomland, has continuing high volume residential, commercial and public land growth. Presently the watershed land use, including bottomland, is mostly residential, commercial, and public land; little agricultural land use remains.

Development and construction of new roadways are impacting the watershed. A breach of Dam #9 could have impacts on an existing road as well as a new road and bridge scheduled for construction

References:

Title 390, NWPM – 500.3 Eligible Purposes

Title 390, NWPH

- 600.3 (B) Authorized Project Measures
- 601.20 Preliminary Investigation
- 601.25 Pre-NEPA Plans
- 601.34 Purpose and Need for Action
- 601.36 Affected Environment
- 610.50 Environmental Impact Statement (4) Statement of Need and Purpose of the Proposed Action
- 610.66 Statement of Need and Purposes of the Proposed Action

Resource Concerns and Opportunities

Description:

This section describes the resource concerns that may potentially be impacted by implementation of the proposed project. The effects of the proposed project can be either negative or positive. Positive effects of the proposed project can include opportunities for improvement or protection of existing resources. For the preliminary investigation feasibility report; identify resources within, and adjacent to, the proposed project area, and any regional or national impacts that may occur as a result of the projects implementation.

In the PIFR, the *Potential Effects of Proposed Alternatives on SWAPA + E + H Resources and Resources of Special Concern* table, shown as an example below, will be used to indicate the estimated effects on resources associated with the potential project.

Example:

Potential Effects of Proposed Alternatives on SWAPA + E + H Resources and Resources of Special Concern

Use: + - Positive Impact - - Negative Impact 0 - No Impact

Resource Concerns: SWAPA + Energy + Human				
	Alt 1 – No Federal Action Description: The sponsor does not implement flood protection measures using Federal funds	Alt 2 – Structural Description: Install levees or diversions along the floodway.	Alt 3 – Nonstructural Description: Implement zoning in flood plain and relocation.	Alt 4 – Pie in the Sky Description: Relocate the town to a non-floodplain area.
Soil	-	+	+	+
Water	-	+	+	+
Air	0	0	0	0
Plants	-	+	+	+
Animals	-	+	+	+
Energy	0	0	0	0
Human	-	+	+/-	-
Resources of Special Concern				
Clean Air Act	0	0	0	0
Clean Water Act/Waters of the U.S.	-	+	+	+
Coastal Zone Management	0	0	0	0
Coral Reefs	0	0	0	0
Cultural Resources/Historic Properties	-	+	+	+
Endangered & Threatened Species	-	+	+	+
Environmental Justice	-	+	+	+
Essential Fish Habitat	0	0	0	0
Floodplain Management	-	+	+	+
Invasive Species	0	0	0	0
Migratory Birds/Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	-	+	+	+
Natural Areas	0	0	0	0

Opportunities

Description:

Each resource concern that may be addressed through the potential project should include a discussion regarding the opportunities associated with the PL-566 purposes. Opportunities can be described in any combination of responses to questions such as:

- Who is willing to help or contribute to addressing the concern: Landowners, Tribal, State and Federal Partners, Non-Governmental Organizations, Universities?
- Where would opportunities to implement measures that would address the concern be located: Private, Tribal, Local, State, Federal Lands?
- Are there structural or non-structural measures that when implemented, would positively impact the resource concern?

Example:

Surface and ground water in the Wilson Creek watershed are impaired due to years of acidic drainage from abandoned coal mines, surface and ground water are no longer useable for human consumption or other uses. The sponsors and residents within the watershed are willing to participate in the PL-566 program, allowing NRCS to implement land treatment measures that are designed to treat acid mine drainage and improve water quality. Treatment sites will be located on both county (sponsor) owned and privately held land.

References:

Title 190, NECH

- 610.10 Overview of NRCS Environmental Compliance
- 610.100 NRCS NEPA Flowchart

State, Tribal, Federal Stakeholder Engagement

Description:

Identify potential state, tribal and federal stakeholders who might have an interest in the potential project. The State Conservationist, state watershed program manager, the interdisciplinary team preparing the PIFR and the Sponsor should determine if an informational meeting should be held among the stakeholders to establish dialogue and determine if there are any potential controversies.

Example:

NRCS and the Sponsors met with the USACE, EPA Region 2, US Fish and Wildlife Services and the State of Idaho Water Resources to discuss the potential PL-566 watershed project. The watershed boundary and the sponsors concerns and objectives were presented to the group. Each agency/office represented was given the opportunity to ask questions about the potential project as well as discuss any perceived controversies surrounding the project, from their organization's perspective.

Potential Alternatives

Description:

Alternatives are actions proposed to meet some underlying need or to achieve a desired future condition and must correlate with the project's Purpose and Need (Title 190 - NECH 610.67). Each viable potential alternative may consist of a combination of structural and/or nonstructural measures, land treatment practices or locally preferred strategies. Reasonable potential alternatives may also include actions that are not covered by NRCS program authority.

For the formulation of alternatives there are four criteria that must be considered: completeness, effectiveness, efficiency and acceptability (PR&G Chapter 7. a. iv.).

While the existing conditions will be represented by the No Federal Action alternative, the PIFR will, at a minimum, include three additional potentially viable alternatives.

- Alternative 1: No Federal Action
- Potential Alternative 2: Structural
- Potential Alternative 3: Non-Structural
- Potential Alternative 4: Pie in the Sky
(if money was no object, all rules, regulations and permitting were approved (may also be an action outside of NRCS program authority).

A preliminary cost estimate for each preliminary alternative will be shown in the PIFR; cost methodology details developed using interdisciplinary professional knowledge should be explained in the appendix.

Maps or photos may be used to show site details for potential alternatives to clarify the reader's understanding.

References:

Title 390, NWPH – 501.12 Plan Formulation

Title 190, NECH – 610.67 Formulation of Alternatives

Principles, Requirements & Guidelines

Example:

Alternatives	Possible Positive Impacts and Effects	Possible Adverse Impacts and Effects
Alternative 1 – No Action/Future Without Project Description: The sponsor does not implement flood protection measures using Federal funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Situation will remain as-is.• No investments in infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current Conditions will continue with flooding: health and safety risk and damage to infrastructure• Damage/removal of riparian areas.
Alternative 2 – Structural Description: Install levy's or diversions along the floodway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced damage to croplands, road and bridge culverts, residential and commercial areas.• Reduced health and safety risk to humans and animals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People may resist easements and property condemnation for project.• Increased operation, maintenance, and replacement cost.• Reduced visual appeal to residents in the floodplain
Alternative 3 – Non-Structural Description: Implement zoning in flood plain and relocation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less operation, maintenance, and replacement cost.• Aesthetics maintained in the community• Increased wildlife habitat in the floodplain• Ecosystem benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People may resist easements and property condemnation for project.• Flooding will continue; causing damages to cropland, roads, bridges and culverts.
Alternative 4 – Pie in the Sky, if money was no object, all rules, regulations and permitting were approved (may be an action outside of NRCS program authority) Description: Relocate the town to a non-floodplain area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elimination of threat to life and property.• Floodplain converted to nature conservatory including wetlands• Increased wildlife habitat• Enhanced learning and recreation opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relocation of cemeteries and utilities• Loss of cultural values in the community• Displacement of local businesses, schools, and public facilities• Increased resistance to relocation and property condemnation.

While all of the potential alternatives listed may not be carried forward for full analysis, this table should document that there are one or more reasonable alternatives that may be analyzed during the full planning process.

Facilitating Factors

Description:

Determine facilitating factors for each reasonable alternative. Facilitating factors make it possible or easier for something to happen and/or assist in attaining a specified goal or improve the desired end result. Facilitating factors include things such as the availability of funding, the ability of the sponsor to do in-kind work, the improved health of people and animals as a result of the federal action, etc.

Example:

- The Sponsor will provide additional water quality analysis.
- Residents have stated that they will provide land rights for the project to the Sponsor.
- Drinking water quality would be improved as result of the project.
- The landscape would be enhanced visually with the smooth and planting of mining spoil piles.
- Significant stakeholder and partner engagement.

Obstructing Factors

Description:

Determine obstructing factors for each reasonable alternative. Obstructing factors make it more difficult for an action to happen and/or decreases the ability to attain a specified goal. The lack of local funding for a project, uncertainty of land rights, possible negative impacts on resources of special concern, community resistance to project and the high cost of moving roads or infrastructure are examples of obstructing factors.

Example:

- The tribal community does not have the power of eminent domain for obtaining land rights.
- Landowners are unwilling to provide a construction easement for access to the proposed project site.
- The water resources permitting agency has a two year back log for permitting requests.
- Mitigation fees are expected to be more than the sponsor can pay
- Directly downstream from the project is the spawning site for an endangered salamander.

Environmental Document

Description:

NRCS is required to develop a watershed project plan environmental document for each planning effort that may be authorized by the Chief. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NRCS Policy outline that watershed plan environmental document will be either a:

- Plan – Environmental Evaluation
- Plan – Environmental Assessment
- Plan – Environmental Impact Statement

Plan - Environmental Evaluation (Plan – EE)

When the entirety of the proposed actions is covered by one or more categorical exclusions (CE), the plan will include documentation of the applicability of the CE and the environmental evaluation in the “watershed project Plan-EE.”

Plan – Environmental Assessment (Plan - EA)

If the project is not covered by a categorical exclusion, it is appropriate to consider a plan – environmental assessment as the document that evaluates and assesses all reasonable alternatives and their impacts. Most NRCS watershed project plan environmental documents are EA’s.

Plan – Environmental Impact Statement (Plan -EIS)

Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment are documented with an environmental impact statement. If it is difficult to determine whether there is a significant impact on the human environment, it may be necessary to prepare an EA to decide if an EIS is required. Other circumstances that require an EIS are:

- Projects that include stream channel realignment or work to modify channel capacity by deepening or widening where significant aquatic or wildlife habitat exists.
- Projects requiring congressional action.
- Broad Federal assistance programs administered by NRCS when there may be significant cumulative impacts on the human environment.
- When the potential project is anticipated to involve controversy regarding its’ environmental effects.

Example:

A potentially viable alternative for a proposed watershed project, sponsored by the Ann County Watershed board, involves diverting approximately 5 Million Gallons of water per day from a stream to a planned PL-566 reservoir. For this potential alternative a diversion pipe will be installed that will pass through a popular community recreation area. Although there is an extraordinary need for safe drinking water, the citizens who utilize the recreation area and the state fish and wildlife agency are opposed to the effort because it is feared the diverted water will affect the amount and quality of recreation and habitat for aquatic species. The board wishes to continue with the planning despite the controversy the project may generate. At this point in the planning process, the interdisciplinary team has determined that the appropriate Plan – Environmental Document for the project may be a Plan – Environmental Impact Statement. A Plan – Environmental Assessment may be prepared to assist in determining if a Plan – Environmental Impact Statement is required.

References:

16 USC 18 §1002 - Definitions

Title 190, NECH – 610.45 Determining Appropriate Documentation

Sponsors

Description:

All sponsors who take an active role in project will complete the WS-4, PIFR Sponsor Declaration form. A summary of the sponsor responses will be included in this section. Completed WS-4 - PIFR Sponsor Declaration should be included in an Appendix.

Example:

<i>Sponsor Will:</i>	Assist in Planning	Land Rights / Eminent Doman	Local Cost Share	O/M Funds	Permits	Land Treatment	In-Kind MOU
Warsaw Conservation District	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
City of Fisherville	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Delawrence County	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Sponsor will:

- Assist in the locally led planning effort.
- Obtain needed land rights including the use of power of eminent domain, if necessary.
- Provide local cost-share funds and/or in-kind services to provide the required portion of total project costs.
- Provide funds for continuing operation and maintenance actions.
- Obtain required permits and approvals at sponsor cost:
- Provide leadership to help ensure adequate conservation land treatment measures are maintained on at least 50% of the watershed area above retention reservoirs.
- Before being credited with the value of any in-kind contribution for any in-kind services and/or acquisition of land rights, sponsor will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NRCS.

References:

Title 390, NWPM – 500.11 Sponsor Responsibilities

Potential Cooperating Agencies

Description:

Cooperating agency is a formal term which refers to an agency's designation and status under NEPA that may include any federal, tribal, state, or local agency other than a lead agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal. NRCS is required to invite, in writing, all agencies that might be involved as cooperating agencies. During the development of the PIFR, a list should be developed of those agencies that are required to be invited to cooperate on the project, the list does not need to be comprehensive at the preliminary investigation feasibility report stage. If the project will occur in a special designated area, the agency responsible for coordination in that should be included in this list.

Example:

Agency	Contact Information	Type of Involvement
US Army Corps of Engineers	USACE – Middle Tennessee District Planning Branch 800 Broadway, 234 US Courthouse Nashville, Tennessee, 36575 Walter W. Jackson w.jackson@usace.mil 615-258-8569	Regulatory [X]
		Informed []
		Prepare permits or letters of permission document [X]
		Provide input []
US Fish and Wildlife Services	Address Point of Contact Email Point of Contact Phone Number	Regulatory [X]
		Informed []
		Prepare permits or letters of permission document [X]
		Provide input []
State Department of Environment and Conservation – Division of Water Resources	Address Point of Contact Email Point of Contact Phone Number	Regulatory [X]
		Informed []
		Prepare permits or letters of permission document [X]
		Provide input []
USDA Farm Service Agency	Address Point of Contact Email Point of Contact Phone Number	Regulatory []
		Informed [X]
		Prepare permits or letters of permission document []
		Provide input []
State Historic Preservation Office	Address Point of Contact Email Point of Contact Phone Number	Regulatory [X]
		Informed []
		Prepare permits or letters of permission document [X]
		Provide input []

Reference:

Title 390, NWPM

- 501.3 Cooperating Agencies

- 502 Subpart E – Special Designated Areas

Potential Stakeholders

Description:

Identify and describe the role, resources and contributions of each potential stakeholder who might be involved with the project. This list should include organizations such as tribal, local, state, federal, private and non-governmental entities associated with the potential project area, including affected landowners. The list does not need to be comprehensive at the preliminary investigation – feasibility report stage.

Example:

Stakeholder	Role	Resources	Contribution
Austin/Wall Irrigation District	Sponsor	Cost-share funds, Admin. for completion of Plan/EA, Design, Construction.	Complete Plan/EA with Permits, Scoping, Public Meetings, Mailings, overall administration of project
USDA-NRCS	Lead Agency for Plan-EA, FA/TA, Reviews	Funding, Technical Reviews	Reviews for project location, inventory needs, Plan-EA supplement
Wyoming Water Development Commission	Funding Assistance, Project Review	Funding Agency, Technical Reviews	Help w/ Sponsor Cost-Share
Army Corps of Engineers	404 Permit	Technical Reviews, Wetlands-Waters of the US Jurisdiction	Permitting, technical review
Bureau of Land Management	Permits, Review, Cooperating agency for Plan-EA	Alternatives, ecological inventories, cultural resource inventory	Alternatives, site selection, environmental reviews, cultural resource inventory
State Dam Safety Office	Dam Permits, Water rights review	Technical review & coordination	Technical review, alternate evaluation
State Historical Preservation Office	Permit – cultural review	Review of project APE	Permit for project APE
Department of Environmental Quality	Permits	Review for permit	Review for permit
State Department of Transportation	Partner	Review of Plan - ED	Review of Plan - ED
County Management Authority	Partner	Review of Plan - ED	Review of Plan - ED
Principal Sponsors – Primary Stakeholders who will make financial and in-kind commitments to the project.	Regulatory – Entities involved in regulatory aspects of the project's implementation.		Keep Informed – Stakeholders who should be kept informed of the projects progress.

Notifications

If a preliminary investigation feasibility report is undertaken, the STC must notify in writing the Governors concerned, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and all other Federal agencies concerned with a decision to initiate any survey or field investigation involving water resources development work and furnish them with appropriate information regarding the scope, nature, status, and results of such survey or investigation (Executive Order 10584 Section 3).

	Method and Date Notified
Governor:	Letter – 5/10/2021
Governor:	Letter – 5/10/2021
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Letter – 5/10/2021, Email – 5/15/2021
National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service	Letter – 5/14/2021, Email – 5/19/2021
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Letter – 5/14/2021, Email – 5/19/2021
Other Federal Agency:	
Other Federal Agency:	
Other Federal Agency:	

Estimated Project Implementation Timeline

Planning Start	5/1/2020
Planning End	4/30/2022
Design Start	6/1/2022
Design End	1/1/2023
Construction Start	5/1/2023
Construction End	5/1/2024

Recommendation

This preliminary investigation and feasibility report has been completed and submitted for approval to:
_____ (State Conservationist Name)_____.

By:

Name: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

Organization: _____

It has been determined that this potential PL-566 watershed operations project:

Does	Does Not	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	... meet the statutory acreage, volume/capacity of structure and recreational limit requirements;
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	... meet the requirements of one or more Watershed Operations authorized purposes;
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	... have the potential for a minimum of 20% agricultural, or rural, benefits;
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	... have one or more viable alternatives;
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	... have potential project sponsor(s) that meet and agree to all terms of responsibilities;
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	... have apparent insurmountable obstacles.

Preparer Signature

Signature: _____ Date: _____

State Watershed Operations
Program Manager

Signature: _____ Date: _____

State Technical Lead (SRC, SCE, Other) Signature: _____ Date: _____

<input type="checkbox"/>	Not recommended for planning funding
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accepted and recommended for Planning Funding

State Conservationist

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Glossary

Rural – All territories of a State that are not within the outer boundary of any city or town that has a population of 50,000 or more according to the latest decennial census of the United States ([2010 Census Urban and Rural Classification and Urban Area Criteria](#)). [Source Title 390 – NWPM Part 506.50 Glossary, MMM]

Appendix

- Sponsor Letter of Request
- WS-4 – PIFR Sponsor Declaration Forms
- Preliminary Environmental Evaluation (CPA 52)
 - The CPA-52 can be used as a screening tool to eliminate things that are not issues for the proposed project, and to provide focus on the specific things that need additional analysis or discussion in the preliminary investigation feasibility report. So as not to duplicate narrative information, within the CPA-52, for items that are discussed in more detail in the preliminary investigation feasibility report it is acceptable to insert a statement of “See Section ____ of the Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report for more detail.”
- Preliminary Cost Estimates for Alternatives
- Additional Maps
- Forecasted NRCS Staffing Needs