

# Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

## *Environmental Assessment for Bicknell Bottoms Waterfowl Management Area*

*Grant number: UT W-100-L-2*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has prepared this document in accordance with the procedures for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as it applies to the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act (WR) as amended (50 Stat. 917, 16 U.S.C. Sec. 669 et seq.).

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) has submitted a grant application titled *Bicknell Bottoms Waterfowl Management Area (WMA)* to the Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) for approval to receive WR grant funds to complete the project. The WMA was originally acquired with WR grant funds and the proposed project requires the prior written approval of the Service before project activities may proceed. The Service's decision to approve the grant application constitutes a Federal action subject to the requirement of NEPA for preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA). To address this requirement, the Service prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA) to analyze the impacts of the proposed project on the human environment.

As proposed in the draft EA, UDNR will dispose of 16 acres of dry, upland habitat within the Bicknell Bottoms WMA, in exchange for 16 acres of high quality wetland habitat adjacent to the WMA (Taft parcel). There is a need to increase the acreage of quality wetland wildlife habitat for waterfowl in the Bicknell Bottoms WMA. The purpose of the proposed action is to acquire high quality wetland habitat adjacent to the WMA and dispose of dry, upland habitat within the WMA that is less valuable to waterfowl. This exchange will increase hunting opportunities for the public by integrating this high quality waterfowl habitat into the WMA and protecting that valuable habitat into the future.

A No-Action Alternative was considered and would fail to protect the high quality wetland habitat within the Taft parcel from potential future damage as a result of overgrazing or other unregulated activities that can result in habitat destruction. As a result, the No Action alternative would fail to meet the purpose and need of this land exchange. The draft EA was issued for a 30-day public comment period ending on April 24, 2020; no comments were received in response to the draft EA. For this reason, the Service is finalizing this EA and completing this FONSI.

Based on review of the EA, I find that the proposed action is not a major Federal action which would significantly impact the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. I also find that all reasonable alternatives were considered in the evaluation of the proposed project and that this project complies with the intent of the National Historic Preservation Act, Executive Order 11988 "Floodplain Management" and Executive Order 11990 "Protection of Wetlands." Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the project will have no effect on any listed species or critical habitat. Consequently, I have determined that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The EA is on file at the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 134 Union Boulevard, Lakewood, Colorado, 80228, and is available upon request. It is also available online at <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/wsfr/nepa.php>.

APPROVAL: