USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Corn Creek Watershed Plan-EA

Project FAQ Sheet

FAQ Updated: January 31, 2022

How was the project purpose developed & who was involved in developing project goals?

The project sponsor, Kanosh Town, and co-sponsor: Corn Creek Irrigation Company (CCIC), jointly identified local water resource concerns and goals within the Corn Creek Watershed and made application to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through its Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (PL-566) to fund a Plan-Environmental Assessment (Plan-EA). Conceptual watershed improvements were included in the application.

What water resource concerns are being addressed by the project?

FLOOD PROTECTION

- Aging and deteriorating flood channels
- Inadequate flood routing capacity through and around Kanosh
- Debris basin not meeting current dam safety standards and potential failure during flood events

IRRIGATION

- Inefficient water delivery and measurement systems
- Water loss in open ditches
- Limited irrigation water supply to users at the ends of the system

WATER MANAGEMENT

- Deteriorating and inefficient water control and conveyance structures

Who will be served by the project?

Residents in and around Kanosh Town including the Kanosh Band of the Paiute Tribe, farmers, and irrigators may benefit from the project through protection of water rights and conservation of water resources. Locally, residents may be protected from flooding and benefit from more efficient water delivery systems.

Where are we at in the process?

As part of the preparation of the Plan-EA, the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires that there be an early and open process for determining the scope of the issues to be addressed by a study. This process is known as “NEPA scoping,” during which an agency will solicit public input. A virtual public scoping meeting was held on May 12, 2021, by the NRCS and project sponsors to introduce the project to the public, explain the Plan-EA and provide context for public comments. The comments received are being considered as alternatives are developed. The financial, performance, and environmental feasibility of the alternatives are being evaluated. To fully evaluate the alternatives, preliminary designs of potential project features are being prepared.

Can the proposed project benefits be obtained by better maintenance and repair of existing facilities?

All water conveyance and control facilities require maintenance. Poorly maintained facilities have a shortened life span and poor performance. However, all water control and conveyance facilities, especially in environments with frequent freeze thaw cycles, will eventually require replacement. NRCS estimates the life expectancy of water conveyance and control facilities (concrete lined ditches, head gates, culvert, etc.) in Utah to be 10 to 25 years. Much of the existing CCIC water conveyance and control facilities are over 30 years old with some even older. Proper maintenance will extend the lifespan of facilities, but in this case the existing facilities are already beyond their expected life span. Repaired concrete structures would only last as long as the adjacent concrete would last. Removal of vegetation from earthen ditches would improve efficiency for a short period of time, but large seepage losses would continue, and vegetation would quickly return. Due to the age and current condition of irrigation and flood control facilities, piecemeal repair of existing

How can I stay informed about the project?

During the NEPA process, information can be obtained by visiting the project website at: www.fransoncivil.com/corn-creek-plan-ea

facilities would provide a limited, short-term benefit.

The existing debris basin, spillway, and water diversion facilities appear to be in relatively good shape, why do they need to be repaired or replaced?

The current debris basin dam and spillway do not meet current dam safety standards. The spillway is undersized, potentially leading to a complete failure of the dam. Utah Dam Safety has identified a foundation seepage issue that also has the potential to cause failure of the dam during a flood event. Failure of the dam would inundate the town with up to three feet of water. As a result of the foundation seepage issues, the State Engineer has mandated the outlet must remain fully open at all times. Thus, greatly reducing the ability of the debris basin to remove sediment and debris. During a flood event, debris and sediment would quickly block culverts and ditches eliminating the capacity of the irrigation system to safely divert water around and through town. Current configuration of the debris basin sends nearly all flood water directly towards town where there is no longer a natural channel to convey the water through or around town.

Why can't the existing system of ditches and channels be used for flood control as they have in the past?

They can be, but even with proper maintenance and cleaning, the existing system of ditches does not have the capacity to safely convey the 100-year flood event through and around town. Currently, the historic Corn Creek channel flows to the southeast corner of town where it ends in a concrete channel along 300 South. The concrete channel has significant flow capacity. However, it ends at a culvert under Main Street. Downstream of Main Street there is an earthen channel that gradually diminishes in capacity until it ends at 200 West. The current system relies on a large number of culverts to convey water through and around town. Even with sufficient capacity, these culverts are subject to plugging with debris and sediment during a flood event. Plugged culverts increase the odds of flooding even if the channels are properly sized and maintained. However, with a properly functioning debris basin, the risk of plugging is greatly reduced provided downstream channels are well maintained. A Preferred Alternative has not yet been selected. The use and expansion of existing channels in some form has been identified as an alternative that is being evaluated.

Will the project address potential water rights concerns?

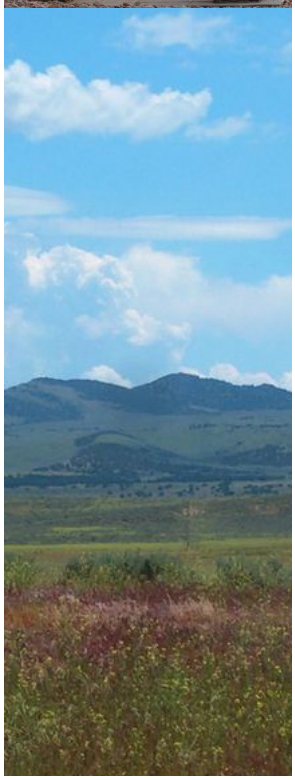
The NRCS funding cannot be used to address water rights issues. However, the CCIC board met with the Utah State Engineer's office to discuss water rights issues and is currently working to update the service area and correctly identify the lands where CCIC water is currently being used. It is anticipated that CCIC will submit a change application in the next year to update water rights information.

There is typically more water than is needed in the spring and far less water than is needed in the summer, will the project include storage of water?

Storage of water has been a frequent source of conversation as alternatives have been identified. There is much interest in creating water storage as part of the project. However, project sponsors do not currently hold water storage rights and is therefore unable to store water. Conversations with the Utah State Engineer to determine mechanisms that would allow a storage right to be obtained have been unsuccessful. All efforts to obtain a storage right would be the responsibility of the project sponsors since the NRCS funding cannot be used to obtain a storage right. Without a change to state law, obtaining a storage right would be very difficult and costly.

How will the project protect the town from flooding?

As mentioned above, a Preferred Alternative has not been selected. Alternatives that divert water around town rather than expanding existing channels through or near town have received greater support during planning meetings. A potential alternative uses the debris basin to divert flood waters to a flood channel east of Kanosh that would eventually connect to the Hatton Ditch. At some point along the Hatton Ditch, the water would be diverted back to the remnants of the historic Corn Creek channel.



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