

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Farm Service Agency**

**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

  
***Timber Harvest Proposal***

**Prepared By  
Adam Kaufman, USDA, Farm Service Agency  
State Environmental Coordinator**

***11/05/2019***

## COVER SHEET

<b>Proposed Action:</b>	The Farm Service Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture is in the process of reviewing a proposal that would allow existing loan customers to harvest 200 acres of timber on land that serves as RE security for existing loans. The physical location of this proposal would take place approximately 2000' west of Hwy 167, 4.5 miles southeast of Evening Shade, AR, and 5.5 miles northwest of Cave City, AR. The legal description of the proposal is Section 26 and 23, Township 16 North, Range 06 West in Sharp County Arkansas.
<b>Type of Document:</b>	This is a site-specific Environmental Assessment
<b>Lead Agency:</b>	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA)
<b>Cooperating Agencies:</b>	None
<b>Further Information:</b>	Adam Kaufman, USDA, Farm Service Agency, 419 West Gaines Street., Monticello, AR 71655.
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>This Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in accordance with USDA FSA National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing procedures found in 7 CFR 799, as well as the NEPA of 1969, Public Law 91-140, 42 US Code 4321-4347, as amended.</p> <p>A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EA will be published on 11/05/2019, 11/06/2019, and 11/07/2019 in the Batesville Daily Guard with instructions for providing written comments. A copy of the Draft EA and related material will be made available as provided by the NOA at USDA, Farm Service Agency, 21 B Court Road, Ash Flat, AR 72513-0277. The Draft EA will also be posted from 11/05/2019 thru 12/05/2019 the FSA State website at: <a href="https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Arkansas/index">https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Arkansas/index</a></p> <p>FSA will be accepting written comments only regarding the Draft EA. Written comments only will be accepted thru 12/05/2019. Written comments will be addressed and given consideration prior to FSA making a final decision on the proposed action. Written comments should be mailed to the following address:</p> <p>Adam Kaufman          USDA, Farm Service Agency          419 West Gaines Street          Monticello, AR          71655</p>

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADEQ	Arkansas Department of Environmental
ANRC	Arkansas Natural Resource Commission
AR	Arkansas
ATV	All-terrain vehicle
BMP's	Best Management Practices
CAFO	Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CNMP	Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EA	Environmental Assessment
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FSA	Farm Service Agency
GHG	Green House Gases
GPM	Gallons per minute
HUC	Hydrologic unit code
IPaC	Information for Planning and Conservation
MA/NLAA	May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMP	Nutrient Management Plan
NOA	Notice of Availability
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officers
TSP	Technical Service Provider
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
U.S.	United States
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Background

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is reviewing a proposal that would allow an existing loan customer to harvest approximately 200 acres of timber on land that serves as RE security for existing USDA Farm Service Agency loans. A detailed description of the components of the proposed project, the project site and related surrounding area of potential effect is further described in Section 2.1 of this document.

## 1.2 Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the proposed project/action is to implement USDA, Farm Service Agency programs, to make available economic opportunity to help rural America thrive, and to promote agriculture production that better nourishes Americans and help feed others throughout the world. FSA is tasked with this mission as provided for by the Food and Security Act of 1985 as amended, the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act as amended, and related implementing regulations found in 7 CFR Parts 762 and 764.

The need for the proposed action is to fulfill FSA's responsibility to provide access to credit, and to help improve the stability and strength of the agricultural economy, including to start, improve, expand, transition, market, and strengthen family farming and ranching operations, and to provide viable farming opportunities for family and beginning farmers and meet the needs of small and beginning farmers, women and minorities. Specifically, in the case of this loan request, FSA's need is to respond to the applicant's request for funding to support the proposed action.

FSA Farm Loan Program Assistance is not available for commercial operations or facilities that are not family farms, or to those having the ability to qualify for commercial credit without the benefit of FSA assistance. The applicants have been determined to be a family farm as defined by 7 CFR 761.2. The proposed action would allow them the opportunity to establish their family farming operation and provide the economic stability to meet the needs of the family.

### Decision To Be Made

FSA's decision is whether to:

- Approve the applicant's request;
- Approve the request with additional mitigations; or
- Deny the request.

## 1.3 Regulatory Compliance

This Environmental Assessment is prepared to satisfy the requirements of NEPA (Public Law 91-190, 42 United States Code 4321 et seq.); its implementing regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508); and FSA implementing regulations, *Environmental Quality and Related Environmental Concerns – Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act* (7 CFR 799). The intent of NEPA is to protect, restore, and enhance the human environment through well informed Federal decisions. A variety of laws,

regulations, and Executive Orders (EO) apply to actions undertaken by Federal agencies and form the basis of the analysis.

All fifty states have enacted right-to-farm laws that seek to protect qualifying farmers and ranchers from nuisance lawsuits filed by individuals who move into a rural area where normal farming operations exist, and who later use nuisance actions to attempt to stop those ongoing operations. The Right to Farm law for Arkansas (Ark. Code Ann. § 24101) protects farming operations from nuisance claims when farms were established prior to the use of the area surrounding the agricultural operation for nonagricultural activities and those farms employ methods or practices commonly or reasonably associated with agricultural production.

## **1.4 Public Involvement and Consultation**

Scoping is an early and open process to involve agencies, organizations, and the public in determining the issues to be addressed in the environmental document. Among other tasks, scoping determines important issues and eliminates issues determined not to be important; identifies other permits, surveys and consultations required with other agencies; and creates a schedule that allows adequate time to prepare and distribute the environmental document for public review and comment before a final decision is made. Scoping is a process that seeks opinions and consultation from the interested public, affected parties, and any agency with interests or legal jurisdiction.

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### ***1.4.1 Internal Scoping***

USDA staff of various specialties have been consulted regarding the purpose and need, issues and impact topics appropriate for consideration for the proposed activity. A site visit and pedestrian review was completed by Shelby M. Sanders, USDA, Farm Service Agency on 07/17/2019. Site visit notes and photographs are included in APPENDIX B.

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### ***1.4.2 External Scoping***

USDA FSA has completed research and the following tasks and efforts:

- Research of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) - Information, Planning, and Conservation System (IPaC) about the project's potential to affect federally listed species as required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973. SEE APPENDIX D-1.
- Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to ensure that compliance with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) are met and that significant impacts to historic properties would not result from the project SEE APPENDIX E-1.
- Consultation with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO): Bob Komardley of the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Everett Bandy of the Quapaw Tribe of Indians, Linda Langley of the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Elizabeth Toombs of the Cherokee Nation, Dr. Andrea Hunter of the Osage Nation, Tonya Tipton of the Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, and Robin Dushane of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma to ensure that compliance with the requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA are met and that significant impacts to historic

properties would not result from the project. SEE APPENDIX E for Section 106 consultation documentation

- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) completed a Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Determination to screen for wetland indicators where ground disturbance associated with project would take place; All acreage was determined to be a Non-Wetland. SEE APPENDIX I-1.

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### **1.4.3 Public Involvement**

The Draft EA will be made available for public review and comment from 11/05/2019 to 12/05/2019 at USDA, Farm Service Agency, 21 B Court Road, Ash Flat, AR 72513. The Draft document will also be posted on the Arkansas FSA state website <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Arkansas/index> from 11/05/2019 to 12/05/2019. A notice of the availability of the draft EA will be published in the Batesville Daily Guard on 11/05/2019, 11/06/2019, and 11/07/2019. Written comments regarding this proposal should be submitted by mail to USDA, Farm Service Agency, Attn: Adam Kaufman, 419 West Gaines Street, Monticello, AR 71655 through 12/05/2019.

### **Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives**

## **1.5 Alternative A - Proposed Action**

The proposed action would involve harvesting approximately 200 acres of timber on a 255 acre tract of land approximately 2,000 feet west of Hwy 167, 4.5 miles southeast of Evening Shade, Arkansas and 5.5 miles northwest of Cave City, Arkansas. SEE APPENDIX A-1. The property is located at 36.011821,-91.600428. This proposal would not be funded with USDA loan funds, however the proposal would take place on land that currently serves as real estate security for existing FSA loans, therefore the proposal is considered a connected action. The proposed action would allow FSA's existing loan customer to harvest timber land and utilize the proceeds to convert this timberland into pasture ground, which is a common practice in Arkansas. This tract of land is located in the Ozark Highlands eco region of Arkansas and is currently wooded for the most part with various oak species, pine trees, and cedar trees. Timber on the proposed site consists primarily of various oaks and other hardwood species, with pine and cedar trees mixed in. The majority of the trees range from 8-15" in diameter and are approximately 20-40' tall. There are a few small open areas on this 255-acre tract of land that are vegetated with sage grass, Bermuda grass, thistles, fescue, and various other forbes and underbrush. Slopes on the proposed site range from 3 to 20 percent. SEE APPENDIX I-1. Proceeds from the timber sales would be utilized to windrow debris after the proposed timber harvest, and to fence the perimeter of the 200 acres that would be harvested as well as cross fencing. SEE APPENDIX C-1.

Existing Improvements on the 255 acre tract of land consist of (6) six 43x600' broiler houses, which were built in 2016, a composter, a 21' x 39' shop building, and water tanks used for an emergency water supply on the broiler farm. The 255 acres is currently utilized as an operational 6-house poultry broiler farm as well as hunting and recreational purposes. There are a few existing trails utilized by vehicles and ATV's. The 255 acre tract of land is accessible from Arkansas by Hwy 167. SEE APPENDIX A-2. Hwy 167

runs north and south in between Evening Shade and Cave City and is the most travelled highway in this area.

The proposed site is surrounded by hardwood and pine timber in all directions. The nearest neighboring dwellings in relation to the proposal are approximately 1450' to the east, 1900' to the east across Hwy 167, 2700' to the northeast across Hwy 167, 1,500' to the north and 1,400' to the south. SEE APPENDIX A-4. There are several residences along Hwy 58 and residences on gravel roads which branch off Hwy 58. SEE APPENDIX A-4. The nearest church, Maxville Missionary Baptist Church is 2.5 miles southeast of the proposed site. SEE APPENDIX A-5. The nearest school, Maxville School, is located 1.8 miles southeast from the site proposal. SEE APPENDIX A-6. Agriculture has a strong presence in this area. There are several integrated poultry operations, and cattle and hay operations in this area. According to the Arkansas Natural Resource Commission Final Report for Poultry Registration for 2019 Sharp county had 80 poultry farms register for the 2018 production year. SEE APPENDIX K-3. According to NASS, Sharp county had 30,000 head of cattle, including calves as of June 2019. SEE APPENDIX K-1

There are no connected actions associated with this proposal at this time. Any future proposed actions, connected actions, or ground disturbing activities financed with FSA funds would require a subsequent environmental review that meets the requirements of 1-EQ (revision3). The proposed action would involve no funding thru FSA. The 255 acres serves as real estate security for an FSA guaranteed loan thru a conventional lender, therefore this would be considered a connection action, thus subject NEPA laws and regulations.

## **1.6 Alternative B - No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative means the loan would not be made and the farm described in Section 2.1 above (Proposed Action) would not be cleared for pasture land. The applicants would continue to utilize this proposed site for hunting, and other recreational purposes with no impacts as the proposed action would not go forward.

## **1.7 Alternative C**

An alternative location would not be feasible, as the proposed project would take place on property currently owned by the borrower that is in close proximity to the headquarters of their existing poultry operation. Integrators typically require a farm manager to live either on or near the farm.

The borrower could have the option to purchase additional pasture land, however this is not a preferred alternative since the borrower already owns this acreage, which is in close proximity to his farming headquarters.

## **1.8 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Analysis**

Other locations for the farm or other uses for the land in question are not considered here because such options do not meet the purpose and need for the proposed action. The current FSA guaranteed loan borrower has requested to clear cut 200 wooded acres on a 255-acre tract of land. FSA's decision to be made is to allow the proposed action to move forward as proposed, to deny this loan servicing action, or to approve the proposed action with additional mitigations, practices or methods that would be needed to minimize or eliminate impacts to protected resources. Allowing the proposed action to move forward would allow the producer to expand grazing lands for his existing beef cattle operation.

## 2. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACTS

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The impacts to a number of protected resources, as defined in FSA Handbook 1-EQ (Revision 3) Environmental Quality Programs for State and County Offices, are considered in this EA. Some resources are eliminated from detailed analysis following CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1501.7), which state that the lead agency shall identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues that are not significant or that have been covered by prior environmental review, narrowing the discussion of these issues in the document to a brief presentation of why they would not have a significant effect on the human or natural environment. Resources that are not eliminated are carried forward for detailed analysis. The table below shows the resources that are eliminated from detailed analysis and those carried forward. Section 3.1 contains discussions of those resources eliminated from detailed analysis. Section 3.2 describes the existing conditions for resources carried forward for detailed analysis and the anticipated impacts to those resources resulting from the Proposed Action.

Resource	Eliminated	Carried Forward
Wildlife and Habitat		X
Cultural Resources		X
Coastal Barriers	X	
Coastal Zones	X	
Wilderness Areas	X	
Wild and Scenic Rivers, NRI	X	
National Natural Landmarks	X	
Sole Source Aquifers	X	
Floodplains	X	
Wetlands	X	
Soils	X	
Water Quality		X
Air Quality		X
Noise		X
Important Land Resources	X	
Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice	X	

### 2.1 Resources Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

#### Coastal Barrier Resources System

Coastal barriers are eliminated from detailed analysis as there are no designated Coastal Barriers in Arkansas.

#### Coastal Zone Management Areas

Coastal Zone Management Areas are eliminated from detailed analysis because there are no Coastal Zone Management Areas in Arkansas.

## **Wilderness Areas**

Wilderness areas were eliminated from detailed analysis in this EA. There are 12 designated Wilderness areas in Arkansas. The closest Wilderness Area would be Leatherwood Wilderness area, SEE APPENDIX F-1, which is located 44.1 miles northwest of this proposed project. SEE APPENDIX F-1. This proposal should have no effect on Leatherwood Wilderness Area.

## **Wild and Scenic Rivers/NRI**

Wild and Scenic Rivers/NRI were eliminated from detailed analysis in this EA. The nearest wild and scenic river in relation to the proposed project is North Sylamore Creek, which is located 33.1 miles southwest of this proposal SEE APPENDIX G-1. The Strawberry River, which is listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory is located 5.46 miles north of this proposal SEE APPENDIX G-2. FSA anticipates no adverse impacts to these protected resources.

## **National Natural Landmarks**

There are five National Natural Landmarks in Arkansas. SEE APPENDIX H-1. The site of the Proposed Action is not located in close proximity to any of these nor would the proposal threaten to alter or impair them. The closest, Mammoth Spring Natural Area is located approximately 33.4 miles northeast of the proposed site, therefore National Natural Landmarks are eliminated from detailed analysis. SEE APPENDIX H-2.

## **Sole Source Aquifers**

Sole source aquifers are eliminated from detailed analysis because there are no sole source aquifers in Arkansas.

## **Floodplains**

Floodplains were eliminated from further detailed analysis. According to FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer, Panel 05135C0300D indicates that the proposed project would lie outside of a flood plain. The nearest flood plain is 1.2 miles to the southeast of the proposed project. SEE APPENDIX J-1.

## **Wetlands**

Wetlands have been eliminated from further detailed analysis. According to the NRCS Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Determination no wetlands were present on the 200-acre proposed site where the proposal would be located, therefore no additional screening is necessary. SEE APPENDIX I-1.

## **Soils**

Soils are eliminated from detailed analysis because no land on this farm would not be cropped and is therefore not subject to the Highly Erodible Land provisions of the Food Security Act. Furthermore, there would be no annual tillage of the soil associated with this proposed project. The applicant has signed an AD-1026 "Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification." SEE APPENDIX I-1.

## Important Land Resources

Prime and unique farmland, forestland and rangeland resources are eliminated from detailed analysis because the proposed action would not result in prime and/or important farmland being converted to a nonagricultural use.

## Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

No impact to population, housing, income, or employment in the region are anticipated to result from the Proposed Action, nor are disproportionate adverse impacts to minority or low income populations anticipated. Therefore, socioeconomics and environmental justice are not carried forward for detailed analysis. SEE APPENDIX K-4 for demographic information.

## 2.2 Resources Considered with Detailed Analysis

This section describes the environment that would be affected by implementation of the alternatives described in Chapter 2. Aspects of the affected environment described in this section focus on the relevant major resources or issues. Under the no action alternative, the proposed action would not be implemented. The no action alternative would result in the continuation of the current land and resource uses in the project area. This alternative will not be evaluated further in this EA.

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### 2.2.1 Wildlife and Habitat

#### Existing Conditions

The proposed 200-acre site is currently established in mixed hardwood, pine, and cedar timberland. The proposal would involve harvesting of timber as shown on APPENDIX C-1. Removal of stumps would not be associated with this proposal, only harvesting of timber. All limbs and remaining debris would be windrowed with bulldozers and eventually burned. All cleared land would then be broadcast with a winter wheat and rye grass mixture after timber harvesting and windrowing activities have been completed. Perimeter and cross fencing would also be implemented as shown on APPENDIX C-1. Wildlife typical of such areas include whitetail deer, squirrels, wild turkeys, raccoons, various other mammals, reptiles and birds. The Strawberry River SEE APPENDIX G-2 supports over 100 species of fish and 30 species of mussels. A site visit was conducted by FSA on 07/17/2019. SEE APPENDIX B for site visit notes and photographs.

An official list of threatened and endangered species and designated critical habitat for this area of Sharp County was obtained from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) system. SEE APPENDIX D-1. The following threatened and endangered species are known to occur in this area of Sharp County:

Gray Bat *Myotis grisescens*, Northern Long-eared Bat *Myotis septentrionalis*, Indiana Bat, *Myotis sodalist*, Rabbitsfoot *Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica*, Scaleshell Mussel *Leptodea leptodon*, Snuffbox Mussel *Epioblasma triquetra*, Turgid Blossom (*pearlymussel*) *Epioblasma turgidula* and Missouri Bladderpod *Physaria filiformis*.

FSA entered a “Programmatic Consultation Agreement” with USFWS on 05/02/2019, which was utilized to conduct Section 7 consultation with USFWS. SEE APPENDIX D-2.

Based on the Programmatic Decision Key, a not likely to adversely affect determination was made for the Gray Bat, Indiana Bat, Northern Long Eared Bat, Rabbitsfoot, Scaleshell Mussel, Snuffbox Mussel, Turgid Blossom and Missouri Bladderpod. The nearest stream reach for the aquatic species listed above would be approximately 2 miles to the northeast.

FSA contacted USFWS via email for concurrence on the determination for the Indiana Bat; USFWS concurred with the NLAA determination for the Indiana Bat.

Tree removal associated with this proposal would occur after November 15, 2019 and prior to March 15, 2020 to ensure no trees would be removed during the summer active season for the Indiana Bat and Northern Long Eared Bat. No ground disturbing activities would take place within a buffered stream reach. SEE APPENDIX D-2

The Bald Eagle has been known to occur in this area, however the Bald Eagle is not covered by the Endangered Species Act. No Bald Eagles, or Bald Eagle nests were observed on this proposed site during the site visit. SEE APPENDIX B-1.

### **Impacts of Proposed Action**

According to the plans submitted by the existing borrowers, 200-acres of timber removal would be involved with this proposal. SEE APPENDIX C-1. Implementation of the proposal would result in a long-term loss of 200 acres of wooded areas, underbrush, thickets, and some open areas, all of which currently contribute to wildlife habitat. The proposal would not result in a long-term loss of wildlife habitat since the proposal would also involve converting the forest into grasslands, which would also benefit wildlife in this area. The proposed cool season grasses would offer nourishment for whitetail deer and other mammals in this area. Based on the response from USFWS and the Programmatic Decision Key for this proposal, no significant impacts to Wildlife and Habitat would be expected to result from the Proposed Action. No adverse impacts on migratory birds are anticipated as a result of this proposal. The primary nesting season for birds in Arkansas is 1 April through 15 July. With this proposal mixed grassland pasture would be created, along with perimeter and cross-fencing fencerows which would contribute to wildlife habitat.

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### ***2.2.2 Cultural Resources***

#### **Existing Conditions**

The Proposed Action involves some ground disturbing activities in areas not previously evaluated or previously disturbed to the depth required for the Proposed Action, therefore cultural resources requires detailed analysis. A site visit was conducted by USDA, Farm Service Agency on 07/17/2019. SEE APPENDIX B. Existing improvements on this tract of land include 6 broiler poultry houses, a stacking shed, shop building, and water tanks. The nearest structure in relation to the proposal listed on the National Register of Historic Places is the Cogger House. This historic structure is located in Evening

Shade, AR, which is approximately 4.31 miles northwest of this proposal. SEE APPENDIX E-2. This historic place would not be visible from the proposed site; therefore, the proposal should have no effect on it.

FSA consulted with the Arkansas State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the following Tribes that have an interest in this area of Sharp County: Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Quapaw Tribe of Indians, Coshatta Tribe of Louisiana, Cherokee Nation, Osage Nation, Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, and Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma on 07/23/2019 by providing the location and details of the Proposed Action. SEE APPENDIX E-1 and E-3. Arkansas SHPO provided a response on 08/23/2019. SHPO's response indicated a 20-acre tract of land had been surveyed for cultural resources, directly to the south of the poultry houses, on the 255-acre tract of land was conducted in 2018 Flat Earth Archaeology. Portions of this survey that were conducted in 2018 study overlap the 255 acres the existing FSA borrowers are proposing to clear. The results of the cultural resource survey conducted in 2018 yielded negative results. Additionally, a pipeline survey was also conducted in 1991, which was also in close relation to the 255-acre tract of land, which also proved negative for cultural materials. SHPO concurred with FSA's findings of no historic properties affected as a result of the clearing of this 255-acre tract of land. SEE APPENDIX E-3.

Elizabeth Toombs, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Cherokee Nation responded to FSA correspondence about the tree removal proposal; The response stated "Our Historic Preservation Office reviewed this project, cross referenced the project's legal description against our information, and found no instances where this project intersects or adjoins such resources. Thus, the Nation does not foresee this project imparting impact to Cherokee cultural resources at this time." SEE APPENDIX E-3. No other responses were received.

### **Impacts of Proposed Action**

Based on the proximity to The Stokes House, John W. Shaver House, Charles W. Shaver House, Sam Davidson House, John McCaleb House, The W.A. Edwards House and the Coger House in relation to the Proposed Action, results of previous cultural resource studies conducted in this area, the response from SHPO, response from the Cherokee Nation, and lack of response from the additional Tribes listed above, FSA anticipates no impacts to known cultural resources would result from the Proposed Action. Impacts to previously unidentified historic properties, including archaeological and historic resources, could occur during land clearing and construction activities. If such resources were encountered during construction of this proposal, all activities would cease, FSA state and national office personnel would be notified, along with Arkansas SHPO and Tribes with an interest in this area. Any potential resources discovered would be professionally evaluated for eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

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## 4. Water Quality

### Existing Conditions

In Arkansas, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) has the authority to enforce provisions of the Clean Water Act that are protective of water quality and to issue permits that are protective of water quality standards. This authority is delegated to ADEQ by the Environmental Protection Agency. The ADEQ Water Division issues Stormwater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permits to protect surface waters from contamination from runoff associated with construction. Coverage under General Permit AR1500000 is required for construction activities that causes ground disturbance in excess of 1 acre. Permit AR1500000 for small sites is for disturbance between 1 and 5 acres and requires operators to post required forms and documents, including a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SPPP), on the site rather than coordinate directly with ADEQ. Permit AR 1500000 for large sites including disturbance in excess of 5 acres, required documents are submitted to ADEQ. SWPPPs are documents that describe construction activities to prevent stormwater contamination, control sedimentation and erosion, in order to prevent significant harm to surface waters and comply with the requirements of the Clean Water Act. ADEQ is also responsible for issuing Non-stormwater NPDES Permits issued to facilities that discharge water.

The proposal is not located within a nutrient surplus area in Arkansas. SEE APPENDIX A-8. This proposal is located within the Mill Creek-Piney Ford Watershed (HUC 12 ID: 110100120104) and the Hamilton Branch-South Big Creek Watershed (HUC 12 ID: 110100120401) SEE APPENDIX G-3, a sub-watershed of the Strawberry River watershed (HUC 8 ID: 11010012). The Strawberry River is considered a high-quality water resource and is designated as Extraordinary Resource Waters and Natural and Scenic Waterway as well as an Ecologically Sensitive Waterbody. The predominant land cover in the Strawberry River watershed consist of forest and pasture land. Urban development and other development have been increasing in the watershed. Forestry/silviculture and livestock/poultry production are the primary land uses in the watershed. REFERENCE ANRC 2016.

A wet-weather stream runs north and south going halfway down the through the north central section of the 255-acre property. Another wet-weather stream runs east to west, along the southern property line but does not cross into the 255-acre property. Another wet-weather stream runs south approximately ½ a mile behind the western property line. SEE APPENDIX A-7.

The Upper White River Basin encompasses approximately 11,684 square miles, or 7.5 million acres across 17 counties in northern Arkansas. According to the Arkansas water plan, the largest land use in the Upper White River Basin is 58.5 % forest land, followed by 28.5% grassland, 9.3% cropland, 1.7% urban build up, then other land uses. REFERENCE ARKANSAS WATER.ORG. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, Sharp county land uses consist of 45.3% pastureland, 31.8% woodland, 18.2% cropland, and 4.8% in other land uses. The 2017 Census of Agriculture indicates that land uses have changed slightly since 2012, with pasture ground still being the dominate land use in Sharp County at 42%, Woodlands at 36%, Cropland at 19%, and other land uses at 4%. SEE APPENDIX K-2. Converting woodlands to pasture and vice versa is a common practice in this area. Streams within the Upper White River Basin have an average yield of approximately 18.3 million acre feet per year. Hydroelectric power

generation within the Upper White River Basin accounts for the majority of water use in the area, followed by irrigation, public supply, then rural/livestock, and then self-supplied industry. Surface Water quality within the Upper White River basin is generally good according to the Arkansas Water Plan. REFERENCE ARKANSAS WATER PLAN. Water quality conditions in this area support fish and wildlife propagation, primary and secondary contact recreation, domestic, agricultural, and industrial water supplies. REFERENCE NPS POLLUTION PLAN However, 40 miles of streams in the Strawberry River watershed do not support aquatic life uses due to excessive turbidity levels and total suspended solids and phosphorous levels are testing above normal, likely from agricultural activities associated with pasturing and animal grazing along stream banks. REFERENCE NPS POLLUTION PLAN. The Strawberry River is on ADEQ's 2018 Draft 303(d) List of Impaired Waterbodies. The Strawberry is in non-attainment for silt turbidity which is believed to be from urban runoff. The waters of this area are routinely used for canoeing, fishing and primary contact recreation activities. REFERENCE ADEQ. The existing poultry operation on this 255 acre tract is currently operating in compliance with all state, federal, and local regulations.

### **Impacts of Proposed Action**

This proposal would involve harvesting of 200 acres of timber on slopes that range from 3-20% though the majority of the timber that would be harvested with this proposal lies on land with slopes of 3-12%. No ground disturbing activities would take place in or near a stream. Logging equipment, trucks and machinery would enter and exit this 255 acre tract as shown on APPENDIX C-1. The proposal would not involve any stump removal, which would help hold the soil on this tract in place. Limbs and debris after logging activities have ceased would be wind rowed with the contours of how this tract lies, which would act as brush dams that would help assist runoff and sediment from the leaving the 200 acres. Once the proposed logging and windrowing activities have ceased, the 200 acres would be broadcast with a mixture of winter wheat and rye grass, which would provide ground cover on any exposed soils and would also help prevent runoff and erosion. These proposed measures should be adequate to help prevent contamination of stormwater off site during the construction phase of this proposed farm. Setbacks on steeper terrain would also be implemented by the timber company, where timber would remain undisturbed.

No significant impacts to water quality are anticipated to result from the Proposed Action.

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## ***5. Air Quality***

### **Existing Conditions**

As of February 1, 2018, all of Arkansas is in attainment for all criteria pollutants established by the Environmental Protection Agency in compliance with the Clean Air Act. The proposed farm would not be required to obtain an air permit in accordance with Arkansas Air Pollution Control Regulation 18.301 since air emissions for defined criteria pollutants at the facility do not exceed the permitting thresholds considered protective of air quality. Potential air quality effects considered here include odor and dust production, which may be associated with logging and land clearing activities and the ongoing operations of the poultry farm if this 200 acres were to be cleared. SEE REFERENCES

The site of the Proposed Action lies in rural Sharp County where agriculture, including livestock feeding operations, are common. There are numerous cattle and hay operations in close proximity to this existing cattle farm, as well as integrated poultry farms in this vicinity. According to the Arkansas Natural Resource Commission (ANRC) 2018 Final Report on County Registration, 80 poultry farms registered with ANRC for the 2018 production year in Sharp County. SEE APPENDIX K-2. According to USDA, NASS, the cattle inventory for Sharp County in 2019 was 30,000 head, including calves. SEE APPENDIX K-1. The nearest neighboring dwellings in relation to the proposal are approximately 1450' to the east, 1900' to the east across Hwy 167, 2700' to the northeast across Hwy 167, 1,500' to the north and 1,400' to the south. There are several residences along Hwy 58 and residences on gravel roads which branch off Hwy 58. SEE APPENDIX A-4. The nearest church, Maxville Missionary Baptist Church is 2.5 miles southeast of the proposed site. The nearest school, Evening Shade Elementary School, is located 1.8 miles southeast of this proposal. SEE APPENDIX A-6. The 200 acres of timber currently acts as a natural buffer, which helps filter out dust and particulate matter from the nearby existing poultry operation. The proposed poultry operation would still be completely surrounded by timber on all sides should the proposal be allowed to happen.

Arkansas Water and Air Pollution Control Act, Subchapter 3 Air Pollution exempts "Agricultural operations in the growing or harvesting of crops and the raising of fowls or animals" and the "use of equipment in agricultural operations in the growth of crops or the raising of fowls or animals." There are no local ordinances regulating odor in this area.

### **Impacts of Proposed Action**

Logging, land clearing, and land smoothing activities that disturb the soil surface could generate dust. Such impacts would be minor, temporary and localized, generally confined to the farm property and ongoing until these proposed activities are complete. All tree removing activities associated with this proposal would be required to cease after March 15, 2019. Similarly, minor and localized emissions associated with heavy machinery could be expected while tree removal, stump removal, and other land clearing activities associated with this proposal are going on. None of these construction related impacts would have a significant or long-term adverse impact to surrounding air quality. The 200 acres of timber also acts a natural buffer which helps filter out dust and particulate matter generated from traffic on the farm and the poultry farm itself. The proposed removal of the 200 acres of timber could slightly increase dust and particulate matter in the surrounding area, depending on wind direction

Routine traffic and other farming related activities could generate dust should this proposed action be allowed to be implemented as well as odors from cattle that would be grazing on this 255 acre tract of land. There are numerous poultry operations in this vicinity. Surrounding neighbors could also experience an increase in air emissions should the owners of the 255 acres tract of land choose to apply poultry litter as fertilizer on their proposed pasture.

Dilution of odors is caused through the mixing of odors with ambient air and is a function of distance, topography, and meteorological conditions. Prevailing winds are from the west and would serve to facilitate the dispersion of odors. Based on the climate of the southeastern United States, there would be a few days in the year when weather conditions and humidity may cause odor to linger in the vicinity.

According to the EPA, total GHG emissions in the US in 2014 were 6,870 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e), a metric measure used compare the emissions from various greenhouses

gases based upon their global warming potential. Agriculture accounted for approximately 9 percent of the total or 625.4 million metric tons. The contribution of agriculture to GHG emissions is comprised of livestock (242.96 million metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e), crops (330.68 million metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e), and fuel combustion (51.79 million metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e).

Agricultural activities contribute to GHG in several ways: Management of agricultural soils accounts for over half of agriculture emissions. Activities including fertilizer application, irrigation and tillage, can lead to production and emission of nitrous oxide. Livestock, particularly cattle, produce methane as part of their digestion accounting for almost one third of the agricultural emissions. Manure storage and management also contribute methane and nitrous oxide, accounting for about 14 percent of the agricultural GHG emissions. Smaller agricultural sources include methane produced by rice cultivation and the burning of crop residue, which produces methane and nitrous oxide. Odor impacts would not be expected to be significant.

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## **6. Noise**

### **Existing Conditions**

Existing noise at the site of the proposed action is from the owners of the 255-acre tract. Existing conditions on site are generally quiet. There is an existing (6) house broiler poultry farm on the 255 acres tract that has been in existence since 2016. The woodlands on this tract are currently utilized for hunting and recreational activities. Noise from farm tractors and equipment, nearby poultry operations, vehicle traffic, and other farming and human activity does exist, but is temporary in nature. This is not a very densely populated area. According to EPA's EJScreening Tool, there is a population of roughly 7,000 people in a 10 mile radius of this 255 acre farm. SEE APPENDIX K-4. Noise also exist from routine traffic from Highway 167, which is approximately 1500 feet east of this proposed operation. The nearest neighboring dwellings in relation to the proposal are approximately 1450' to the east, 1900' to the east across Hwy 167, 2700' to the northeast across Hwy 167, 1,500' to the north and 1,400' to the south. There are several residences along Hwy 58 and residences on gravel roads which branch off Hwy 58. SEE APPENDIX A-6. The nearest church, Maxville Missionary Baptist Church is 2.5 miles southeast of the proposed site. The nearest school, Evening Shade Elementary School, is located 1.8 miles southeast of this proposal. SEE APPENDIX A-6 . There are no non-farm businesses in close proximity to this proposed facility.

### **Impacts of the Proposed Action**

The Proposed Action would establish approximately 200 acres of pasture ground, which is currently established as mixed timber. Noise levels would increase slightly during normal, daylight working hours during the timber harvesting phase of this proposal, which would be dependent entirely upon the weather. Upon completion, noise from the Proposed Action would permanently increase noise levels slightly in this area; however, noise from cattle and other farming activities on this 255-acre tract of land would be insignificant as there are existing cattle operations and integrated poultry facilities in this area already.

Tractor and equipment usage and truck noise associated with the working and movement of cattle, feed, supplies and materials on this proposed cattle pasture would all contribute to noise levels. Such activities would rarely take place other than during daylight hours, be infrequent in nature, of brief duration and low intensity. Additionally, Arkansas's Right to Farm Law protects operation of farms that were established prior to the use of the area surrounding the agricultural operation for nonagricultural activities and those farms which employ methods or practices commonly or reasonably associated with agricultural production. As integrated poultry production is a mainstay of the state's economy the related production methods have long been the accepted prevailing practice for widespread production both in Arkansas and throughout the country. SEE ARKANSAS RIGHT TO FARM REFERENCE

The proposed action is not expected to significantly affect ambient noise levels in the area or the nearest dwelling.

## 7. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

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The cumulative impacts analysis is important to understanding how multiple actions in a particular time and space (e.g., geographic area) impact the environment. The CEQ regulations define cumulative effects as “...the impact on the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such actions” (40 CFR § 1508.7). Whereas the individual impact of one project in a particular area or region may not be considered significant, numerous projects in the same area or region may cumulatively result in significant impacts.

Cumulative impacts most likely arise when a relationship exists between a proposed action and other actions occurring in a similar location or time period. Actions overlapping with or in proximity to the proposed action would be expected to have more potential for a relationship than those more geographically separated. Similarly, actions that coincide in time, may have the potential for cumulative impacts.

Establishing an appropriate scope for cumulative impacts analysis is important for producing meaningful analysis that appropriately informs agency decision making. This involves identifying geographic or temporal boundaries within which to identify other activities that could contribute to cumulative impacts to resources. Boundaries should consider ecologically and geographically relevant boundaries which sustain resources of concern. Temporal boundaries will be dependent on the length of time the effects of the proposed action are estimated to last and analysis commensurate with the project’s impact on relevant past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities within those boundaries. For example, small scale projects with minimal impacts of short duration would not likely contribute significantly to cumulative impacts. CEQ guidance (2005) reinforces this, stating:

*“The scope of the cumulative impact analysis is related to the magnitude of the environmental impacts of the proposed action. Proposed actions of limited scope typically do not require as comprehensive an assessment of cumulative impacts as proposed actions that have significant environmental impacts over a large area. Proposed actions that are typically finalized with a Finding of No Significant Impact usually involve only a limited cumulative impact assessment to confirm that the effects of the proposed action do not reach a point of significant environmental impacts”*

This cumulative impacts analysis focuses on the potentially affected resource (identified in section 3.2 of this document) and uses natural local boundaries to establish the geographic scope within which cumulative impacts could occur. Relevant past, present and reasonably foreseeable activities identified in Section 5.1 are based on potential geographic and temporal relationships with the proposed action within those identified boundaries. Cumulative effects on those resources are described in Section 4.2.

## **7.1 Past, Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions**

Analysis of cumulative analysis is forward looking and focuses on Sharp County where the proposed action would be implemented and the related area which includes the resources of concern. The purpose is to assess if the reasonably foreseeable effects of the proposed action would have an additive relationship to other past effects that would be significant, and to examine its relationship other actions (e.g. Federal, State, local, and private activities) that are currently taking place or are expected to take place in the reasonably foreseeable future.

Federal, State, local, and private activities that are currently taking place, have occurred in the past, or may reasonably be assumed to take place in the future in the cumulative effects area include the following: Sharp County encompasses approximately 606 square miles and has a population of roughly 17,000. Pasture lands account for the majority of the ground cover in the county, followed by forests cropland. SEE APPENDIX K-2. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, 158,279 acres are established in farmland on 648 farms in Sharp County County. SEE APPENDIX K-2. Farmland has increased over the 5 years to 161,736 acres in Sharp County according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Land in timber has actually increased 4.2% during that time.

According to the University of Arkansas Research and Extension Service, Agriculture accounted for 13% of the jobs in Sharp County, behind government enterprises at 18% and trade at 16%. All of these other sectors are somewhat related to and are all dependent on agriculture in this area. SEE SHARP COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE REFERENCE.

## **7.2 Cumulative Analysis**

Some resources considered for detailed analysis above (in Section 3.2) could be directly or indirectly affected by the Proposed Action and therefore the Proposed Action could contribute to additive or interactive cumulative effects to these resources. For other resources, no such contributions to cumulative effects are anticipated because no direct or indirect impacts would occur based on program requirements.

The significance of cumulative effects is dependent on how impacts compare with relevant thresholds, such as regulatory standards. Regulatory standards can restrict development by establishing thresholds of cumulative resource degradation (CEQ 1997):

“Government regulations and administrative standards...often influence developmental activity and the resultant cumulative stress on resources, ecosystems, and human communities. They also shape the manner in which a project may be operated, the amount of air or water emissions that can be released, and the limits on resource harvesting or extraction.”

Cumulative effects in this analysis are described relative to regulatory standards and thresholds in accordance with CEQ guidance. FSA relies on the authority and expertise of regulatory agencies, which have broad knowledge of regional activities that could affect the sensitive resources they are responsible for protecting, and to ensure through their permitting and consultation processes that its activities are not likely to contribute to significant negative cumulative resource impacts.

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### **7.2.1 Wildlife and Habitat**

Contributions of the Proposed Action to cumulative impacts include removal of existing vegetation and the loss and fragmentation of wildlife habitat. The proposal would also involve winter and summer time grass plantings that would re-establish the 200 acre in grasslands. No impacts to Threatened and Endangered Species are anticipated based on program requirements. The majority of the proposed site is wooded with mixed hardwood and softwood timber and other native vegetation. The proposed action would harvest approximately 200 acres of timber which would be converted to grasslands. Such impacts would add to natural vegetation and habitat lost as a result of past, present and reasonably foreseeable activities in the region of the Proposed Action including loss of native vegetation communities to agriculture, residential and commercial development and road building, recreation and other human activities. The Proposed Action would not be anticipated to result in long term or adverse impacts or to endangered species or their habitat. No cumulative impacts are anticipated based on coordination and consultation with USFWS and program requirements

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### **7.2.2 Cultural Resources**

Based on program requirements, which call for coordination and consultation with State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, no impacts to known cultural resources are expected to result from the Proposed Action. There is the potential for encountering unknown cultural resources if the proposal is implemented. Though unlikely, potential loss and damage to unknown cultural resources could occur, adding to similar potential impacts from other past, ongoing, and future developments that have the potential to degrade and destroy cultural resources. SEE APPENDIX E FOR SECTION 106 CONSULTATIONS AND RESPONSES.

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### **7.2.4 Water Quality**

During construction of the Proposed Action there is the potential for mobilization of exposed soil; however those impacts would be temporary and minor, and minimized by select harvesting and leaving steeper undisturbed as well as windrowing and grass plantings. Such impacts would add to impacts to water quality resulting from residential, municipal, industrial, and commercial development, particularly the use of septic systems, as well as runoff from roads and development, and agricultural production. Once the disturbed areas are revegetated or otherwise stabilized, no impacts to water quality would be expected. Since there are no long-terms effected to water quality, the proposed action would not be expected to contribute significantly to cumulative effects to water quality.

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### **7.2.5 Air Quality**

The Council on Environmental Quality Final Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and the Effects of Climate Change In National Environmental Policy Act Reviews states:

The site of the Proposed Action lies in a rural area of Sharp County, AR. This proposed operation is surrounded by hardwood timber to the north, south and west, which would act as a buffer to filter the odor, dust, and other particulate matter emitted by the existing and proposed poultry houses. Exhaust fans point towards the south.

Arkansas Water and Air Pollution Control Act, Subchapter 3 Air Pollution exempts "Agricultural operations in the growing or harvesting of crops and the raising of fowls or animals" and the "use of equipment in agricultural operations in the growth of crops or the raising of fowls or animals." There are no local ordinances regulating odor in existence in this area.

Arkansas's Right to Farm Law protects operation of farms that were established prior to the use of the area surrounding the agricultural operation for nonagricultural activities and those farms employ methods or practices commonly or reasonably associated with agricultural production. Management of agricultural soils accounts for over half of agriculture emissions. Activities including fertilizer application, irrigation and tillage, can lead to production and emission of nitrous oxide.

- Livestock, particularly cattle, produce methane as part of their digestion accounting for almost one third of the agricultural emissions.
- Manure storage and management also contribute methane and nitrous oxide, accounting for about 14 percent of the agriculture GHG emissions.
- Smaller agricultural sources include methane produced by rice cultivation and the burning of crop residue, which produces methane and nitrous oxide.

Dust would be generated from soil disturbing activities from cutters, skidders, trucks, and other equipment usage during proposed the proposed timber harvesting. Such impacts would be minor, intermittent, and localized. Though such impacts are not expected to be significant, they would add to dust generated by other activities in the immediate vicinity of the farm once in operation.

Odor impacts from cattle should be minimal, given there are several cattle and poultry operations in this general vicinity.

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### **7.2.6 Noise**

Increases in noise levels would be minimal compared to existing conditions. There is already an established (6) house poultry farm located on this 255 acre tract. There are no local or state noise ordinances, based on Program Requirements. Timber harvesting and livestock operations are very common in this area.

## **7.3 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES**

NEPA requires that environmental analysis include identification of any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved should an action be implemented. The term irreversible refers to the loss of future options and commitments of resources that cannot be renewed

or recovered, or can only be recovered over a long period. Irreversible commitments apply primarily to the use of nonrenewable resources, such as minerals or cultural resources, or to factors such as soil productivity, that are renewable only over a long period. Irretrievable refers to the loss of production or use of natural resources. For example, when a road is built through a forest, some, or all of the timber production from an area is lost irretrievably while an area is serving as a road. The production lost is irretrievable, but the action is not irreversible. If the use changes, it is possible to resume timber production. No irreversible resource commitments would occur as a result of the Proposed Action. Irretrievable resources include those raw materials and fuels used during construction. List of Preparers and Persons and Agencies Contacted

<b>8. List of Preparers</b>	
<b>Name and Title</b>	<b>Education and Experience</b>
Adam Kaufman Farm Loan Specialist, FSA, Arkansas	BS, Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences Years of Experience: 11

<b>Persons and Agencies Contacted</b>	
<b>Name and Title</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Shelby M. Sanders	Farm Service Agency
Stacy Hurst	Arkansas SHPO
Melissa Lombardi	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Pedro Ardapple-Kindberg	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Bob Komardley	Apache Tribe of Oklahoma
Linda Langley	Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
Dr. Andrea Hunter	Osage Nation
Everett Bandy	Quapaw Tribe of Indians
Elizabeth Toombs	Cherokee Nation
Tonya Tipton	Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
Brett Barnes	Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma

## 8. REFERENCES

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CEQ 1997. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). 1997. Guidance under the National Environmental Policy Act. December.

TCEQ 2016. Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). 2016. Economic Values and Impacts of Poultry Production Activities in East Texas. <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/> Accessed on 19 September 19, 2016.

**Arkansas Water Plan:**

<http://www.arwaterplan.arkansas.gov/plan/ArkansasWaterPlan/AppendicesUpdate.htm>

**National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS):**

[https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online\\_Resources/County\\_Profiles/Arkansas/cp05083.pdf](https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Arkansas/cp05083.pdf):

**Web Soil Survey (WSS):** <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>

**IPAC (Information:** <https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>

**FEMA:** <https://msc.fema.gov/portal>

**NEPASSIST:** <https://www.epa.gov/nepa/nepassist>

**National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS):**

[https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1,\\_Chapter\\_2\\_County\\_Level/Arkansas/st05\\_2\\_001\\_001.pdf](https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Arkansas/st05_2_001_001.pdf)

**Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), Impaired Streams/TMDL Lists:**

<https://www.adeq.state.ar.us/water/>

**Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), Rules and Regulations:**

<https://www.adeq.state.ar.us/regs/>

**Arkansas Natural Resource Commission (ANRC) Regs:** <http://www.anrc.arkansas.gov/rules/current-rules/>

**Arkansas Air Pollution Control Regulations:**

[https://www.adeq.state.ar.us/regs/files/reg18\\_final\\_160314.pdf](https://www.adeq.state.ar.us/regs/files/reg18_final_160314.pdf)

**Arkansas Water.Org Sharp County:**

[http://arkansaswater.org//index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=101&Item](http://arkansaswater.org//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=101&Item)

Burns, R.T., H. Li, H. Xin, R.S. Gates, D.G. Overhults, J. Earnest, and L. Moody. 2008. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Broiler Houses in the Southeastern United States. Published in Proceedings of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering Conference.

**EPA 2016a. US Environmental Protection Agency Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Available at:** <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions#agriculture>. Accessed March 1, 2017.

**EPA 2016b. US Environmental Protection Agency Greenhouse Gas Data Explorer. Available at:** <https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/inventoryexplorer/>. Accessed March 1, 2017.

**National Forest Service:** <https://www.fs.usda.gov/osfnf>

**University of Arkansas Research and Extension: Sharp County:**

<https://www.uaex.edu/business-communities/strategic-planning/docs/county-profiles/sharp-county-profile.pdf>

**Arkansas Air Pollution Control Regulations:**

[https://www.adeq.state.ar.us/regs/files/reg18\\_final\\_160314.pdf](https://www.adeq.state.ar.us/regs/files/reg18_final_160314.pdf)

**Arkansas Right to Farm:**

[http://www.farmlandinfo.org/sites/default/files/Arkansas\\_RTF\\_law\\_1.htm](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/sites/default/files/Arkansas_RTF_law_1.htm)

**ANRC 2016:** Strawberry River Watershed-Based Management Plan. Prepared for the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission. Little Rock, AR. Available at:

<http://www.arkansaswater.org/319/pdf/Management%20Plans/Strawberry%20River%20Watershed%20based%20Final%202016-11-15.pdf>. Accessed September 8, 2017.

**Arkansas 2018-2023 NPS Pollution Management Plan** [https://static.ark.org/eeuploads/anrc/2018-2023\\_NPS\\_Pollution\\_Management\\_Plan.compressed\\_\(2\).pdf](https://static.ark.org/eeuploads/anrc/2018-2023_NPS_Pollution_Management_Plan.compressed_(2).pdf)

## 9. EA DETERMINATION AND SIGNATURES

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### ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION – The FSA preparer of the EA determines:

1. Based on an examination and review of the foregoing information and supplemental documentation attached hereto, I find that this proposed action
  - would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be prepared;
  - would not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment and, therefore, an EIS will not be prepared.
  
2. I recommend that the Project Approval Official for this action make the following compliance determinations for the below-listed environmental requirements.

Not in compliance	In compliance	Not applicable	
			National Environmental Policy Act
			Clean Air Act
			Clean Water Act
			Safe Drinking Water Act
			Endangered Species Act
			Coastal Barrier Resources Act
			Coastal Zone Management Act
			Wild and Scenic Rivers Act/National Rivers Inventory
			National Historic Preservation Act
			Subtitle B, Highly Erodible Land Conservation, and Subtitle C, Wetland Conservation, of the Food Security Act
			Executive Order 11988 and 13690, Floodplain Management
			Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands
			Farmland Protection Policy Act
			Department Regulation 9500-3, Land Use Policy
			E.O. 12898, Environmental Justice

3. I have reviewed and considered the types and degrees (context and intensity) of adverse environmental impacts identified by this assessment. I have also analyzed the proposal for its consistency with FSA environmental policies, particularly those related to important farmland protection, and have considered the potential benefits of the proposed action. Based upon a consideration of these factors, from an environmental standpoint, this project may:
  - Be approved without further environmental analysis and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) prepared.
  - Not be approved because of the reasons identified under item b.

Signature of Preparer	Date
Name and Title of Preparer (print)	

**Environmental Determination – FSA State Environmental Coordinator determines:**

Based on my review of the foregoing Environmental Assessment and related supporting documentation, I have determined:

- The appropriate level of environmental review and assessment has been completed, and substantiates a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI); therefore, an EIS will not be prepared and processing of the requested action may continue without further environmental analysis. A FONSI will be prepared.
  
- The Environmental Assessment is not adequate and further analysis or action is necessary for the following reason(s):
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- The Environmental Assessment has established the proposed action cannot be approved for the following reason(s):

Additional SEC Comments:

Signature of SEC	Date
Printed Name	

