

**United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Implementation of Tree Assistance Program

The United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) has prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) to evaluate the environmental consequences associated with implementing the 2005 Tree Assistance Program (TAP). TAP is authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

The 2005 TAP provides financial assistance to producers in qualifying counties who experienced losses of tree (including Christmas trees, ornamental trees, nursery tree and potted trees), field grown bush (including shrubs) or vine crops as a result of hurricanes Katrina, Ophelia, Rita and Wilma. Qualified producers are those in counties impacted by disasters during 2005 (designated by the President or Secretary of Agriculture) in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative is also the Proposed Action (Alternative A). It proposes to implement the 2005 TAP. Producers meeting eligibility requirements may apply for reimbursement of expenses related to:

- Site preparation and debris removal;
- Chemicals and nutrients required to reestablish crop;
- Seedlings or cuttings for replanting;
- Replacement, rehabilitation, and pruning; and,
- Labor required for replanting.

Reasons for Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

In consideration of the analysis documented in the PEA and the reasons outlined in this FONSI (below), the Preferred Alternative would not constitute a major Federal action that would significantly affect the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. The determination is based on the following:

1. Potential beneficial and adverse impacts of implementing the Preferred Alternative have been fully considered within the PEA. No significant adverse direct or indirect effects were identified, based on the resource analyses provided in the PEA.
2. The Preferred Alternative would not significantly affect public health or safety.
3. The Preferred Alternative would not significantly affect any unique characteristics which includes historic and cultural resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.
4. The Preferred Alternative would not involve effects to the quality of the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial.
5. The Preferred Alternative would not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

6. The Preferred Alternative does not result in cumulative significant impacts when considered with other actions that also individually have insignificant impacts. The PEA discusses potential cumulative impacts of implementing the Preferred Alternative. Cumulative impacts of implementing the Preferred Alternative were determined to be not significant.
7. The Preferred Alternative would not have adverse effects on threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat. In accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the effects of implementing the Preferred Alternative on threatened and endangered species and designated critical habitat were addressed in the PEA.
8. The Preferred Alternative would not adversely affect districts, sites, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
9. The Preferred Alternative does not threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Determination

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and FSA's environmental regulations at 7 CFR part 799 implementing the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality, 40 CFR parts 1500-1508, I find that neither the Proposed Action nor the Alternative is a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, no environmental impact statement will be prepared.

Approved



May 30, 2007

Signature

Date

Name: Matthew T. Ponish

Title: National Environmental Compliance Manager