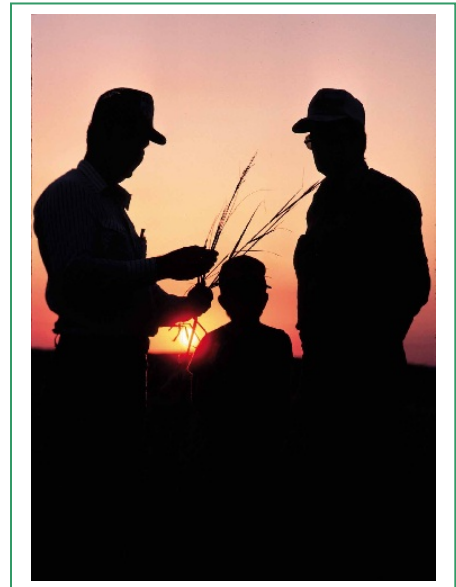
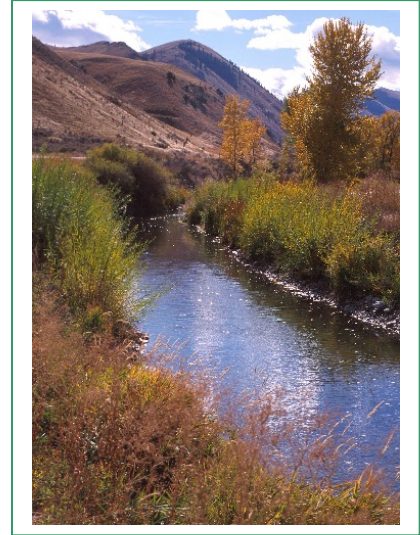




**CONSERVATION SECURITY
PROGRAM (CSP)**

Finding of No Significant Impact
May 2004



FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM (CSP)

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. I have determined, based upon the reasons provided below, that there will be no significant individual or cumulative impacts on the quality of the human environment as a result of implementing the CSP, particularly when focusing on the significant adverse impacts which NEPA is intended to help decision makers avoid and mitigate against. Therefore, an EIS need not be prepared.

The CSP authorizes activities that reward agricultural producers for actions they have already taken to improve the quality and quantity of natural resources, and to implement new conservation measures that will do so (EA p. 2). NRCS has in the past and will continue to document the results of an environmental evaluation on a site-specific level and, as stated in the EA, will consult with the appropriate organizations to avoid, reduce or mitigate adverse impacts on protected resources (EA, p. 25). NRCS will comply with requirements protecting unique geographic features and other resources, as well as NRCS policies protecting natural and cultural resources (EA pgs. 25, 26). Thus, any adverse effects that may result from this program will occur at a much lower threshold than the EIS threshold.

Because the purpose of the program is to improve the quality of natural resources and because of the steps NRCS will take to work with other agencies as necessary on a site-specific basis to avoid, mitigate and reduce any potential collateral adverse effects, there is no threat of a violation of any Federal, State or local law or other requirements for the protection of the environment resulting from the proposed rule to implement CSP. There is no impact on public health or safety identified in this EA or otherwise expected. Furthermore, there is no effect identified that might be considered highly controversial or uncertain or that might involve unique or unknown risks. The proposed action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions other than the future implementation of the types of conservation practices used to accomplish the purposes of this program.

Implementation of the CSP rule is not sufficiently related to other actions that either individually or cumulatively is likely to result in the type of significant impacts that NEPA is intended to address. To the extent other NRCS CSP activities may result in significant effects to the quality of the human environment, a State or area-wide EA or EIS may be prepared separately from this National EA.

Based on the information presented in the attached CSP EA, I find that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment that requires preparation of an EIS.

BRUCE I. KNIGHT
Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

May 25, 2004
DATE