



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Quivira National Wildlife Refuge
1434 NE 80th Street
Stafford, Kansas 67578

In Reply Refer to:
FWS/IR05/IR07

August 10, 2020

To: Watershed Act - Program Decisions Committee

This letter is sent in support of an application proposal that is being submitted by the Big Bend Groundwater Management District 5 (District) through the National Resource Conservation Service for funding made available through the Watershed Act. The proposed project will assist with the work plan development, environmental review process, and permitting of an augmentation well field that will provide water to Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) in central Kansas. The water supplied by the well field will, in part, directly support a short-term water impairment resolution being directed by the District, and supported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) through a collaborative partnership. This type of partnership approach continues to be developed in a way that identifies a range of short and long-term projects that promote water conservation and sustainability of the groundwater that feeds the larger Rattlesnake Creek watershed corridor. It is understood that this specific well field project will not, on its own, provide results that completely enhance or restore the hydrologic function of the Refuge, but is an important part of the overall resolution.

The Refuge is 22,135 acres overlaying three Kansas counties, and generally receives approximately 67,000 visitors annually. The Refuge purpose is to provide feeding, resting, and nesting habitat for all waterfowl and migrating water birds within the central flyway of North America. This diversity is typically otherwise found only in coastal areas or along large river systems. The refuge's unique and vitally important natural habitats, including its water resources, support people and native wildlife at a local, regional, national and international scale. The FWS takes pride in the fact that the national and international importance of the refuge's habitats is demonstrated through various designations, such as:

- Critical habitat for the endangered whooping crane
- Ramsar Wetland of International Importance
- Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Site
- National Audubon Society – Globally Important Bird Area
- Part of the Wetlands and Wildlife National Scenic Byway in Kansas

The FWS supports planning efforts toward this project, and will continue to show support to other projects and actions that help conserve water resources in the watershed, and create a sustainable groundwater source for the health of the watershed corridor.

Sincerely,

Mike Oldham 8/11/2020

Mike Oldham, Wildlife Refuge Manager
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

INTERIOR REGION 5
MISSOURI BASIN

KANSAS, MONTANA*, NEBRASKA, NORTH DAKOTA,
SOUTH DAKOTA

*PARTIAL

INTERIOR REGION 7
UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASIN

COLORADO, NEW MEXICO, UTAH, WYOMING