



Draft Watershed Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Clarke County Water Supply Project

Securing a sustainable water supply for South Central Iowa

November 2025



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OVERVIEW

Drought and an unreliable water supply in the Clarke County, Iowa region has impacted residents and the agricultural community for several decades. Economic growth has stagnated since the water supply is insufficient to support growing agriculture and new businesses. Water use restrictions during drought events have been imposed on residents on multiple occasions. Farmers and ranchers perform a balancing act to ensure their crops and livestock have the water they need to thrive.

In April 2021, the Clarke County Reservoir Commission (CCRC) received assistance from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop a watershed project plan for the Clarke County Water Supply Project Watershed under the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) program. The **Clarke County Water Supply Project Watershed Plan-Environmental Impact Statement**, presents the analysis required under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 (Public Law 83-566) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended.

Who is the CCRC?

CCRC is an intergovernmental entity, members include Osceola Water Works (OWW), Southern Iowa Rural Water Association (SIRWA), City of Osceola, City of Murray, City of Woodburn, and Clarke County. Since the early 1990's leaders and dedicated community members throughout Clarke County have worked toward the research and development of an ample and sustainable water resource that will support the future of Clarke County, Iowa and our surrounding neighbors.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed plan is to provide a reliable water supply to meet existing and anticipated water needs for agricultural producers served by OWW and SIRWA. The project is needed due to agricultural and other water supply deficiencies. In identifying a new water supply for agricultural uses, there is also an opportunity to supply additional water for users in the city of Osceola.

 **This project will provide an additional 1.90 million gallons per day.** 

West Lake, the region's current water source, has insufficient water supply to meet demand in the City of Osceola and the surrounding region. At least four serious drought events have occurred in Clarke County since the 1980s. Most recently, drought starting in 2021 resulted in four years of West Lake below full capacity. OWW was forced to implement some form of water restrictions for almost two years, including six months in a water emergency.

Water demand continues to grow due to agricultural, population and economic growth. If a new water supply is not identified OWW will no longer be able to supply SIRWA with water, jeopardizing agricultural and rural demand for the entire region, and economic/population growth in Osceola would also be restricted.

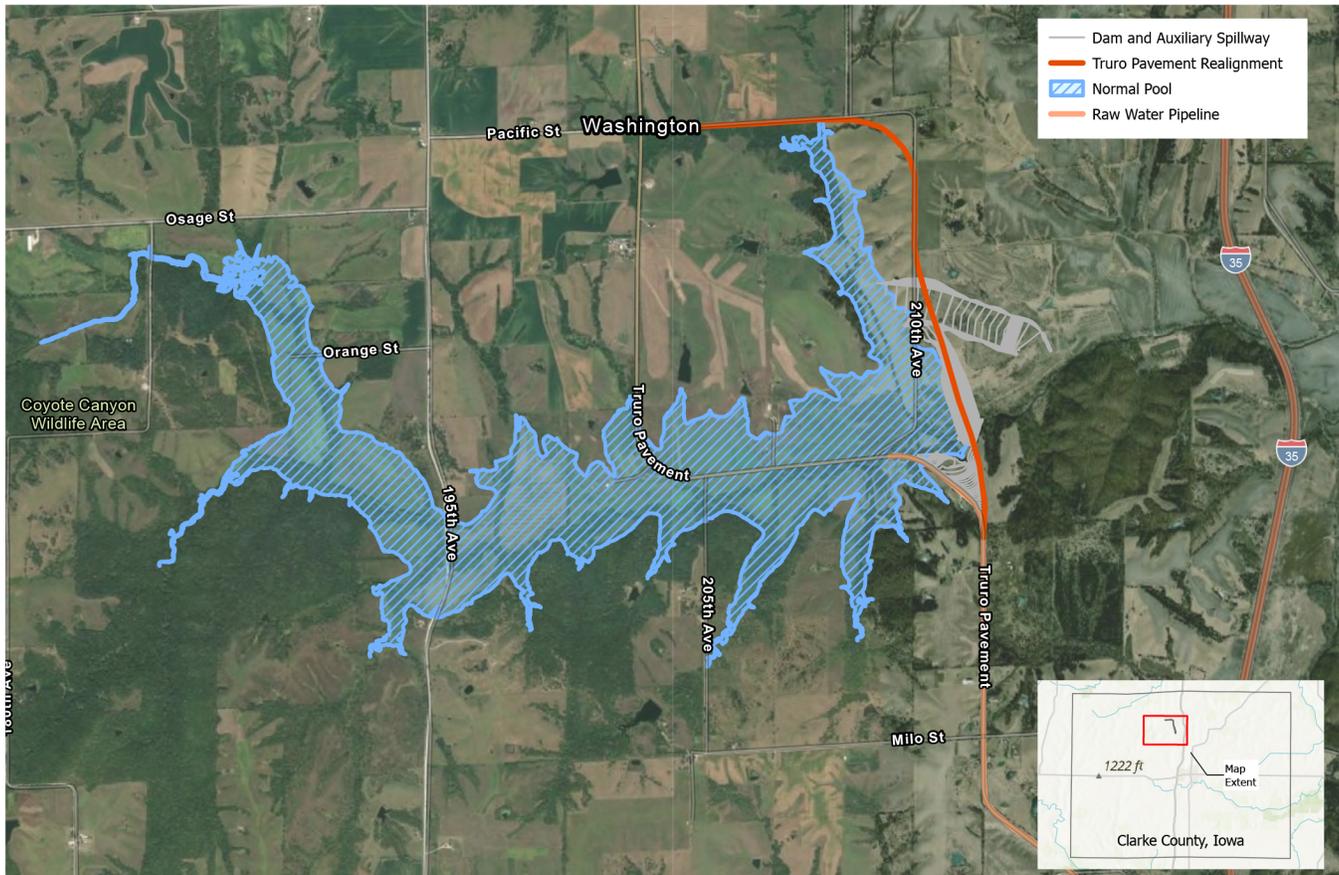
ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

CCRC and NRCS have carefully evaluated five potential alternatives to address the water crisis in the region. These alternatives were screened against specific criteria, such as the project need of supplying a total raw water supply of 1.90 million gallons per day, reasonableness and practicability, to determine if an alternative was eliminated or carried forward for detailed study.

Alternative	Analysis Results
No action	Advanced
New raw water reservoir	Advanced
Expansion of existing West Lake	Eliminated due to insufficient water supply
Purchase water and build a pipeline from another water utility	Eliminated due to logistics and cost
Groundwater Wellfield	Eliminated due to poor quality groundwater and cost

Preferred Alternative

After a careful review, CCRC selected building a single source water supply reservoir in the Upper West Creek watershed as the preferred alternative. This alternative would build an earthfill embankment dam on West Creek with a reinforced concrete pressure pipe spillway and vegetated auxiliary spillway. There would also be a water supply pipeline to transport water from the reservoir to the water treatment plant. The dam construction area would also require the relocation of a segment of a local road, Truro Pavement.



IMPACTS

CCRC and NRCS performed a comprehensive review of potential impacts for the preferred alternative. Potential impacts include:



Historic Properties and Cultural Resources

A cultural resources programmatic agreement has been completed to ensure an inventory of cultural resources and evaluation of project effects to historic properties and other cultural resources.



Streams and Wetlands

Preliminary concept designs have been developed to mitigate for the 52 acres of wetland impacts and over 75,000 linear feet of stream impacts.

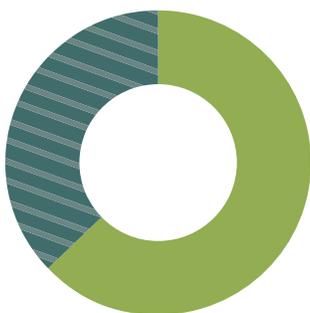


Habitat

Conservation measures are anticipated to cover all mitigation measures for habitat impacts. Coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources was completed. Conservation measures include construction timing, biological surveys, and approved seeding plans to avoid adverse impacts.

COSTS

Design and construction are estimated to cost **\$117 million**. Funding will be split between Public Law 566 funds, which come from the NRCS's Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) Program, and CCRC, which come from the member contributions, the 1% local option sales tax and other non-Federal funds.



63% (\$74.2 million)
Public Law 566 funds

37% (\$42.8 million)
CCRC funds

NEXT STEPS

Once the Clarke County Water Supply Project Watershed Plan-Environmental Impact Statement is complete and a Record of Decision is issued, engineering and design activities will occur. Construction is currently anticipated to be complete in 2031.

- 2025**
EIS reviewed and finalized
- 2026**
Funding approval
- 2027 – 2028**
Design
- 2029 – 2031**
Construction

STAY INVOLVED

Review the draft plan and provide comment.



Comments will be collected through **December 22** and can be provided directly through the QR code or by contacting:

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