



NRCS Utah Irrigation Reservoir Plan: Cove–East Fork Virgin River Draft Watershed Plan-EIS Open for Comment Through November 2

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USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is taking comments through November 2, 2026 on the Draft Cove–East Fork Virgin River Watershed Plan-EIS in Kane and Washington Counties, Utah — a 90-foot earthen dam, 6,000 acre-foot reservoir, and Glendale and Mt. Carmel irrigation pipelines.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), with the Kane County Water Conservancy District and the Washington County Water Conservancy District as project sponsors, has released the Draft Cove–East Fork Virgin River Watershed Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (Plan-EIS) for proposed improvements in Kane and Washington Counties, Utah. The comment period runs September 18 through November 2, 2026.

The EPA's weekly notice of availability in the Federal Register on September 18, 2026 lists the draft as EIS No. 20260125, Draft, NRCS, UT, with comments ending 11/02/2026.

What would be built

The NRCS project page lists these measures:

- an earthen dam about 1,900 feet long and 90 feet high;
- a 6,000 acre-foot reservoir;
- recreational amenities around the reservoir;
- a reservoir outlet pipeline;

- the Glendale irrigation pipeline;
- the Mt. Carmel irrigation pipeline and booster pump station; and
- access roads.

The Washington County Water Conservancy District's public notice says water from the proposed reservoir would be made available to existing agricultural fields near Long Valley and for municipal and industrial uses in Washington County. The project would be partially funded under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL 83-566).

How to comment

- Deadline: Monday, November 2, 2026.
- Email: CoveEFVR@usda.gov
- Mail: Ammon Boswell, NRCS Watershed Program Manager, 1950 West Main Street, Tremonton, UT 84337.
- Hard copies: Kane County Water Conservancy District office (725 East Kanaplex Drive, Kanab) and Washington County Water Conservancy District office (533 East Waterworks Drive, St. George).
- NRCS also invites information on cultural resources in the area of potential effects, to satisfy Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act through the NEPA comment process.
- A public meeting was held September 30, 2026 at the Old Rock Church Events Center in Mt. Carmel.

Two other Utah watershed notices from NRCS

On September 28, 2026, NRCS Utah also published two Federal Register rescission notices, withdrawing earlier Notices of Intent to prepare EISs because, NRCS said, they were issued before viable alternatives and the need for an EIS were confirmed:

- Pleasant Creek Supplemental Watershed Plan, Sanpete County — with Mt. Pleasant City, Pleasant Creek Irrigation Company, and Twin Creek Irrigation Company (rescinds 89 FR 38861, May 8, 2024).
- Upper Price River Watershed Project, Carbon County — with Price City, covering Price, Helper, Wellington, Price Canyon, and Scofield Reservoir (rescinds 86 FR 29739, June 3, 2021).

In both, NRCS says watershed planning continues, earlier scoping comments will still be considered, and a new NOI will be published if an EIS proves appropriate.

Sources

1. NRCS project page, Cove–East Fork Virgin River Watershed: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/watersheds/cove-east-fork-virgin-river-watershed-sponsor-kane-co-water>
2. Washington County Water Conservancy District public notice (Draft Plan-EIS NOA): <https://www.wcwcd.gov/procurements/public-notice-only-cove-east-fork-virgin-river-watershed-project-kane-washington-counties-utah-draft-plan-eis-notice-of-availability/>
3. Federal Register (Sept. 18, 2026), Document 2026-19164: EPA EIS Notice of Availability (EIS No. 20260125). <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/09/18/2026-19164/environmental-impact-statements-notice-of-availability>

4. Federal Register (Sept. 28, 2026), Documents 2026-19772 and 2026-19770: NRCS rescission notices, Pleasant Creek (Sanpete County) and Upper Price River (Carbon County), Utah. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/09/28/2026-19772/rescission-notice-pleasant-creek-supplemental-watershed-plan-sanpete-county-utah>

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Notes

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