As defined by the Clean Water Act, wetlands are “areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.” Jurisdictional wetlands are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

At Halligan Reservoir, 16.74 acres of wetland would be inundated by Fort Collins’ Proposed Action. An estimated 10.9 acres of wetland would reestablish along the new shoreline, therefore the net permanent wetland effect is 5.84 acres. At the Gravel Pits Alternative site, wetlands are not expected to reestablish because the pits would be lined. Permanent wetland effects at other Project Alternative sites are minimal.

Indirect Wetland Effects

The assessment of indirect effects focused on changes in the frequency and duration of inundation of wetlands along the North Fork and Main Stem of the Cache la Poudre River. None of the Project Alternatives are likely to have an adverse indirect effect to wetlands along the Main Stem. Fort Collins’ Proposed Action is the only alternative that would have an indirect effect on North Fork wetlands, and that effect would primarily be beneficial because of the Winter Release Plan and the Summer Low Flow Plan.

**Winter Release Plan**

The Winter Release Plan would release three cubic feet per second between October 1 and April 30. Benefits from the additional winter flow to wetlands along the North Fork can include an increase in alluvial groundwater recharge and enhancement of wetland communities.

The Winter Release Plan benefits to the North Fork would only occur under the Fort Collins’ Proposed Action.

**Summer Low Flow Plan**

The Summer Low Flow Plan would ensure a minimum base flow of five cubic feet per second, resulting in:
- Increased stream width and saturated area
- Increased soil moisture available to adjacent wetland vegetation
- Increased stream continuity
- Reduced groundwater fluctuations during the growing season

The Summer Low Flow Plan applies only to Fort Collins’ Proposed Action.