

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Transfer of up to 450 Acre-Feet of Replacement Water from Patterson Irrigation District to Del Puerto Water District

FONSI-12-081

Recommended by:

_____ Date: _____
Ben Lawrence
Natural Resources Specialist
South-Central California Area Office

Concurred by:

_____ Date: _____
Chuck Siek
Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist
South-Central California Area Office

Concurred by:

_____ Date: _____
Randy English
Chief, Resources Management Division
South-Central California Area Office

Approved by:

_____ Date: _____
Michael P. Jackson
Area Manager
South-Central California Area Office



Introduction

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for the Transfer of up to 450 Acre-feet of water from Patterson Irrigation District (PID) to Del Puerto Water District (DPWD). This Finding of No Significant Impact is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA) Number 12-081, *Transfer of up to 450 Acre-Feet of Replacement Water from Patterson Irrigation District to Del Puerto Water District*, which is hereby incorporated by reference.

Background

The State of California has historically experienced periods of drought and flooding. Water agencies prepare for varying water supply conditions so that agricultural or urban water supply needs can continue to be met during short-term supply fluctuations. Having the ability to move water supplies from an area of greater supply to an area of lesser supply can help alleviate localized, short-term shortages.

In October 2008, PID approached Reclamation with a request to transfer 2,200 acre-feet (AF) of its Replacement Water to Del Puerto Water District (DPWD) during the 2009 contract water year. Reclamation analyzed the proposed transfer in an EA, *Patterson Irrigation District One-Time Delivery of Replacement Water to Del Puerto Water District*, and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), FONSI-09-084, was signed on August 7, 2009.

In 2009, PID determined that it could transfer 1,500 AF of additional water and still be able to meet the in-district demand of its water users. In September 2009, PID requested that Reclamation approve the district's proposal to transfer this additional Replacement Water to DPWD. Reclamation approved this request as EA/FONSI 09-141 on November 24, 2009.

In 2012, PID approached Reclamation with a third proposal, to transfer an additional 450 AF of water to DPWD in water year 2012.

Proposed Action

Reclamation proposes to approve PID's one-time delivery of up to 450 AF of its Replacement Water (under Contract #14-06-200-3598A-LTR1) to DPWD for the remainder of the 2012 contract water year. Reclamation would facilitate this transfer by conveying the Replacement Water down the Delta-Mendota Canal (DMC) from the Delta as usual, but instead of being diverted into PID turnouts, PID's Replacement Water would be delivered to existing DPWD turnouts along the DMC. DPWD would like the flexibility to deliver the water throughout the district as needed, so the turnouts would be between mileposts 18.05L to 68.03L. DPWD would then convey this Replacement Water to their water users.

Findings

Water Resources

Under the Proposed Action, DPWD would receive up to 450 AF of additional water for use, along with water transferred under other actions and their CVP contract supply. Conditions would remain the same as have historically occurred and there would be no impacts to the DMC. Additional turnouts along the canal could be used that were not identified for previous actions, but this would not materially affect conditions in the DMC.

Land Use

The Proposed Action would not result in any land use changes in PID because the district has determined that they have adequate water to meet the needs of their customers. Existing uses would be unaffected. DPWD would use the additional Replacement Water to irrigate and maintain their customers' existing permanent crops. Maintaining a reliable and cost-effective water supply to the crops is a benefit for the area's current land uses.

Biological Resources

Most of the habitat types required by species protected by the Endangered Species Act do not occur in the project area. The Proposed Action does not include the conversion of any native land or land fallowed and untilled for three or more years. The Proposed Project also would not change the land use patterns of the cultivated or fallowed fields that have value to listed species or birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Due to capacity limitations and water quality restrictions in the DMC, and the absence of natural stream courses or surface water pumping, there would be no effects on listed fish species. No critical habitat occurs within the area affected by the Proposed Project and so no critical habitat primary constituent elements would be affected.

Any encountered biological resources are likely to be those associated with actively cultivated land. The transferred water involved with the Proposed Project would not be used on native lands or on lands that have been fallowed for more than three consecutive years. Such actions would require subsequent environmental review.

The short duration of the water availability, the requirement that no native lands be converted or otherwise disturbed without consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the stringent requirements for transfers under applicable laws would preclude any impacts to wildlife, whether federally listed or not. In conclusion, the Proposed Project would not affect Federally listed species or any critical habitat, nor would it affect birds protected under the MBTA.

Socioeconomic Resources

The Proposed Action would provide supplemental water to DPWD to sustain their existing crops and at the same time still provide sufficient irrigation water for landowners in PID. Conditions would remain the same as existing conditions and there would be no impacts to socioeconomic resources.

Environmental Justice

Under the Proposed Action, the availability of additional Replacement Water would help maintain agricultural production and local employment in DPWD. Employment opportunities for low-income wage earners and minority population groups would be consistent with historical conditions. Disadvantaged populations would not be subject to disproportionate adverse impacts.

Cumulative Impacts

As in the past, hydrological conditions and other factors are likely to result in fluctuating water supplies which drive requests for water service actions. Water districts provide water to their customers based on available water supplies and timing, while attempting to minimize costs. Farmers irrigate and grow crops based on these conditions and factors, and a myriad of water service actions are approved and executed each year to facilitate water needs. Each water service transaction involving Reclamation undergoes environmental review prior to approval. Existing or foreseeable projects, in addition to the proposed transfer, which could affect or could be affected by the Proposed Action or No Action alternative, include the following:

Accelerated Water Transfer Program

Under the Accelerated Water Transfer Program, South of Delta contractors are permitted to transfer up to 150,000 AF of CVP water in aggregate without further environmental analysis, subject to certain requirements and restrictions. Reclamation issued FONSI 10-051 for this action on February 14, 2011.

Additional Point of Delivery for Patterson Irrigation District's Non-Project Water to Del Puerto Water District

Under a previous action (EA 09-156), Reclamation approved a Warren Act transfer of up to 10,000 AF of water by a variety of contractors to and through the Delta-Mendota Canal. In 2012, the previous approval was amended to allow up to 10,000 AF to be transferred from Patterson Irrigation District to Del Puerto Water District. Reclamation issued FONSI 12-054 for this action on July 17, 2012.

Delta-Mendota Canal Pump-In Project (2011-2012)

The DMC pump-in program allows the member agencies of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority to pump groundwater into the DMC for delivery to contractors during the period of March 1, 2011 through February 28, 2013. The member agencies are limited to no more than 10,000 AF individually, and 50,000 AF as a group. Reclamation issued FONSI 10-072 for this project on February 28, 2011.

Delta-Mendota Canal Pump-In Project (2012-2013)

This project is similar to the DMC Pump-In Project above, but covers the time period from March 1, 2012 to February 28, 2013. Allowed water volumes are the same. Reclamation issued FONSI 12-005 for this project on May 8, 2012.

Delta-Mendota Canal Pump-In Project (2013-2024)

This project is similar to the DMC Pump-In Project above, but covers the time period from March 1, 2013 to February 29, 2024. Allowed water volumes are the same. Reclamation is considering this action under EA 12-061.

License to Del Puerto Water District for New Discharge Point at Milepost 52.40L on the Delta-Mendota Canal

Under this action, Reclamation is considering allowing DPWD to construct a new discharge facility to pump water into the DMC. Reclamation is considering this action under EA 12-080.

Water service actions like those described above do not result in increases or decreases of water diverted from rivers or reservoirs. Each water service transaction involving CVP and non-CVP water undergoes environmental review prior to approval. The Proposed Action and similar projects would not interfere with the projects listed above, nor would they hinder the normal operations of the CVP and Reclamation's obligation to deliver water to its contractors or to local fish and wildlife habitat. The Proposed Action, when added to other water service actions, would not result in cumulative effects to surface water resources beyond historical fluctuations and conditions.