

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Environmental Assessment

Temporary Transfer of Water from the McConnell Foundation to Kanawha and Glide Water Districts in Contract Year 2014

EA-14-03-NCAO



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Mid Pacific Region**

April 2014

Mission Statements

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes and our commitment to island communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Bureau of Reclamation proposes to approve a 1-year transfer of up to 5,100 acre-feet (AF) of Central Valley Project (Project) water from the McConnell Foundation (Foundation) to the Kanawha and Glide water districts (Districts) served by the Tehama-Colusa Canal. Water made available to the Districts could come from direct transfer from the Foundation or indirectly through the City of Redding's water service contract, the Buckeye Contract (#14-06-200-5272A-LTR1), or a combination thereof. Water made available to the Foundation for transfer is based upon a pre-1914 right to divert water regardless of Central Valley Project allocations (see Contract No. 00-WC-20-1707).

The request from the Districts stems from the reduced rainfall during the winter and spring that resulted in an unprecedented zero allocation of Project water for agricultural use and 50% allocation of Project water for Municipal and Industrial use in the service areas of the Tehama-Colusa Canal.

1.2 Need for the Proposal

The purpose of the project is to transfer Project water to alleviate unexpected drought conditions in 2014. This water is needed to support irrigation needs and/or M&I uses in the Districts.

1.3 Scope

This EA has been prepared to examine the potential impacts of approving the temporary transfer of up to 5,100 AF of Project water from the Foundation to the Districts from April through February 28 2015. For purposes of this EA, the action area includes four counties: Trinity, Shasta, Tehama, and Glenn (Figure 1.1).

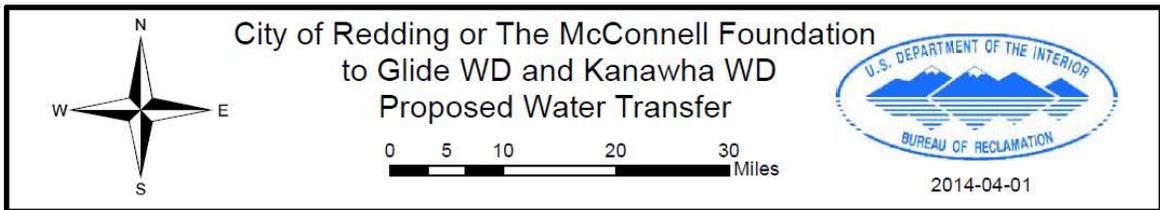
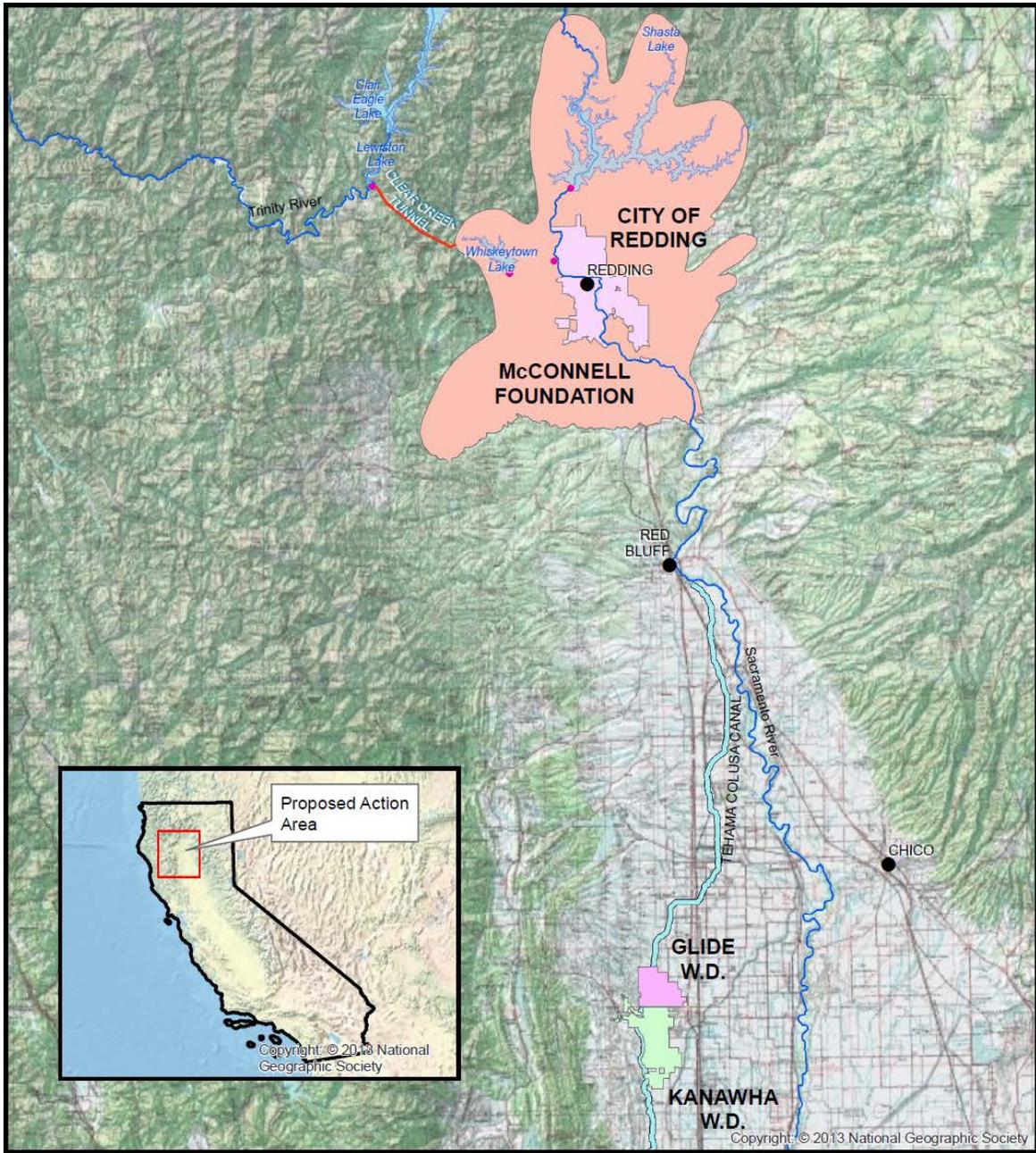


Figure 1-1. Project Site Location

Section 2 Alternatives Including Proposed Action

2.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would consist of Reclamation not approving the transfer of Project water from the Foundation to the Districts. The Districts would be required to operate within the confines of the available water supply that might include groundwater, or acquire water from other willing sellers.

2.2 Proposed Action Alternative

The Proposed Action is approval of the transfer of up to 5,100 AF of Project water from the Foundation to the Districts from April through February 28, 2015. Water made available to the Districts could come directly from the Foundation or indirectly through the Buckeye Contract through the City of Redding, or a combination thereof. In the case of direct transfer, any quantity delivered would be subject to a reduction by a factor 1.786 because this water would be used outside Shasta County (see Contract No. 00-WC-20-1707). In contrast, any Project water transferred through the Buckeye contract would not be subject to a reduction.

The Project water to be transferred would originate at Trinity Lake, be diverted through Carr Tunnel into Whiskeytown Reservoir then through Spring Creek and Keswick power plants into the Sacramento River. This water, minus any potential conveyance loss, would be diverted at the screened Red Bluff Pump Plant (RBPP) into the TCC for delivery to the Districts between mileposts 45 and 58.

In addition, the water transfer would be subject to the following parameters:

- Occur within a single water year.
- Qualify as historic and routine transfers.
- Use existing facilities and operations.
- Maintain existing land uses.
- Provide water for lands irrigated within the last 3 years, groundwater recharge, maintenance of fish and wildlife resources, incidental domestic use, or M&I use.
- Comply with all applicable federal, state, local, or Tribal laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment and Indian Trust Assets (ITAs).
- Occur between willing buyers and willing sellers.

Section 3 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

This section identifies the potentially affected environmental resources and the environmental consequences that could result from the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

3.1 Physical Resources

No adverse impacts to physical resources are anticipated because of this transfer. The transfer water would likely originate at Trinity Lake, be diverted into Whiskeytown Reservoir, and then released into the Sacramento River at Keswick Dam over approximately an 11-month period beginning in April, 2014. Water diverted from the Trinity Basin is used for multiple uses including environmental requirements for cold water in Clear Creek, as outflow from Whiskeytown Dam and Keswick (via the Spring Creek Tunnel) to support water temperature requirements in the mainstem Sacramento River.

The transfer water would result in a minor increase in flow of the Sacramento River until being diverted at the RBPP, a screened pumping plant, from which water would then flow into the TCC to be diverted by the transferee between mileposts 45 and 58 of the TCC. However, the influence would be small and essentially immeasurable regardless of how the Project water becomes available for transfer to the Districts. For example, assuming the delivery of 5,100 AF of transfer water occurred evenly over the 11-month period, the average increase of flow in this reach of river would increase by about 8 cubic feet/second (cfs) from Keswick Dam. Because summer time flows are typically greater than 10,000 + cfs from Keswick in years of drought (e.g 2009 or 2013), this increase would constitute less than a 0.1 percent increase in flow, which is considerably smaller than typical measurement error for stream gages. In the case where some or all of the water would come directly from the Foundation, the percentage increase in flow below Keswick would be even smaller since it would be subject to reduction by a factor of 1.786.

The minor change in flow would not change Project water storage because the Project Water in question would likely be transferred to other users resulting in a similar effect.

The amount of water diverted at the TCC would be the same as that which is released from Keswick Dam to result in a zero-sum action, resulting in no change to flows of the Sacramento River below the point of diversion, which is similar to the No Action Alternative.

No new facilities would be needed to distribute the water. The Project water would be applied to existing agricultural land and/or M&I uses and would be

conveyed through existing facilities, which would avoid any adverse effects on unique geological features such as wetlands, wild or scenic rivers, refuges, floodplains, rivers placed on the nationwide river inventory, or prime or unique farmlands.

3.2 Biological Resources

Several federally listed species are known to inhabit the Project area, which includes portions of Trinity, Shasta, Tehama, and Glenn Counties (Table 3.1). However, Reclamation has determined that the Proposed Action would have no effect on these species or designated critical habitat because conditions of approval maintain existing land use practices. These conditions include: (1) That water subject to transfer would be for irrigation purposes for lands irrigated within the previous 3 years and not lead to land conversion; and/or M&I use; and (2) transfer water would be conveyed through existing facilities with no new construction or modification to facilities. Similarly, aquatic species would not be affected by the Proposed Action because the quantity of water transferred over the period of time would be very small relative to the total flow in the Sacramento River and water diverted into the TCC would be screened so as to avoid impacts to fish species of concern.

Table 3-1. Federally listed species that occur in Trinity, Shasta, Tehama, and Glenn Counties. Source: the California Natural Diversity Database and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife websites.

Species	Status ¹	Effects ²	Summary Basis for ESA Determination
AMPHIBIANS			
California red-legged frog (<i>Rana draytonii</i>)	E	NE	Species absent from Sacramento River Valley floor and from vicinity of the Proposed Action area. No suitable habitat in the Proposed Action area. No change to wetland or riparian habitat
California tiger salamander, central population (<i>Ambystoma californiense</i>)	T	NE	No land use changes would occur to habitat for this species as a result of the action, no conversion of habitat, and no new facilities would be constructed.
BIRDS			
Western yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>)	C	NE	No land use changes would occur to habitat for this species as a result of the action, no conversion of habitat, and no new facilities would be constructed.
FISH			

Species	Status¹	Effects²	Summary Basis for ESA Determination
Central Valley steelhead (<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>)	T, X	NE	No effect to flow of any water way or coldwater resource within the species' range would be affected by the proposed action.
Chinook salmon - Central Valley spring-run (<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>)	T, X	NE	No effect to flow of any water way or coldwater resource within the species' range would be affected by the proposed action.
Chinook salmon - Sacramento River winter-run (<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>)	E, X	NE	No effect to flow of any water way or coldwater resource within the species' range would be affected by the proposed action.
Coho salmon –SONC (<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>)	E, X	NE	No effect to flow of any water way or coldwater resource within the species' range would be affected by the proposed action.
North Amer.green sturgeon (<i>Acipenser medirostris</i>)	T	NE	No effect to flow of any water way or coldwater resource within the species' range would be affected by the proposed action.
INVERTEBRATES			
Conservancy fairy shrimp (<i>Branchinecta conservatio</i>)	E,X	NE	Found or believed to occur Glenn County. No land use changes would occur to habitat for this species as a result of the action, no conversion of habitat, and no new facilities would be constructed.
Shasta Crayfish (<i>Pacifastacus fortis</i>)	E	NE	Only found in the Pit River and Fall River Mills, northeast of action area. No land use changes would occur to habitat for this species as a result of the action, no conversion of habitat, and no new facilities would be constructed.
Valley elderberry longhorn beetle (<i>Desmocerus californicus dimorphus</i>)	T	NE	No land use changes would occur to habitat for this species as a result of the action, no conversion of habitat, and no new facilities would be constructed.

Species	Status¹	Effects²	Summary Basis for ESA Determination
Vernal pool fairy shrimp (<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>)	T, X	NE	No land use changes would occur to habitat for this species as a result of the action, no conversion of habitat, and no new facilities would be constructed.
Vernal pool tadpole shrimp (<i>Lepidurus packardii</i>)	E	NE	Found or believed to be in Glenn County. No land use changes would occur to habitat for this species as a result of the action, no conversion of habitat, and no new facilities would be constructed.
PLANTS			
Hoover's spurge (<i>Chamaesyce hooveri</i>)	T	NE	Found or believed to be in Glenn County. No land use changes would occur to habitat for this species as a result of the action, no conversion of habitat, and no new facilities would be constructed.
palmate-bracted bird's-beak (<i>Chloropyron palmatum</i>)	E	NE	Found or believed to be in Glenn County. No land use changes would occur to habitat for this species as a result of the action, no conversion of habitat, and no new facilities would be constructed.
Colusa grass (<i>Neostapfia colusana</i>)	T	NE	Occurs in vernal pools along the eastern side of the central Sierra Nevada foothills.
hairy Orcutt grass (<i>Orcuttia pilosa</i>)	E	NE	Found or believed to be in Glenn County. Occurs in vernal pools along the eastern side of the central Sierra Nevada foothills.
Greene's tuctoria (<i>Tuctoria greenei</i>)	E	NE	No land use changes would occur to habitat for this species as a result of the action, no conversion of habitat, and no new facilities would be constructed.

Species	Status ¹	Effects ²	Summary Basis for ESA Determination
McDonalds's rock cress (<i>Arabis macdonaldiana</i>)	E	NE	Outside of the project area. No land use changes would occur to habitat for this species as a result of the action, no conversion of habitat, and no new facilities would be constructed.
REPTILES			
Giant garter snake (<i>Thamnophis gigas</i>)	T	NE	Found or believed to occur in Glenn County. No land use changes would occur. Habitat would remain the same and no new facilities would be constructed.
<p>1 Status= Listing of federally special status species, unless otherwise indicated. E: Listed as Endangered. T: Listed as Threatened. X: Critical habitat designated</p> <p>2 Effects = NE = No Effect determination.</p>			

3.3 Cultural Resources

The Proposed Action will not produce any ground disturbances, it will not result in the construction of new facilities or the modification of existing facilities, and it will not result in any changes in land use (See Attachment 1). Reclamation has determined that neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative have the potential to cause effects to historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1).

3.4 Socio-Economic Resources

The transfer(s) would not adversely affect the quality of human environment or public health or safety or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources under any of the alternatives, because they essentially maintain present conditions. Given the criteria for approval of a proposal under this EA, the proposed action would not increase the amount of water available or the amount of irrigated land within the Sacramento Valley. It would merely facilitate efficient use of the resources already in use and help prevent crop losses. Minor shifts in the location of water use would occur, but they would be too small to noticeably affect regional economics.

3.5 Environmental Justice

The transfer would not disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations and communities because this water would help provide water to areas of greatest need.

3.6 Indian Trust Assets

No Indian Trust Assets are served by the water to be transferred under the proposed action and therefore no Indian Trust Assets would be affected (See Attachment 2). Moreover, the transaction would be between a willing buyer and seller and would comply with any applicable Federal, state, local or tribal law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

3.7 Cumulative Impacts

There are no other known past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions that would cumulatively result in significant impacts to the human environment when taking into consideration the actions analyzed in this EA.

Section 4 Consultation and Coordination

4.1 Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1521 et seq.)

Reclamation determined that the Proposed Action would have no effect on federally proposed or listed threatened and endangered species or their proposed or designated critical habitat. Therefore, no consultation was required under Section 7 of the ESA.

Attachment 1.

CULTURAL RESOURCE COMPLIANCE
Reclamation Division of Environmental Affairs
MP-153

MP-153 Tracking Number: 14-NCAO-156

Project Name: Temporary Transfer of Water from the McConnell Foundation to Kanawha and Glide Water Districts in Contract Year 2014

NEPA Document: EA-14-03-NCAO

NEPA Contact: Paul Zedonis, Natural Resources Specialist

MP 153 Cultural Resources Reviewer: William Soule, Archaeologist

Date: 04/08/2014

Reclamation's proposed action is the approval of a 1-year transfer of up to 5,100 acre-feet of Central Valley Project (Project) water from the McConnell Foundation (Foundation) to the Kanawha and Glide water districts (Districts) served by the Tehama-Colusa Canal. This action is pursuant to Sacramento River Settlement Contract No. 14-06-200-7754A-R-1. This is the type of undertaking that does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties, should such historic properties be present, pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 regulations codified at 36 CFR Part 800.3(a)(1).

Water made available to the Districts could come from direct transfer from the Foundation or indirectly through the City of Redding's water service contract, the Buckeye Contract (#14-06-200-5272A-LTR1), or a combination thereof. Water made available to the Foundation for transfer is based upon a pre-1914 right to divert water regardless of Central Valley Project allocations (see Contract No. 00-WC-20-1707). The request from the Districts stems from the reduced rainfall during the winter and spring that resulted in an unprecedented zero allocation of Project water for agricultural use and 50% allocation of Project water for Municipal and Industrial use in the service areas of the Tehama-Colusa Canal.

After reviewing the materials submitted by NCAO, I concur with a statement in EA-14-03-NCAO that neither this proposed action, nor the no action alternative, has the potential to cause effects to historic properties pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1). With this determination, Reclamation has no further NHPA Section 106 obligations. This memorandum is intended to convey the completion of the NHPA Section 106 process for this undertaking. Please retain a copy in the administrative record for this action. Should changes be made to this project, additional NHPA Section 106 review, possibly including consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, may be necessary. Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment.

CC: Cultural Resources Branch (MP-153), Anastasia Leigh – Regional Environmental Officer (MP-150)

Attachment 2.



Zedonis, Paul <pzedonis@usbr.gov>

CR & ITA Review: DEA Water Transfer from McConnell to G/K WDs 04/08/14

RIVERA, PATRICIA <privera@usbr.gov>

Tue, Apr 8, 2014 at 10:49 AM

To: "Zedonis, Paul" <pzedonis@usbr.gov>

Cc: Kristi Seabrook <kseabrook@usbr.gov>, Mary Williams <marywilliams@usbr.gov>

I reviewed the proposed action to approve a 1-year transfer of up to 5,100 acre-feet (AF) of Central Valley Project (Project) water from the McConnell Foundation (Foundation) to the Kanawha and Glide water districts (Districts) served by the Tehama-Colusa Canal. Water made available to the Districts could come from direct transfer from the Foundation or indirectly through the City of Redding's water service contract, the Buckeye Contract (#14-06-200-5272A-LTR1), or a combination of the actions.

The proposed action does not have a potential to impact Indian Trust Assets.

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