UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

MID-PACIFIC REGION

SOUTH-CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AREA OFFICE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

MISSION CREEK SOUTH COAST CONDUIT CROSSING
AND FISH PASSAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Central Valley Project
Sacramento, California

FONSI-09-33

Recommended by:

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Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Mission Creek South Coast Conduit Crossing and Fish Passage Improvement Project

In accordance with the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for the approval of the repair, securing of the South Coast Conduit (SCC) and the reconstruction of the channel bed so that fish may migrate upstream and downstream of the bridge structure. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board and Reclamation's Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declamation/Environmental Assessment (IS/MND/EA) Number 09-33 *Mission Creek South Coast Conduit Crossing and Fish Passage Improvement Project,* dated April 2009, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

The proposed project is composed of two parts. The first part is to repair and secure the SCC. The second part of the project is reconstruction of the channel bed so that fish may migrate upstream and downstream of the bridge structure. No redundant water supply or pipeline exists to convey Cachuma Project water or State Water Project water to Summerland and Carpinteria if the SCC is out of service due to unexpected repairs at the Mission Creek crossing. Thus, a bypass pipeline would be required during project construction Flow in Mission Creek would be diverted into a bypass culvert around the work area. A fish screen would be placed across the channel just upstream of the diversion location to prevent fish from entering the work area while the diversion is installed. Approximately 70 feet of the SCC would be removed and replaced at a greater depth.

The second part of the project entails rehabilitation of the creek bed. The grade would be controlled by constructing two rock riffles with 2-ton angular boulder weirs at their downstream ends. Riffle construction would consist of keystone trenches at the beginning and end of each riffle. Pool construction would utilize rock weirs in conjunction with constricting boulders to provide necessary hydraulic constrictions which aid in creating and maintaining pool depth. The rock weirs on the upstream end of the pools also provide grade control and scour protection for the bridge and pipeline.

The project also includes the implementation of all mitigation measures identified in the IS/MND/EA.

BACKGROUND

The SCC was constructed by Reclamation in 1954, and the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board (COMB) operates the SCC from the north portal at Lake Cachuma to Carpinteria Reservoir. The pipeline supplies approximately 80 percent of the South Coast's water supply. As part of the Phase 2 Reliability Study for the SCC conducted in 2006, seven creek crossings, identified as areas of concern in the 2005 Reliability and Alternatives Study, were evaluated. The Mission Creek crossing, located at approximately pipeline Station 74+00, is about 25 feet downstream of the Highway 192 Bridge, and an emergency (retrofitted) concrete cap to prevent channel bed scour beneath the bridge footings was placed over the pipeline at the then current flow line. The recommended approach was to replace the crossing (along with others) with new pipe encased in structural concrete at a greater depth.

In June 2007, a report prepared for the Santa Barbara County Public Works Department addressing Mission Creek at Highway 192 concluded that the existing concrete apron is a barrier to migrating

salmonids, and should be removed and replaced with a riffle-pool stream bed. The proposed stream improvement for fish passage cannot practically be constructed without relocation of the SCC to a greater depth across Mission Creek. COMB will replace the SCC at Mission Creek and implement the proposed stream channel improvements in one project.

The purpose of this project is to replace a section of the SCC to protect it from damage by scour; remove an existing fish passage barrier; and improve the stream channel to reduce lateral scour of the banks. The beneficial effect of these improvements will be the elimination of the existing jump barrier, the creation of a channel that is passable to fish over a greater range of flows, and protection of the SCC.

Reclamation's finding that implementation of the Proposed Action will result in no significant impact to the quality of the human environment is supported by the following findings:

Findings

Air Quality

The proposed project would produce combustive emissions due to the use of fossil fuel-powered mobile equipment. Additionally, earth-moving activities and the movement of equipment on unpaved surfaces could produce uncontrolled fugitive dust emissions at a rate of about 55 pounds of PM10 per day per acre of disturbed land. Construction activities would only require the concurrent operation of a few pieces of construction equipment. Due to the mobile and intermittent nature of these sources, their emissions would not contribute to substantial ambient impacts at any location. Implementation of County standard dust control measures typically reduces fugitive dust emissions from uncontrolled levels by at least 50 percent. Proposed construction activities would not contribute to exceedance of an ambient air quality standard, and impacts would be less than significant. Additionally, implementation, where feasible, of combustive emission reduction measures recommended by the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (identified in Air Quality Mitigation Measure AQ-1) would further minimize the impact of these emissions.

Water Resources

Extensive modeling was performed to analyze pre- and post-project hydraulic and hydrologic conditions at the project site. The project would not have foreseeable effects on percolation rates, groundwater recharge, or the amount of surface water runoff. The project would include dewatering of the work area by diversion of surface water from immediately upstream of the construction area and pumping of near-surface shallow groundwater from the pipeline trench. The water would be diverted to immediately downstream of the construction area, resulting in no net loss in stream flow. As a result, surface water flow and shallow groundwater flow would be temporarily disrupted during construction. However, because stream diversion would be temporary and absorption rates and amount of surface runoff would not change as a result of the project, impacts would be less than significant.

Construction activities, including removal of the existing concrete apron, pipeline replacement, construction of the step pools, and slope contouring, would result in vegetation removal, disturbance of soils, and temporary exposure of soils to erosion from wind and water. Installation/removal of the diversion and pipeline trench dewatering have the potential to cause turbidity in the creek. In addition, the first flush of water over the reconstructed channel bed would also result in temporary turbidity. Erosion induced siltation of Mission Creek could result in adverse water quality impacts, as turbid water can effect aquatic organisms in the creek. Upon

completion of grading and construction activities, the construction area would undergo a revegetation program, which would help stabilize disturbed soils. Diversion installation and removal would cause a temporary disturbance of the creek bed with rapid dispersal of turbidity. Water from pipeline trench dewatering would be treated (by settling in a Baker tank or similar means) before discharge to the creek but could have effects on downstream water quality. Temporary soil erosion and water diversion/discharge impacts would be mitigated and therefore are not significant.

Geology

The project would involve excavating and temporary stockpiling of soil for pipeline replacement, as well as slope contouring for the proposed fish passage and on the adjacent creek banks. The pipeline trench would be backfilled following construction and excessive grading would not be required for slope contouring. Grading may result in an excess of soil; however, a detailed grading and soil disposal plan would be prepared during final design of the project.

Construction activities, including removal of the existing concrete apron, pipeline replacement, construction of the new grouted rock on the downstream side of the bridge (outside the active channel during low to moderate flows), and slope contouring, would result in vegetation removal, disturbance of soils, and temporary exposure of soils to erosion from wind and water. However, implementation of the project would not result in long-term increases in erosion or soil loss. Upon completion of grading and construction activities, the construction area would undergo a revegetation program. Temporary soil erosion impacts would mitigated to minimize impacts and therefore are not significant.

Biological Resources

Although the proposed project would have long-term benefits to rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife species (specifically steelhead), short-term impacts would occur during construction activities.

Steelhead or rainbow trout are present in the project area and would be affected by construction activities in the creek (removal of the concrete apron, relocation of the pipeline, and improving the fish passage). Individuals within the work area would be captured and relocated to a safe location upstream of the project. Installation of the water diversion system for construction would disturb habitat at the upstream and downstream ends of the diversion. Such disturbances in the channel would result in a temporary increase in turbidity in the stream. Dewatering of the pipeline trench from subsurface flows would also have the potential to increase turbidity downstream of the work area. Effects under NEPA would be positive.

The project would implement mitigation measures to minimize impacts to biological resources. Compliance with the Endangered Species Act will be completed prior to completion of the EA or signature of the FONSI.

Cultural Resources

Because project construction would occur in an active stream channel which has been previously disturbed during construction of the bridge and apron, as well as installation of the South Coast Conduit, it is unlikely that archaeological or historic resources would be impacted by project construction. No structures affected by the proposed project are considered to be a historic property under 36 CFR 60.4, and no archeological sites are recorded or are expected within the project

construction area. (The bridge abutments for the existing bridge would not be affected by project construction.) The proposed project, therefore, would not affect areas that contain or are likely to contain significant archeological resources, historic architectural resources, or traditional cultural resources.

If a determination of "no historic properties affected" for the proposed project is concurred upon by the California State Historical Protection Office, no further compliance (i.e., Indian tribal consultation, monitoring, or a data recovery [mitigation] strategy) under Section 106 or 36 CFR 800 would be required.

However, known archaeological or historic resources are present within or in close proximity to the project site. Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act will be completed prior to completion of the EA or signature of the FONSI.

Noise

The proposed project would result in the generation of temporary construction noise. Temporary project-related noise would occur from the use of construction equipment and construction activity during daylight hours. Installation of the line valve (approximately one week duration) could require work at night to minimize the SCC shutdown period under emergency conditions. Installation of the bypass line across the Tennis Club's driveway (less than one day duration) would be conducted outside business hours for that facility to avoid service interruption to the Tennis Club, resulting in work during one night. Most nighttime work would be with hand tools, would produce low levels of noise and would be of short duration. Nighttime noise could occur for a maximum of six days and would result in a less than significant impact.

Indian Trust Assets

The only federally-recognized Chumash Indian Tribe located in Santa Barbara County, is the Santa Ynez Band of Mission Indians. The closest Indian Trust Asset (ITA) is a Public Domain Allotment, located approximately 20 miles (32 km) west-northwest of the project site. The project would have no affect on ITAs.

Environmental Justice

The proposed project would provide benefits to the local community by reducing erosion and natural creek scour at the bridge apron and reducing a threat to the integrity of the SCC and local water supply. The project would also have environmental benefits by improving migration passage for steelhead. The short-term impacts of proposed project construction would not have a disproportionate effect on environmental justice populations (a disproportionate effect is defined as an effect that is predominantly borne, more severe, or of a greater magnitude in areas with environmental justice populations than in other areas) because no minority or low-income populations are present adjacent to the project site.

Cumulative Effects

Emissions of O3 precursors and PM10 emissions from the proposed construction activities, in combination with emissions from future sources and approved projects in the region, would exacerbate the existing O3 and PM10 nonattainment conditions within Santa Barbara County (County). However, all construction activities would be required to implement standard County dust control measures and construction emissions are included in the County air attainment planning

process. As a result, proposed construction activities would produce less than significant cumulative impacts.

Due to the use of fossil fuel–fired construction equipment, the project would generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, mainly in the form of carbon dioxide. However, due to the relatively low level of proposed construction equipment usage, the cumulative contribution of project GHGs to climate change would be negligible and immeasurable.

No current or proposed cumulative projects have been identified that would also affect Mission Creek. Past projects, however, have adversely affected the creek, including installation of the concrete apron on the downstream side of the Highway 192 Bridge. All significant project impacts would be mitigated to less than significant and the residual project effects would not contribute considerably to cumulative impacts on biological resources.

Projects that result in significant, project-specific, hydrologic impacts are generally considered to also make a significant contribution to corresponding cumulative impacts. However since the proposed action's impacts will be mitigated to a less than significant level there will not be a significant impact on erosion-induced siltation of local creeks and the Pacific Ocean.