

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

MID-PACIFIC REGION

SOUTH-CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AREA OFFICE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

PATTERSON IRRIGATION DISTRICT ONE-TIME DELIVERY OF 2,200
ACRE-FEET OF REPLACEMENT WATER TO DEL PUERTO WATER
DISTRICT

FONSI-08-94

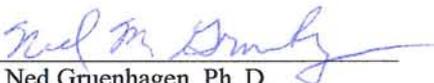
Recommended by:



Michael Inthavong
Natural Resources Specialist
South Central California Area Office

Date: 8/6/2009

Concurred by:



Ned Gruenhagen, Ph. D.
Supervisory, Natural Resources Specialist
South Central California Area Office

Date: 8/6/09

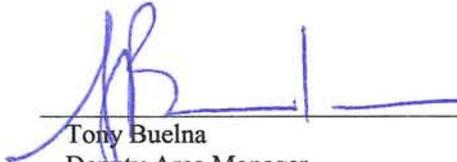
Concurred by:



Laura Myers
Chief, Resources Management Division
South Central California Area Office

Date: 8/6/09

Approved by:



Tony Buelna
Deputy Area Manager
South Central California Area Office

Date: 8/7/09

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Patterson Irrigation District One-Time Delivery of 2,200 Acre-Feet of Replacement Water to Del Puerto Water District

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has determined that the approval of Patterson Irrigation District's (PID) delivery of 2,200 acre-feet (AF) of its Replacement Water to Del Puerto Water District (DPWD), is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an environmental impact statement is not required. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment Number EA-08-94, *Patterson Irrigation District One-Time Delivery of Replacement Water to Del Puerto Water District*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

The State of California (State) has historically experienced periods of drought and flooding. Water agencies strive to prepare for varying water supply conditions to the extent possible so that agricultural or urban water supply needs can be met regardless of the water type. This is done by having a variety of water supply options that can be implemented as needed. Having the ability to move water supplies from an area of greater supply to an area of lesser supply is one strategy that can be useful.

Currently, the State is experiencing unprecedented water management challenges during a third consecutive year of drought. Both the State and Federal water projects are forecasting very low storage conditions in all major reservoirs. Specifically for the Central Valley Project (CVP), additional factors have contributed to the reduction in total water supplies this year. These include: 1) low reservoir water supply conditions coming into 2009 from a dry 2007 and 2008, and 2) limits placed on pumping at the Jones Pumping Plant for purposes of meeting court-ordered delta smelt protections. Based on all these factors, Reclamation declared a shortage in the amount of water available to South-of-Delta contractors for the 2009 Contract Year (March 1 through February 28/29). Due to these challenging times, Reclamation expects to explore options within its authority in order to minimize impacts to those affected by this water shortage.

As a result of a settlement reached between PID and Reclamation for the construction of Friant Dam and partial obstruction of natural flow from the San Joaquin River, PID receives 6,000 AF per year of water, hereto referred to as Replacement Water, from Reclamation via the Delta-Mendota Canal (DMC).

Reclamation received a request from PID, on behalf of DPWD, to approve a one-time delivery of 2,200 AF of PID's Replacement Water to DPWD in order to supplement their limited CVP supply and to help alleviate some of the effects of a critically dry year.

FINDINGS

Water Resources: Reclamation will continue to convey and deliver CVP water to both PID and DPWD via the DMC, pursuant to their respective CVP contracts and as water is available. PID's Replacement Water will continue to be conveyed in the DMC for normal delivery into its turnouts; however, the Proposed Action will include additional points-of-delivery for a portion of the Replacement Water to be diverted into DPWD's existing turnouts. There will be no negative impacts to the DMC or its normal functions and operations. There will be no impacts to the DMC as conditions would remain the same as current conditions.

PID has had an excess water supply in past years and does not expect to pump any additional groundwater as the transfer of 2,200 AF to DPWD will still leave PID with the ability to meet the irrigation needs of its water users. Therefore, there will be no impacts to the underlying groundwater subbasin.

Land Use: PID will continue to use the remaining balance of the Replacement Water as part of their varied water resources to irrigate existing farmlands. PID historically has and will continue to detach lands as a result of landowners requesting municipal and industrial water so that PID can remain an entirely agricultural district. Reclamation has no authority over land use changes in PID and any such change is not a result of the Proposed Action. DPWD would use the Replacement Water to irrigate and maintain their existing permanent crops.

Conditions will remain the same as existing conditions; therefore, no changes to land use will occur in PID and DPWD.

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 would not involve the conversion of any land fallowed and untilled for three or more years. Such actions would require subsequent environmental review. The Proposed Action also would not change the land use patterns of the cultivated or fallowed fields that do have some value to listed species or birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Due to capacity limitations and water quality restrictions in the DMC, there would be no effects on listed fish species. No critical habitat occurs within the area affected by the Proposed Action and so none of the primary constituent elements of any critical habitat would be affected. Any encountered biological resources are likely to be those associated with actively cultivated land. Since no natural stream courses or additional surface water pumping would occur, there would be no effects on listed fish species.

The short duration of the water availability, the requirement that no native lands be converted without consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the stringent requirements for transfers under applicable laws will preclude any impacts to wildlife, whether federally listed or not.

Cultural Resources: The Proposed Action involves redistributing water through existing Federal facilities. There will be no modification of water conveyance facilities and no activities that would result in new construction. There will be no impacts to cultural resources.

Indian Trust Assets: There are no tribes possessing legal property interests held in trust by the United States in the water, nor is there such a property interest in the lands designated to receive the water in the Proposed Action; therefore, this action will have no effect on Indian Trust Assets (ITA). The nearest ITA is the Chicken Ranch Rancheria approximately 45 miles northeast of the project location.

Socioeconomic Resources: The Proposed Action will 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 will remain the same as existing conditions and there will be no impacts to socioeconomic resources.

Environmental Justice: The Proposed Action will not affect low-income or disadvantaged populations within the districts by not causing dislocation, changes in employment, or increase flood, drought, or disease. Employment opportunities for low-income wage earners and minority population groups would be within historical conditions. Disadvantaged populations would not be subject to disproportionate impacts.

The Proposed Action does not propose any features that would result in adverse human health or environmental effects, have any physical effects on minority or low-income populations, and/or alter socioeconomic conditions of populations that reside or work in the vicinity of the Proposed Action. There will be no changes to existing conditions.

Cumulative Impacts: As in the past, hydrological conditions and other factors are likely to result in fluctuating water supplies and this drives requests for water service actions. Water districts aim to provide water to their customers based on available water supplies and timing, all 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. In addition, the Proposed Action is a one-time, temporary transfer; therefore, when added to other water service actions, the Proposed Action will not result in cumulative effects to resources beyond historical fluctuations and conditions.