

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

MID-PACIFIC REGION

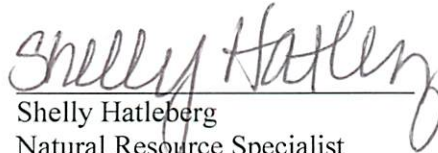
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Yuba City Feather River Fish Screen Project

FONSI 12-03-MP

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RECLAMATION
Managing Water in the West

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
YUBA CITY FEATHER RIVER FISH SCREEN PROJECT
FONSI 12-03-MP**

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and City of Yuba City (City) have prepared a joint Environmental Assessment/Initial Study (EA/IS) for the *Yuba City Feather River Fish Screen Project*, dated November 2009. Since the EA/IS was prepared, there have been no changes to the project description or resources within the Proposed Action area, therefore, this document remains valid.

The loss of juvenile anadromous fish at water diversions in the Central Valley have been identified as contributing to fish population declines. The Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) provides that the Central Valley Project (CVP) shall be operated to meet all obligations under state and Federal law, including the Endangered Species Act (ESA). One of the CVPIA's goals is to at least double the average population levels of anadromous fish in the Central Valley. One measure to help fulfill this goal is to provide funds for the construction of fish screens on unscreened water diversions.

Under the Proposed Action, the City proposes to replace its existing unscreened intake structure on the Feather River (River Mile 28), a tributary to the Sacramento River, with a new screened intake structure facility that meets the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) anadromous fish screen criteria. In 2005, the City expanded its Water Treatment Plant (WTP) capacity to meet their growing population. The completed WTP expansion project resulted in a continuous capacity of 36 million gallons per day (mgd) and a peak capacity of 42 mgd. As a condition of the State Water Resources Control Board's approval of the completed WTP expansion project, the City agreed to replace its unscreened intake structure with a screened intake structure. The new intake and fish screen will be designed according to the historical peak diversions at the existing Yuba City intake.

The Proposed Action for Reclamation includes funding only the fish screen portion of the overall project. Reclamation will provide funding for 50 percent of the total cost of the fish screen's construction through its Anadromous Fish Screen Program (AFSP), which was authorized under Section 3406(b)(21) of the CVPIA. The CVPIA authorizes Reclamation to develop and implement measures to avoid losses of juvenile anadromous fish resulting from unscreened diversions on the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and their tributaries.

FINDINGS

In accordance with NEPA, the Mid-Pacific Regional Office of Reclamation has found that the Proposed Action is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Consequently, an environmental impact statement is not required. This finding of no significant impact is based on the following:

1. **Agriculture and Land Use:** The Proposed Action would not result in changes in agriculture or conflict with zoning for agricultural use or existing Williamson Act contracts nor would it result in the conversion of farmland. No impacts to land uses and/or land use plans would occur as the result of the implementation of the Proposed Action; therefore, the Proposed Action would not have a significant impact on agricultural resources or land use.

2. **Air Quality and Climate Change:** Short-term impacts to air quality may occur during the installation of the fish screen and associated construction activities. The magnitude of air quality impacts associated with gasoline powered vehicles, mobile construction equipment and fugitive dust is considered to be short-term and minor. Minimization and avoidance measures would be implemented during construction activities. Reclamation has determined that the Proposed Action would not have a significant impact on air quality or climate change.

3. **Biological Resources:** The analysis in the EA/IS indicates that the impacts to wildlife would be less than significant with the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures. Impacts to special-status species, including valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB), salmonids and North American green sturgeon, would be avoided or minimized by implementing the measures discussed in the EA/IS, the Action Specific Implementation Plan (ASIP) and the January 18, 2011 Biological Opinion from NOAA Fisheries. Reclamation has consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries on the potential effects of the Proposed Action to listed species regulated under section 7 of the ESA. Reclamation has determined that the Proposed Action "is not likely to adversely affect" VELB, "may affect, is not likely to adversely affect" salmonids or green sturgeon, and would not jeopardize the continued existence of any of these species, critical habitat or Essential Fish Habitat. With the screened intake, there would be an overall net benefit to listed fish species as a result of the Proposed Action. Overall, the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts on biological resources.

4. **Cultural Resources:** The Proposed Action is the type of activity that has the potential to affect historic properties. A records search, a cultural resources survey, and Tribal consultation did not identify historic properties within the area of potential effect. All project activities would result in no historic properties affected pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800.4(d)(1). The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred with Reclamation's determinations and findings on February 11, 2010 and Reclamation concluded the Section 106 compliance process. Since no historic properties would be affected, no cultural resources would be impacted as a result of implementing the Proposed Action.

5. Soils and Geology: Implementation of erosion and sediment control measures as described in the EA/IS would reduce erosion rates during and after construction. Operation of the screened intake structure is not expected to result in changes to erosion compared to existing conditions. The screened intake would be designed to minimize erosion or disturbance to soils and the area disturbed during construction would be stabilized with vegetation or engineered structures as described in the EA/IS. There are no significant impacts to soils and geology associated with the Proposed Action.

6. Water Quality: Short-term increases in turbidity may occur during construction activities; however, the increases would be temporary. Minimization and avoidance measures, as presented in the EA/IS, would be implemented to reduce adverse impacts on water quality in accordance with the water quality certification standards and conditions of the Clean Water Act (CWA) Sections 404 and 401 permits. The Proposed Action would have no significant impacts on water quality.

7. Noise: Short-term impacts associated with noise may occur during construction. Project construction could lead to temporary or periodic increases in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity. However, the project site is in a rural land use area and there are no sensitive receptors in the immediate area. As a result, the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts to noise during construction. Operation of the intake structure/fish screen would require four submersible pumps. Because these four pumps would be submerged and housed in the concrete intake structure, noise levels would be attenuated. Given that this system would be used only occasionally and the distance to the nearest noise sensitive uses is large (0.5 mile), there would be no significant operations-related noise impacts.

8. Environmental Justice: There would be no impacts to minority or low-income populations. The Proposed Action would not disproportionately affect any minority or low income populations. Therefore, no impacts regarding Environmental Justice would occur as a result of the Proposed Action.

9. Indian Trust Assets: The Proposed Action would not affect Indian Trust Assets. The nearest ITA is located approximately 21 miles from the project area, and there are no discernable changes that would occur outside the project area or Yuba City. Therefore, there are no impacts to Indian Trust Assets.