

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Lower Colorado Region
Phoenix Area Office

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

4-Mile Post Lift Station and Pipeline Improvements Project

Pinal County, Arizona

Approved: _____

Leslie A. Meyers
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Date: _____

7/17/17

FONSI No. PXAO-17-01

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, has issued a final Environmental Assessment (EA) to disclose the potential environmental impacts that may result from implementation of the 4-Mile Post Lift Station and Pipeline Improvements Project. The final EA for the proposed project was issued in July 2017, and is incorporated by reference in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The EA and the FONSI have been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law [P.L.] 91-190), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR § 1500-1508), and the Department of the Interior NEPA regulations (43 CFR Part 46).

The Pima-Maricopa Irrigation Project (P-MIP) proposes to expand an existing pipeline easement, and construct a new pipeline and lift station west of Coolidge in Pinal County, Arizona. As described in the final EA, the Project would increase capacity within the San Carlos Irrigation Project (SCIP) Southside Canal, which is the primary water supply for the Gila River Farms. This increased capacity is needed to convey an alternate, pooled water supply that includes Gila River (Globe Equity 59) surface and ground water from the Pima Lateral up-gradient to the Southside Canal to be used should a water shortage be declared on the Colorado River. The proposed project would not increase acreage of irrigated lands.

BACKGROUND

The P-MIP was established by the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) in 1995 to design and construct a water conveyance system to deliver irrigation water to up to 146,330 acres on the Gila River Indian Reservation. P-MIP is a tribal program funded through Reclamation under the authority of the Master Repayment Contract between the GRIC and the United States of America made pursuant to the Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902 (32 Stat. 388), and any acts amending or supplementing it, including the Reclamation Project Act of August 4, 1939 (53 Stat. 1187), the Colorado River Basin Project Act of September 30, 1968 (82 Stat. 885, 43 U.S.C. § 1501), and the Leavitt Act of July 1, 1932 (47 Stat. 564). In addition, the P-MIP is funded through Title II of the Arizona Water Settlements Act of 2004, Public Law 108-451, to rehabilitate and construct the new SCIP delivery system. The original conveyance facilities were begun by Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Irrigation Rehabilitation in the mid-1990s. In 2001, the P-MIP inherited these facilities, and in 2007 completed the original 4-Mile Post lift station and pipeline. The lift station is designed to provide irrigation water during times of water shortage to about 10,450 acres of land under lease to Gila River Farms. Additional background regarding the P-MIP is available in the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Pima-Maricopa Irrigation Project (Reclamation 1997) and the Final EA for the Blackwater Area Project (Reclamation 2003).

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The P-MIP considered acquiring reduced easements for the Proposed Action. However, this alternative would not meet the purpose and need, as it would not adequately encompass infrastructure and support features of the proposed Project.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

A scoping notice soliciting public comments on the Proposed Action was distributed for public review and comment on April 26, 2017. Reclamation received written comments from one agency in response to the scoping notice. The agency comments were considered during preparation of the draft EA.

Reclamation distributed a Notice of Availability and posted the draft EA on the Phoenix Area Office website for public and agency review in June 2017, and accepted comments until July 12, 2017. No comments were received on the draft EA.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS

Based upon the Final EA on the 4-Mile Post Lift Station and Pipeline Improvements Project, Reclamation has determined that the Proposed Action will not significantly impact the human environment, and that preparation of an environmental impact statement is not warranted. This decision is based upon the following considerations:

1. The Proposed Action will have no significant adverse or beneficial environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment including air quality, geology and soils, vegetation, water resources, and wildlife.
2. The Proposed Action will not result in any adverse effects to public health or safety.
3. The project area is not unique within its geographical setting, and is similar to many other areas of federal and private land in the region. There are no wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas, refuges, park lands, or other unique or rare characteristics of the land and aquatic environs that will be affected by the Proposed Action.
4. There are no known scientific or environmental controversies over the effects of the Proposed Action on the human environment.
5. There are no known effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain, or involve unique or unknown risks. Project activities will involve standard construction methods and conventional engineering technologies.
6. The Proposed Action involves construction of a new lift station and improvement of existing infrastructure, and will not establish a precedent for future actions.
7. Cumulative effects of the Proposed Action were considered in the EA. There are no known incremental effects of the action that become significant when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions that have affected, or will affect, the project area.
8. The Proposed Action will not significantly affect districts, sites, objects, or structures listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), or cause loss of significant cultural resources. A Class III survey of the project identified four sites

eligible or recommended eligible for inclusion in the NRHP within, or immediately adjacent to the area of potential effects (APE). The Tribal Historic Preservation Office concurred with the survey report's recommendations and findings on June 19, 2017. One site, GR-1107, will be avoided. No adverse effect to two sites (GR-913 and GR-1579) will result from the Proposed Action as the portions of these sites within the APE lack integrity, and do not contribute to their overall eligibility. Site GR-799 is the historical-period occupation of 4-Mile Trading Post; portions of GR-799 within the APE were previously mitigated and reported on in 2017. An archaeological monitor will be present during all ground-disturbing activities at site GR-799 in order to identify and record any inadvertently discovered cultural remains, and to ensure there is no adverse effect to the site.

9. The Proposed Action will have no effect on federally listed threatened or endangered species.
10. The Proposed Action will not violate any Federal, State, or local environmental laws or requirements.
11. The Proposed Action will provide GRIC members with better access to water rights during times of declared water shortage. No other Indian trust assets will be affected.

DOCUMENTS REFERENCED

- Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). 1997. Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, Pima-Maricopa Irrigation Project. Prepared for U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Arizona Project Office, Arizona.
- , 2003. Final Environmental Assessment, Blackwater Area of the Pima-Maricopa Irrigation Project. Prepared for U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Phoenix Area Office, Arizona.
- , 2017. Final Environmental Assessment 4-Mile Post Lift Station and Pipeline Improvements Project. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Phoenix Area Office, Arizona.