



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Phoenix Area Office
6150 West Thunderbird Road
Glendale, AZ 85306-4001
JUL 24 2022

IN REPLY REFER TO:
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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Memorandum

To: All Interested Persons, Organizations, and Agencies

From: Alexander Smith ALEXANDE
Acting Area Manager R SMITH

Digitally signed by
ALEXANDER SMITH
Date: 2022.07.24
15:16:02 -07'00'

Subject: Notice of Availability (NOA) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed White Mountain Apache Tribe Rural Water System Within the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, Arizona (Action by 45 Days from the Date of Publication of the NOA in the Federal Register)

The Bureau of Reclamation is announcing the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT) Rural Water System for public review and comment. The DEIS analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed Rural Water System and potential alternatives to its operation. The DEIS was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) and the WMAT Water Rights Quantification Act (Title III of the Claims Resolution Act of 2010; Public Law 111-291). The proposed project would include construction and operation of a dam, storage reservoir, water pumping plant, water treatment facilities and a distribution system that would provide water to communities located approximately 180 miles east of Phoenix, Arizona, on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, Arizona (Attachment 1). Reclamation is the lead Federal Agency and the WMAT, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are cooperating agencies.

The proposed Miner Flat Reservoir would hold approximately 8,600 acre-feet of water and the dam would be about 160 feet high and 400 feet in length. Water from the Miner Flat Reservoir would be released to the North Fork of White River, diverted from the stream channel upstream of the community of Whiteriver, and subsequently treated and conveyed via pipeline to downstream Fort Apache Indian Reservation communities. Construction of the distribution system would include 50 miles of new water transmission pipeline. After completion of construction and operation of the new facilities for a period of at least three years by Reclamation, the WMAT would become the titled owner and operator of the completed water system (Attachment 2).

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ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA*, NEVADA*

* PARTIAL

Reclamation solicited input from the public on the proposed action to assist in identifying key issues and defining the scope of the project and environmental analysis. Scoping activities and meetings were originally conducted for the WMAT Rural Water System EIS in 2013, including publishing of the project's Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on September 6, 2013. The Rural Water System project schedule was extended to accommodate additional engineering studies for the new dam. The project was re-started and a new NOI was published in the Federal Register on April 19, 2021, and a public scoping period was re-opened from April 19, 2021 – May 19, 2021. An additional virtual public scoping meeting was held on May 1, 2021.

Reclamation and the WMAT are hosting a virtual public meeting to present an overview of the project and provide an opportunity for public comment on the Draft EIS. The meeting will be held virtually using the Facebook Live platform on Saturday, August 27, 2022, at 10:00 AM PST. The project website (<https://www.wmat-rws-eis.com>) will have a link to access the meeting. The link will be active about one hour before the broadcast. Presentation materials will be posted on the project website following the meeting.

You may download a copy of the Draft EIS, review project information, watch a recording of the virtual public meeting if you miss the live broadcast, and submit comments on the project website (<https://www.wmat-rws-eis.com>) or send written comments to the attention of Mr. Dominic Graziani, Phoenix Area Office, Bureau of Reclamation, 6150 West Thunderbird Road, Glendale, Arizona, 85306-4001, or by email to bor-sha-LCB-WMAT-EIS@usbr.gov. Paper copies are also available upon request by calling Ms. Sonia Holloway, Secretary, at (623) 773-6251 or via email at sholloway@usbr.gov.

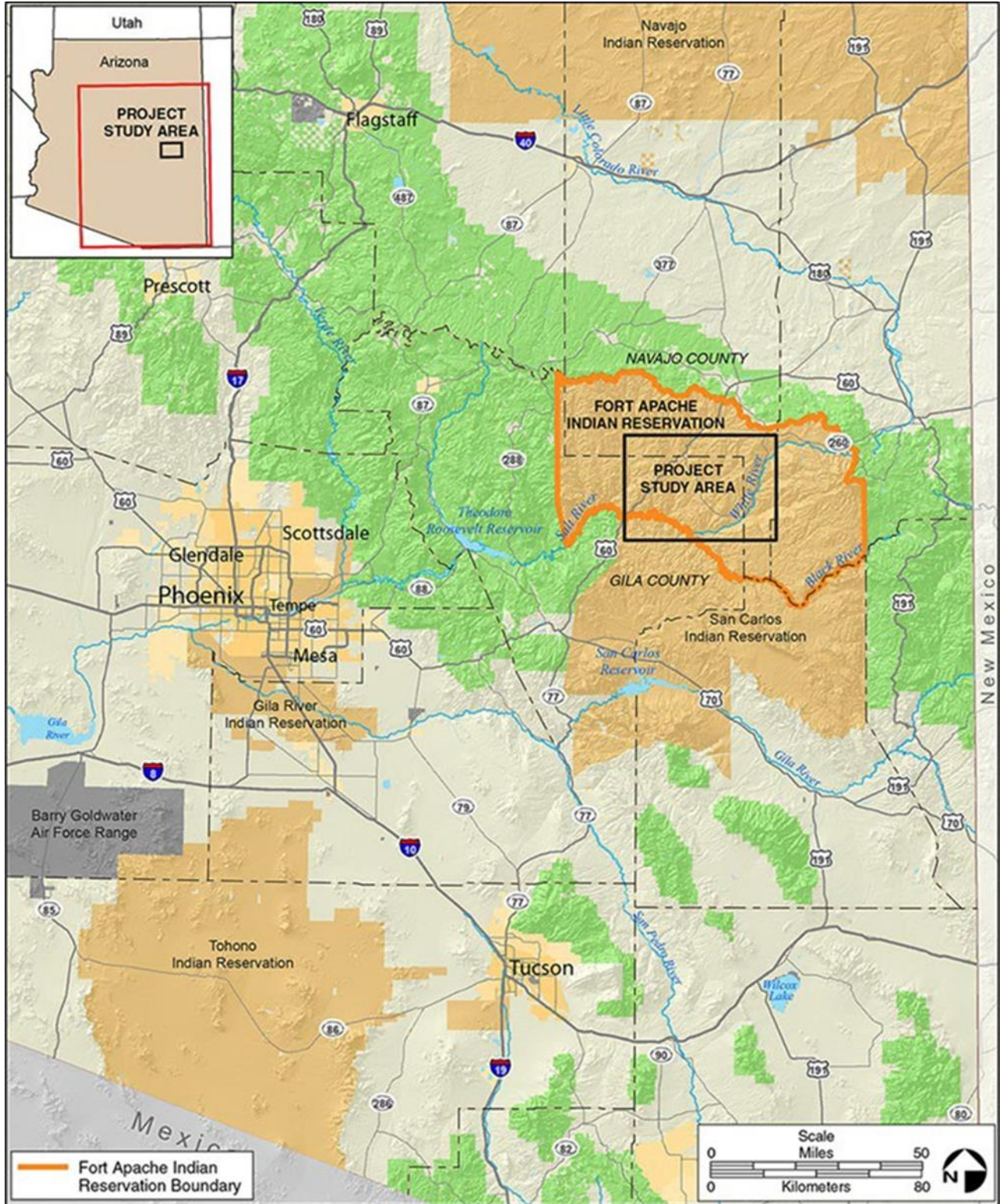
If you have questions, please contact Mr. Graziani, Environmental Protection Specialist, at (623) 773-6216 or via email at dgraziani@usbr.gov.

Thank you for your help and cooperation with this project.

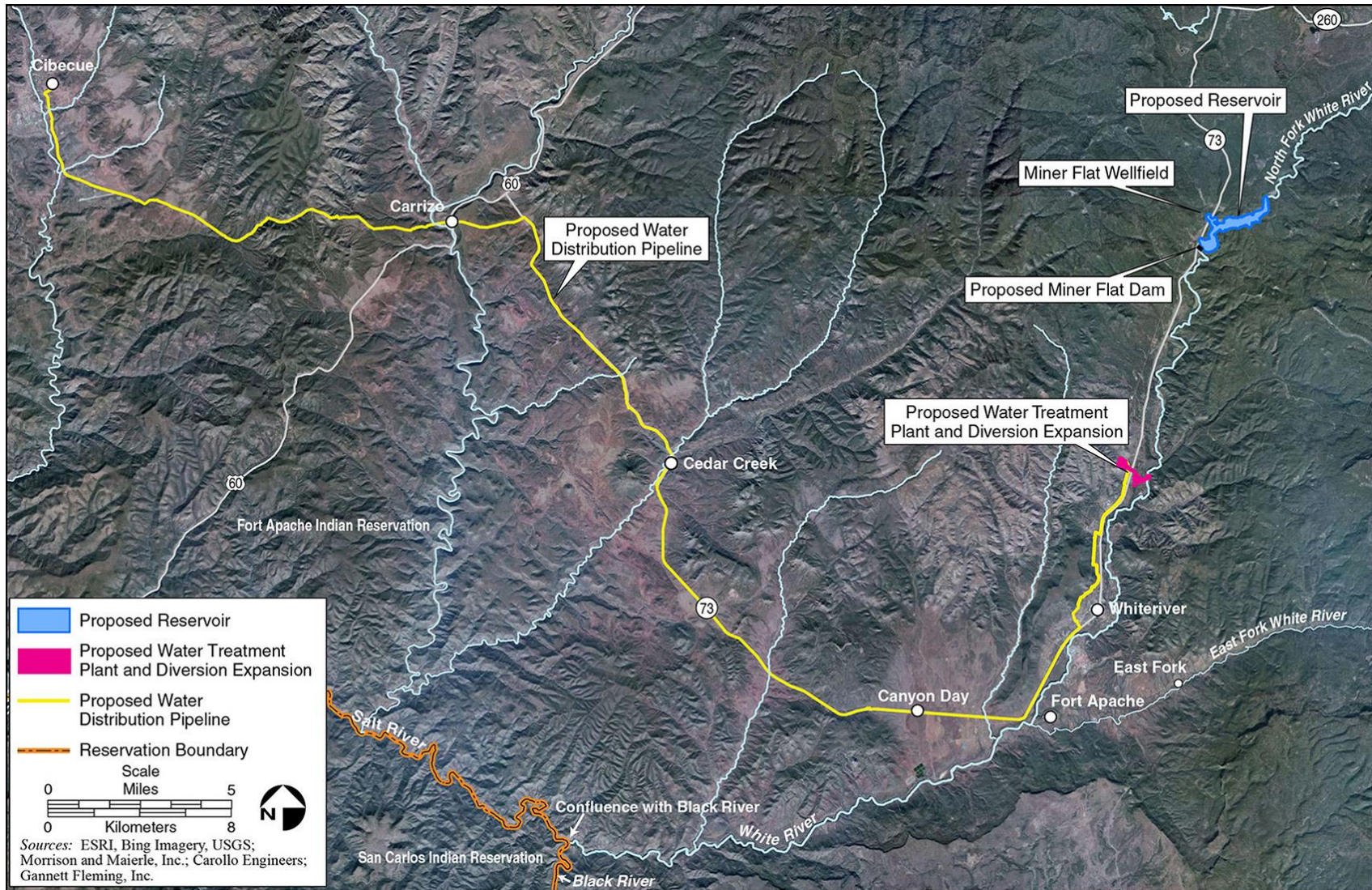
Attachments

Attachment 1: General Location of the Proposed Project

Attachment 2: Major Components of the Proposed WMAT Rural Water System



Attachment 1: General Location of the Proposed Project



Attachment 2: Major Components of the Proposed WMAT Rural Water System