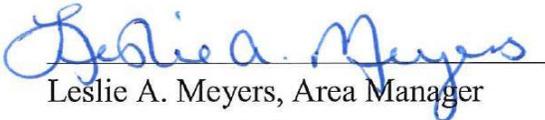


United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Lower Colorado Region  
Phoenix Area Office

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

CASA BLANCA-III LATERAL AND SUB-LATERAL CANALS  
PIMA-MARICOPA IRRIGATION PROJECT  
GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY  
PINAL COUNTY, ARIZONA

Approved:   
Leslie A. Meyers, Area Manager  
Phoenix Area Office  
Bureau of Reclamation

Date: 5/13/19

FONSI No.: PXAO-19-02

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## Introduction

The U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has overseen preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential environmental effects of plans to modernize an extensive irrigation system to serve farmland within the Gila River Indian Community. The existing Casa Blanca Canal, which is owned by the San Carlos Irrigation Project, is one of the major irrigation canals managed by the Pima-Maricopa Irrigation Project. Efficiency enhancements to water distribution equipment on approximately 71 miles of lateral and sub-lateral canal offshoots of the main Casa Blanca Canal would provide reliable water supply to agricultural lands in the Casa Blanca Canal service area. The Final EA for the proposed project is incorporated by reference in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Installation of 2–3 inches of concrete lining to all laterals, construction of a new segment of one of the laterals to straighten its current inefficient alignment, inspection and repair or replacement of existing irrigation canal measurement and control components (e.g., check structures, control gates), and maintenance of all canal access roads and road crossings within the existing permanent irrigation easement would provide flexibility in the service, repair, and operations of the canals and laterals; resulting in reduced overhead, maintenance, and resources necessary to conduct future repairs.

Review by Reclamation is needed to ensure the proposed action complies with appropriate Federal environmental requirements.

## Public Involvement

Reclamation distributed a Notice of Availability to the project stakeholders and posted the Draft EA on the Phoenix Area Office website for public and agency review from February 14, 2019, to March 15, 2019. No public comments were received on the Draft EA; however, the Bureau of Indian Affairs provided comments on the Draft EA. These comments were addressed in the Final EA.

## Major Considerations

The following issues were addressed in the EA and have been taken into consideration in Reclamation's determination of whether a FONSI is appropriate, or an Environmental Impact Statement should be prepared.

1. The proposed actions would take place in areas that are frequently disturbed. The proposed actions would have no significant adverse or beneficial environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment. Impacts to soil, air, biological, cultural, and water resources would be negligible/minor and short-term. Best management practices and environmental commitments would be implemented as part of the proposed actions, as described in Section 3.0 and listed in Section 4.0 of the EA. Beneficial effects to land

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use and environmental justice would include conversion of existing fallow or unused agricultural land being brought into production and a potential increase in jobs.

2. The proposed actions would not adversely affect 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. No significant, adverse impacts to wetlands, wild or scenic rivers, wilderness areas, refuges, park lands, or other unique or rare characteristics of the land and aquatic environment would result from the proposed actions.
4. Effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. There is no scientific controversy over the nature of the impacts identified during the analysis.
5. The project does not have highly uncertain and potentially significant effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.
6. The proposed action does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. No potentially significant effects were identified. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed action and alternatives is described in Section 3.0 of the EA.
7. The proposed action would not result in cumulatively significant environmental effects. A complete disclosure of the effects of the project is contained in Section 3.0 of the EA.
8. The proposed action would not adversely affect districts, cultural sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. A cultural inventory has been completed for the project area. Impacts to documented cultural sites within the area of potential effects would be mitigated through avoidance or monitoring during construction. Reclamation determined that there would be no adverse effect on historic properties.
9. The proposed actions would have no effect on threatened or endangered wildlife species or their habitat because none are known to occur in the project area. This is further outlined in Section 3.9 of the EA. Three federally protected species – Sonoran pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana sonoriensis*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), and Northern Mexican gartersnake (*Thamnophis eques megalops*) – were identified as potentially occurring within or near the study area. However, it was determined that these species would not likely be found in the study area. Therefore, there would be no effect to threatened or endangered species from implementation of the proposed action.

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10. The project would not violate any known Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.
  11. The proposed action would not adversely affect Indian trust assets or limit access to, or ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands.

### **Finding of No Significant Impact**

Based on the attached Final EA, Reclamation has determined that the modernization of the existing Casa Blanca Canal lateral and sub-lateral system would not have a significant effect on the human environment, and an Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted.