

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

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Redfield Canyon Fish Barrier
Graham County, Arizona**

Approved: 
Randy N. Chandler, Area Manager
Phoenix Area Office
Bureau of Reclamation

Date: July 1, 2011

FONSI No. PXAO-11-04

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-90), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior (DOI) NEPA regulations (43 CFR 46), the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), as the lead Federal agency, has issued an environmental assessment (EA) (Reclamation 2011a) to disclose the potential environmental impacts that will result from acquisition of land and construction of a fish barrier in Redfield Canyon, Arizona.

The proposed action will protect existing populations of Gila chub and repatriated populations of loach minnow, spikedace, Gila topminnow, and desert pupfish that reside in upper Redfield Canyon against potential future upstream invasions of nonnative aquatic organisms from the San Pedro River.

BACKGROUND

The proposed action will complement other similar projects being implemented by Reclamation to assist with recovery and conservation of federally listed fish and amphibian species in the Gila River Basin. Reclamation's fish barrier construction program is mandated by a May 15, 2008 FWS biological opinion (BO) that addressed delivery of water through the Central Arizona Project (CAP) and its potential to introduce and spread nonnative aquatic species in the Gila River Basin (FWS 2008).

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Reclamation considered "no action" and the proposed action in the EA. The proposed action was developed by Reclamation to implement a provision of the 2008 CAP BO that requires construction of a fish barrier in Redfield Canyon. The following alternatives were considered during planning.

No Action. Under the no action alternative, Reclamation would not acquire land, construct the proposed fish barrier, or provided funding to the AGFD for monitoring of federally listed warm-water fishes in Redfield Canyon.

Proposed Action. Under the proposed action, Reclamation will acquire a 6-acre tract of land and construct a reinforced, concrete fish barrier in Redfield Canyon, approximately 9.5 miles upstream from the confluence with the San Pedro River. In addition, Reclamation will provide funding to AGFD for native fish restoration and monitoring.

Alternatives Considered But Rejected. Several location alternatives for construction of the fish barrier were considered and eliminated from detailed analysis during planning.

CONSULTATION, COORDINATION, AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Scoping information was posted on Reclamation's Phoenix Area Office web site and distributed to potentially affected individuals, organizations, and agencies on October 8, 2010. Public comments were considered during preparation of the EA and helped guide the development of the proposed action and associated mitigation. The draft EA was mailed to individuals, organizations, and agencies for public comment on May 26, 2011. News releases announcing the availability of the draft EA were sent to the *Arizona Republic* and 12 other news media outlets. The draft EA also was posted on Reclamation's Phoenix Area Office web site. Reclamation received 7 comment letters and e-mails on the draft EA, which are included in Appendix C of the final EA.

Concurrent with development of the draft EA, Reclamation consulted with FWS under section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The possible effects to listed species resulting from implementation of the proposed action were addressed in a Biological Assessment prepared by Reclamation and submitted to the FWS on May 17, 2011 (Reclamation 2011b).

Reclamation also consulted with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in compliance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The following Native American Indian Tribes were notified of the proposed action in consultation letters and scoping notices distributed by Reclamation: Ak-chin Indian Community, Fort Sill Apache Tribe, Gila River Indian Community, Hopi Tribe, Mescalero Apache Tribe, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, San Carlos Apache Tribe, Tohono O'odham Nation, and White Mountain Apache Tribe.

MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS

The following issues have been taken into consideration in Reclamation's deliberation whether a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate, or an environmental impact statement should be prepared.

1. The EA demonstrates that there will be no significant adverse or beneficial impacts on the quality of the human environment including water, air, land use, soil, and cultural and biological resources. Impacts to physical and biological resources will be highly localized and limited to the project area.
2. Public health and safety are minimally affected by the project. The project area is mostly unpopulated and isolated. There will be no disproportionate direct or indirect effects on populations defined in Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice). Appropriate hazardous material management and waste disposal associated with construction will minimize any potential risks to public health, safety, and the environment.
3. There are no wetlands, prime farmland, recommended or designated wild and scenic rivers, refuges, park lands, or other unique or rare characteristics of the land and aquatic environs that will be significantly affected. Although the project area is situated within the boundary of the Redfield Canyon wilderness, the area is not administered as wilderness by the Arizona State Land Department and no adverse effect to wilderness will occur. Aquatic values associated with

the native fish community and threatened and endangered species will be enhanced. Impacts to riparian vegetation will be localized and minor.

4. There are no known scientific controversies over the effects of the proposed action on the human environment. There is no known controversy regarding the effects of this project on the quality of the human environment, based on the analysis and public comments received.

5. There are no known effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

6. The proposed action does not set a precedent for similar projects that may be implemented by Reclamation or other agencies. Reclamation has constructed similar fish barriers on other streams in Arizona.

7. Cumulative effects of the proposed project 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. Class III (intensive) cultural resource surveys of the area of potential effect indicated that no significant historical or archaeological sites will be adversely affected by the proposed action. The SHPO has concurred with no effect and no adverse effect determinations. Reclamation also consulted with Native American Indian Tribes that have possible cultural affinities or other interests in the project area. No areas of traditional cultural importance or areas of specific tribal concern have been identified.

9. The EA demonstrates that federally listed species will not be significantly affected by the proposed action. Construction of the proposed fish barrier is a conservation measure specified by the FWS in the 2008 BO. The FWS determined in the BO that further ESA section 7(a)(2) consultation on listed aquatic species covered under the opinion was not required for fish barrier construction. In addition, the FWS concluded in the 2008 BO that the proposed fish barrier is likely to enhance the critical habitat of Gila chub by reducing threats from nonnative aquatic species. A Biological Assessment prepared by Reclamation concluded non-aquatic listed species would not be affected by the project.

10. The proposed action will not violate any Federal, State, or local environmental laws or requirements. The action will be implemented in accordance with the terms and conditions of Clean Water Act permits and certifications issued under sections 401, 402, and 404.

11. Indian trust assets will not be affected.

12. The mitigation requirements identified in the final EA will be implemented by Reclamation.

Documents cited above:

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). 2011a. Final environmental assessment. Redfield

Canyon fish barrier. Phoenix Area Office, Phoenix, AZ.

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). 2011b. Biological assessment of impacts to listed species from construction of a fish barrier in Redfield Canyon. Phoenix Area Office, Phoenix, AZ.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). 2008. Reinitiated biological opinion on transportation and delivery of Central Arizona Project water to the Gila River Basin in Arizona and New Mexico and its potential to introduce and spread nonindigenous aquatic species. May 15, 2008. Phoenix, AZ.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based upon a review of public comments and consideration of the effects presented in the final EA, I have determined the proposed action will not significantly impact the human environment and that preparation of an environmental impact statement is not warranted. It is my decision to implement the proposed action identified in the final EA.