



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Phoenix Area Office
P.O. Box 81169
Phoenix, Arizona 85069-1169

IN REPLY REFER TO:
PXAO-1500
ENV-1.10

JUL 25 2005

To: All Interested Persons, Organizations, and Agencies

From: Carol Lynn Erwin
Area Manager

Subject: Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the Proposed Land Acquisition Within the Gila River Floodplain Near Fort Thomas for Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Habitat, Graham County, Arizona

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has completed a final EA for the proposed purchase of about 700 acres located within the Gila River floodplain in Graham County, Arizona. The subject property is located about 3 miles southeast of Fort Thomas, just north of U. S. Highway 70. Under the proposed action, Reclamation intends to purchase the subject property, which contains riparian vegetation that is suitable habitat for the federally endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) (willow flycatcher). The property will then be managed by Salt River Project (SRP), under agreement with Reclamation, in perpetuity to benefit the willow flycatcher. There will be no substantive change in the property's current condition. The proposed land purchase by Reclamation and management by SRP would partially fulfill requirements of the Endangered Species Act related to Reclamation's modifications to, and SRP's operation of, Theodore Roosevelt Dam.

The subject EA was prepared consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. A draft of the EA was distributed on May 26, 2005, for a 36-day public review and comment period. The draft EA was distributed to approximately 100 entities, including public agencies, tribal governments, and interested organizations and individuals. Six letters of comment were received. Based upon the draft EA and input received from the public, Reclamation has determined that implementation of the proposed purchase and management of the subject property, to benefit the willow flycatcher in perpetuity, will not significantly impact the environment, and a FONSI is appropriate. A copy of the FONSI and final EA are attached. The final EA includes revisions that have been made to the draft EA to address comments received and includes copies of the comment letters received and Reclamation's responses.

Thank-you to everyone that participated in this process. Your interest in the project is appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Sandra Eto of the Environmental Resource Management Division at 602-216-3910.

Attachment