

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

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

CENTRAL ARIZONA PROJECT CANAL TRAIL:
TANGERINE ROAD to PINAL COUNTY LINE

May 2018

Approved: _____


Leslie Meyers, Area Manager
Phoenix Area Office

Date: _____

6/15/18

Acting For

Bureau of Reclamation

FONSI No. PXAO-18-01

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-90), Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR §§ 1500-1508), Department of the Interior NEPA regulations (43 CFR Part 46), the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has issued a final Environmental Assessment (EA) to disclose the potential environmental impacts that would result from implementation of a proposed recreational trail along the Central Arizona Project (CAP) canal within Pima County. The final EA is incorporated by reference.

The proposed trail would begin at Tangerine Road and extend north towards the Pinal County line, a distance of approximately 7 miles. The trail would be located on the berm along the eastern side of the CAP canal, which is outside the security fence but on an existing maintenance road. Recreation opportunities would be limited to pedestrian, equestrian, and bicyclist access, with no motorized vehicles permitted on the trail. The project includes construction of a 2-acre trailhead parking lot on the north side of Tangerine Road. The operation and maintenance of the trail and trailhead would be conducted in accordance with the Operations and Maintenance Agreement between Reclamation and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, signed in June 2000, and the proposed Management and Development Plan between Pima County and Reclamation.

BACKGROUND

As part of the original plan for the construction of the CAP canal, Reclamation anticipated the development of a recreational trail along the entire 336-mile length of the canal that would accommodate walking, bicycling, jogging, and equestrian use. The trail was considered before portions of the CAP canal were constructed and included in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CAP Granite Reef Aqueduct (January 1974). It was revisited in subsequent EISs for the Tucson Aqueduct Phases A and B. The Records of Decision were issued February 1983 and August 1984, respectively. The EISs examined a proposed trail along the downslope corridor of the canal. In 2003, the recreation trail along the CAP was designated as a National Recreation Trail by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

Approximately 60-miles of the CAP is located in Pima County, Arizona. In 1986, Pima County entered into a 50-year Recreational Land Use Agreement (Recreation Agreement) with Reclamation to develop a recreational trail that would utilize the CAP right of way along the Tucson Aqueduct. Over time, the Recreation Agreement has been amended to specify future trail related development projects and the cost-sharing approach for such development. The first amendment to the Recreation Agreement, dated April 1997, was for cost sharing of Sandario Road Trailhead. The second amendment, dated September 2007, outlined the cost-sharing approach for the development of a CAP Trail Master Plan and for the development of additional trail-related features, specifically the Tangerine and Avra Valley Trailheads. The second amendment also included the cost-sharing approach for the construction of the trail from (1) Tucson Mountain Park Well Site to the Sandario Trailhead facility and (2) Tangerine Trailhead to the Pima-Pinal County line. As a result of the second amendment to the Recreation Agreement, Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department developed a CAP Trail Master Plan (Master Plan) in December 2008. The Master Plan serves as a guide for

the phased design and construction of the CAP Trail through Pima County. Within the Master Plan, the approximate 60-mile long recreational trail is broken up into ten segments. To date, only the Sandario Road Trailhead has been constructed. This EA evaluates the Tortolita Segment. The remaining segments will be evaluated under subsequent NEPA once the site-specific project details are identified.

As part of the CAP Operations & Maintenance Agreement between Reclamation and CAWCD, a list of environmental commitments are summarized, one of which includes an Interim CAP Right-of-way Land Use Policy. The Land Use Policy designates areas upslope of the CAP canal as mitigation areas, which were set aside to offset impacts associated with the construction of the canal. Lands within 25 feet or more of the upstream toe of any upslope embankment are jointly used for embankment and mitigation. The proposed alignment for the trail is located just west of the CAP mitigation property.

MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS

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

1. The Proposed Action will have no significant adverse or beneficial environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment including land use and recreation, cultural resources, and biological resources.
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 2-acre parking lot and the establishment of 7-mile recreation trail along the CAP Canal, 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 three sites eligible or recommended eligible for inclusion in the NRHP within, or immediately adjacent to the area of potential effects (APE). The Proposed Action is located on the berm of the CAP Canal, which consists of fill material that was likely excavated during the construction of the CAP canal. As such, it is highly unlikely that *in situ* artifacts or archaeological features would be present within the berm or that implementation of the Proposed Action would have a direct impact on any potentially NRHP-eligible components of the three sites identified. Indirect impacts to the archaeological sites that occur immediately adjacent to the Proposed Action could include damage by off-trail travel. In order to reduce potential impacts to adjacent cultural sites, the Proposed Action includes the posting of signs to indicate the prohibition of off-trail use and the implementation of a monitoring program for unauthorized visitation and/or disturbance to the archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity of the project.
9. The Proposed Action will have no effect on federally listed threatened or endangered species or critical habitat.
10. A Management and Development Plan will be developed for this portion of the CAP trail (Tortolita Segment) and will include the mitigation requirements identified in the EA. The mitigation requirements identified in the EA will be implemented by Pima County, CAWCD, Reclamation, and any third party agreement entity.
11. The Proposed Action will not violate any Federal, State, or local environmental laws or requirements.
12. The Proposed Action will not affect any Indian trust assets.
13. The Proposed Action will not limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007).
14. There will be no disproportionate high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations, as defined in Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice).

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based upon the attached Final EA, Reclamation has determined that the opening of approximately 7 miles of recreational trail (Tortolita Segment) along the CAP canal maintenance road and the installation of a 2-acre trailhead parking lot within Pima County will not significantly impact the human environment, and that preparation of an environmental impact statement is not warranted.

DOCUMENTS REFERENCED

- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. 1974. Environmental Impact Statement for the CAP Granite Reef Aqueduct: A Feature of the Central Arizona Project.
- . 1983. Environmental Impact Statement for Tucson Aqueduct Phase A.
- . 1984. Environmental Impact Statement for Tucson Aqueduct Phase B.
- . 1986. Recreational Land Use Agreement between the United States of America and Pima County, Arizona: For Public Recreational Development and Use of a Portion of the Tucson Aqueduct of the Central Arizona Project, Pima County, Arizona.
- . 1997. Amendment to the Recreational Land Use Agreement between the United States of America and Pima County, Arizona.
- . 2000. Operating Agreement between the United States of America and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District for the Operation and Maintenance of the Central Arizona Project.
- . 2007. Amendment No. 2 to the Recreational Land Use Agreement between the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation and Pima County, Arizona.
- . 2017. Draft Environmental Assessment - CAP Canal Trail: Tangerine Road to Pina County Line. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado Region, Phoenix Area Office.