



FALL 2013

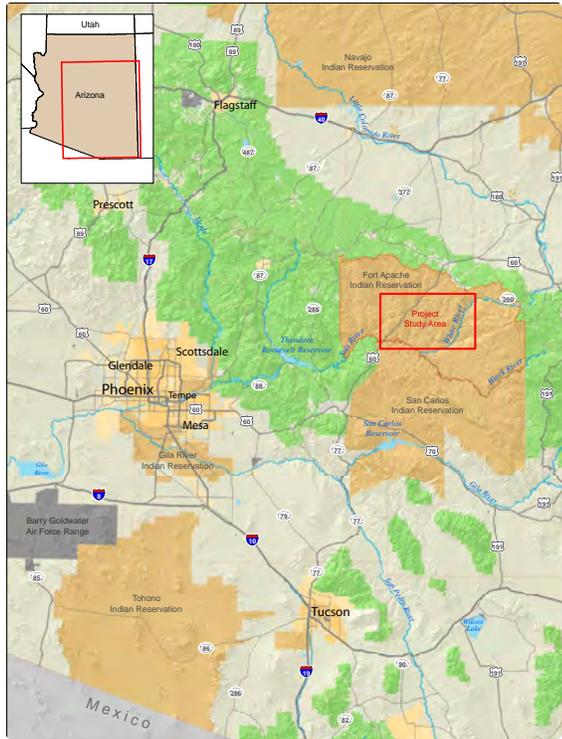
WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE RURAL WATER SYSTEM Project Overview



An environmental impact statement (EIS) is now being prepared to assess the potential environmental effects of constructing the White Mountain Apache Rural Water System to divert, store, and distribute water from the North Fork of the White River for the use and benefit of the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT or Tribe). The Proposed Action would include construction and operation of

the WMAT Rural Water System, which includes a dam, storage reservoir, pumping plant, treatment facilities, and a distribution system that would provide water to communities located on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, Arizona, including Whiteriver, Fort Apache, Canyon Day, Cedar Creek, Carrizo, and Cibecue.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is the lead federal agency, and the WMAT and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are cooperating agencies.



▶ WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE WATER RIGHTS QUANTIFICATION ACT OF 2010

The Proposed Action is the outcome of the WMAT Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 (Act) in which Congress directed Reclamation to plan, design, and construct the WMAT Rural Water System.

The Act also provides for operation of the completed system by Reclamation for three years following construction, after which WMAT would own, operate and maintain the water system.

▶ PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSAL

Since the early 2000s, the Whiteriver area has experienced water outages, declining water quality and a diminishing water source. The WMAT needs a dependable and sustainable water supply for the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

The Proposed Action would fulfill Reclamation's statutory mandate under the WMAT Water Rights Quantification Act to plan, design, construct, operate, maintain, and replace the WMAT Rural Water System until it is transferred to the Tribe as provided in the Act.

For the WMAT, the purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide a secure, safe and dependable, good-quality, fresh water supply for its communities and tribal members.

▶ PROJECT BENEFITS

This project would replace a failing groundwater supply and ensure a long-term and reliable fresh water supply for the Tribe well into the future.

The project could also provide multipurpose benefits, including commercial water supply, recreation, hydropower potential, limited flood control, irrigation, improved instream flows for riparian and aquatic habitat, and stream temperatures suitable for production of endangered Apache trout at the Alchesay National Fish Hatchery.

WHICH AGENCIES ARE INVOLVED IN THE EIS?



The Bureau of Reclamation is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) lead agency because of its statutory requirement to implement the Proposed Action



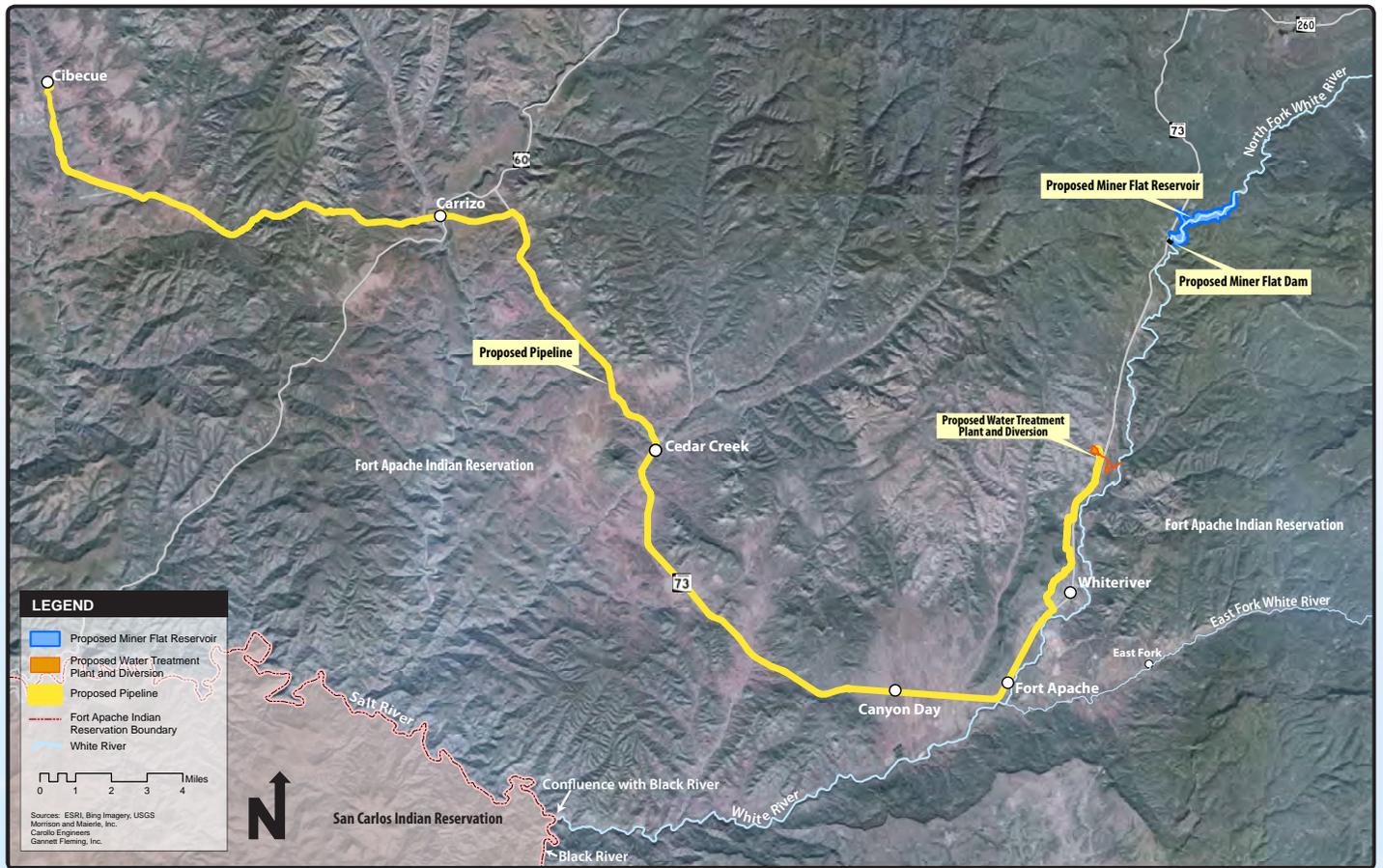
WMAT is a NEPA cooperating agency because it is the statutory owner/beneficiary of this project



Bureau of Indian Affairs is a NEPA cooperating agency because of its statutory responsibility regarding Indian Trust Assets

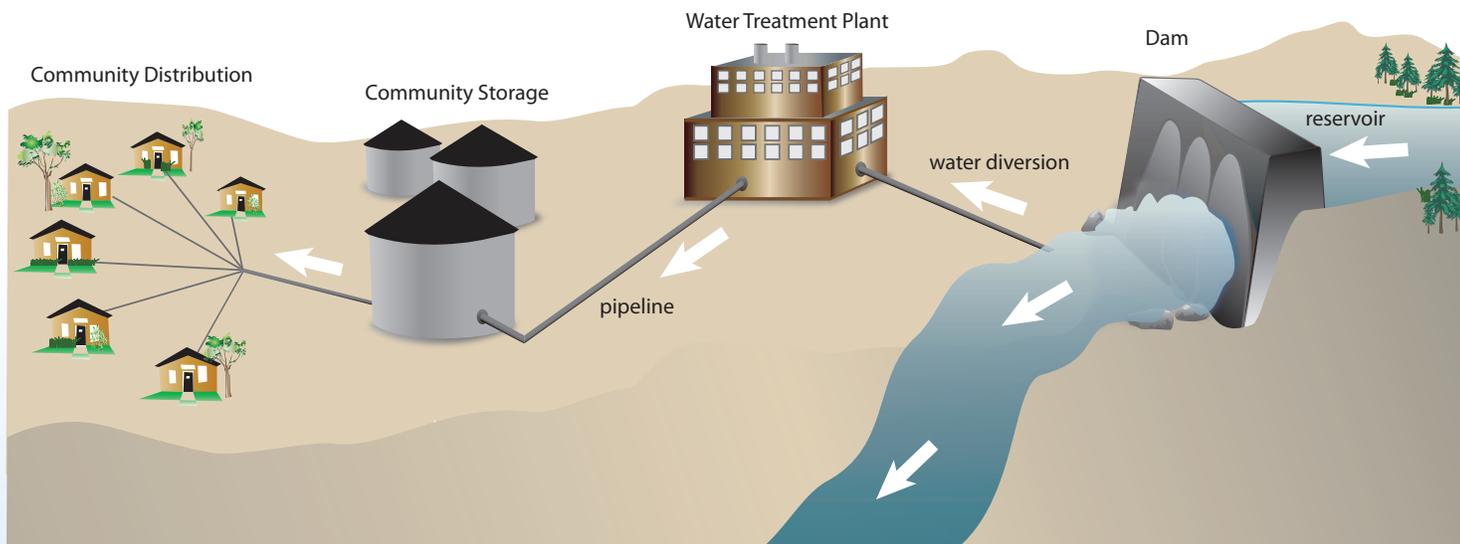


Project Overview Map





What a Proposed Water System Would Look Like



Project Components

▶ THE DAM AND RESERVOIR

- The proposed dam site is about 7.5 miles south of the intersection of Highway 260 and Indian Route 73, about 12 miles north of Whiteriver.
- The proposed Miner Flat Dam, a roller compacted concrete dam, would be about 160 feet in height, and would have a crest length of 450 feet.
- The reservoir created by the dam would have a surface area of about 160 acres at an elevation of about 6,062 feet, and a storage capacity of about 8,620 acre-feet.
- The dam and reservoir would provide long-term stability and reliability in water diversions for the water distribution system. The dam would also release water back into the North Fork of the White River.
- The dam site would have new access roads, associated facilities for operations and maintenance, and possible recreational facilities.

▶ WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

- The project would install a pipeline from the treated water storage site at the WTP to existing water distribution systems serving the communities of Whiteriver, Fort Apache, Canyon Day, Cedar Creek, Carrizo, and Cibecue.
- The distribution system consists of 60 miles of new pipeline, storage tanks for each of the receiving communities, and pumping stations.
- The pipeline alignment would mostly follow existing roadways (except between Carrizo Creek and Cibecue Ridge).

▶ DIVERSION/WATER INTAKE AND WATER TREATMENT PLANT (WTP)

- The water treatment system is designed to treat 14.55 million gallons of water per day.
- WTP options include expanding the existing plant, building a new plant, or a combination of the two. Expanding the existing WTP is currently the preferred alternative.
- The expanded system would require a new raw-water intake from the North Fork of the White River at a site near the existing intake and pump station. Water would be conveyed in a 24-inch pipeline to the WTP.
- Treated water would be delivered to storage tanks via a gravity or pressurized pipeline.
- During the 4- to 5-month WTP construction phase, communities would continue to be served by the Miner Flat wells.



Answers to Your Questions

Below are responses to questions that many people may have. We encourage you to ask additional questions which may not be listed below.



Why can't we continue to rely on groundwater?
Groundwater sources have declined and production does not meet peak needs of the WMAT residents. Due to drought and drawdown of groundwater aquifers, this source has a finite life span, and is not expected to maintain a reliable supply of water for all of the Tribe's needs into the future.
How would this change how I'm getting my water now?
There would be no change in how you receive your water; however, your water supplies and tap pressure should be more regular, consistent, and dependable. You would continue to get water from your community distribution system. The proposed project does not include any changes, upgrades or expansions to the local water distribution system of each of the receiving communities.
If I am a tribal member and not on a water distribution system now, will this project bring water to me?
This project is to improve the existing water system for those on the reservation who are currently part of the system. WMAT may fund other projects to improve local distribution to residents in rural communities on the reservation, but these are not part of projects specified in the Act, and would be separately funded.
When will the project be built?
Construction of the project would not begin until after the signing of the Record of Decision on this EIS. The EIS Record of Decision is currently scheduled for Summer 2015.
What changes could I expect during construction?
During construction, water supplies from the existing water treatment plant would be interrupted; however, residents would continue to receive water from the existing ground water supply provided by the Miner Flat wells. During construction there may be temporary road narrowing to one lane at some construction sites and increased traffic from construction workers and heavy vehicles and equipment.
Who would own the rural water system?
WMAT would own the completed rural water system, following successful operation of the system by Reclamation for a period of three years, and after providing the Tribe with technical assistance to operate and maintain the system. After completion of the three-year period, the United States Secretary of the Interior would convey title to the Rural Water System to the WMAT after all the operating, monitoring criteria, procedures and emergency action plans are in place.
How would the Tribe pay to operate the new water system?
The Act provides for a Maintenance Fund (\$50 million) for the ongoing maintenance and operating costs of the Rural Water System. The Secretary of the Interior would manage the Maintenance Fund in accordance with the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act of 1994 system. Withdrawals by the Tribe would be in accord with an approved tribal management plan.



The National Environmental Policy Act

NEPA is our national mandate for making informed decisions while considering environmental impacts. When Federal agencies propose projects having the potential to significantly impact the environment, NEPA requires the following process be undertaken as part of the planning process before final decisions are made:

- Evaluation and consideration of potential environmental consequences for proposals that may significantly impact the environment.
- Consideration of public and government agency comments.

Where the potential for significant environmental impacts exists, this evaluation is presented in an EIS, which:

- Identifies and describes the affected environment.
- Evaluates the potential environmental consequences from a range of reasonable alternatives.
- Identifies environmental permits and specific mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, or reduce environmental impacts if required.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE AREAS

Reclamation, WMAT and BIA understand the potential for the WMAT Rural Water System to affect environmental resources. As part of the EIS process, Reclamation, WMAT and BIA would analyze potential environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action, including construction and operation of a dam, reservoir, raw-water intake, treatment facilities, and water distribution system to communities on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation in east-central Arizona.

The environmental resource areas under consideration in the process include:

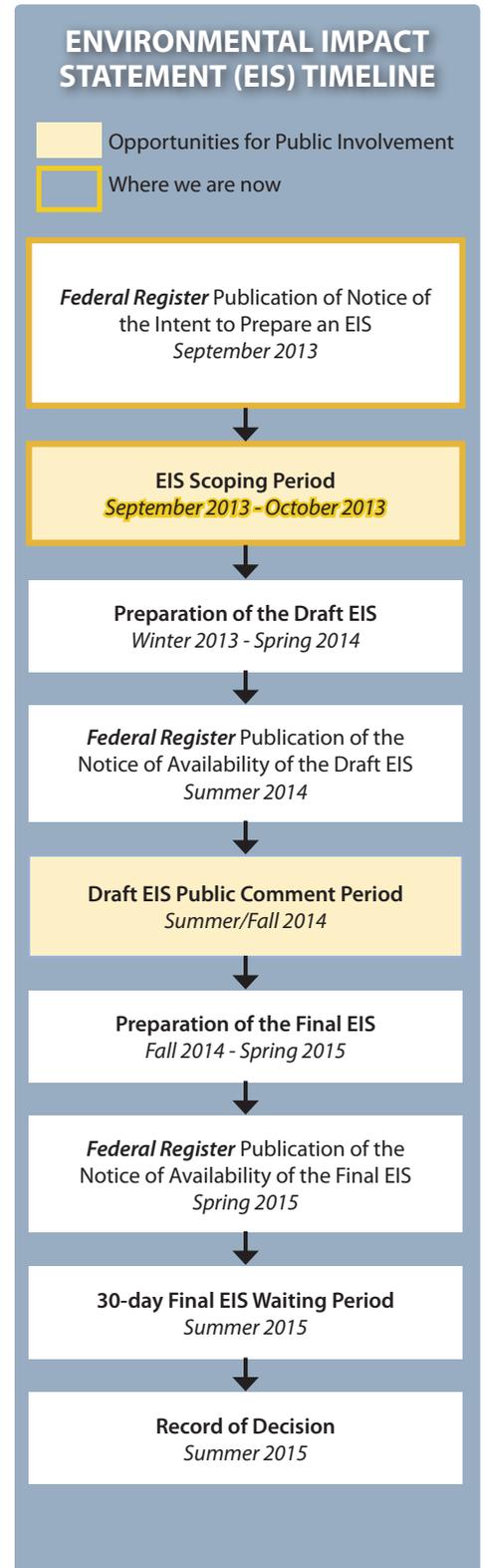
- Hydrology and Water Resources
- Air Quality/Greenhouse Gases
- Biological Resources
- Noise
- Cultural Resources
- Aesthetics/Visual Resources
- Recreation
- Public Services
- Energy
- Land Use
- Forest Timber/Agricultural Resources
- Community/Socioeconomic effects
- Traffic/Circulation
- Environmental Justice
- Soil/Geology/Paleontology
- Indian Trust Assets
- Hazardous Materials

NOTICE OF INTENT AND SCOPING

The EIS process begins with publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register to prepare an EIS. The NOI provides basic information on the Proposed Action in preparation of scoping, which is an early and open process for:

- Actively bringing the public into the decision-making process.
- Determining the scope of issues to be addressed.
- Identifying the major issues related to a Proposed Action and alternatives.

Scoping begins before any significant analysis is completed and public participation is an integral part of scoping. The purpose of soliciting public comments is to identify interested parties and relevant issues so they can be addressed in the EIS.





WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are proposing to construct a dam, storage reservoir, pumping plant, treatment facilities, and a distribution system using water from the North Fork of the White River on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. This project would ensure a long-term, reliable and sustainable water supply for residents and businesses on the Reservation. As part of scoping and initiating the environmental impact analysis process, Reclamation, WMAT and BIA request your input on issues of concern regarding this proposed action.

Please attend our September meetings

To learn more and provide your comments on environmental issues relative to the proposed action, WMAT and the agencies are hosting two meetings:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Friday September 20, 2013	6-9 PM	Cibecue Complex – Feeding Center 6 West 3rd North Cromwell Road Cibecue, Arizona, 85911
Saturday September 21, 2013	9 AM - 12 NOON	Whiteriver Unified School District Office - Training Room II 963 South Chief Avenue Whiteriver, Arizona, 85941

Comments can be submitted at either meeting.

Written comments can also be mailed or e-mailed by **October 28, 2013** to:

Mr. John McGlothlen
Bureau of Reclamation
6150 West Thunderbird Road
Glendale, AZ 85306-4001

e-mail: jmcglothlen@usbr.gov (use "Scoping Comments" for the subject)

Additional information can be found on Reclamation's Phoenix Area Website:

www.usbr.gov/lc/phoenix

– look for the link for the WMAT Rural Water System Project.

We look forward to and thank you for your participation.