



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Lower Colorado Region
Phoenix Area Office
6150 West Thunderbird Road
Glendale, AZ 85306-4001

IN REPLY REFER TO:

PXAO-1500
ENV-7.00

SEP 05 2013

MEMORANDUM

To: All Interested Parties

From: Randy N. Chandler
Area Manager

Subject: White Mountain Apache Tribe Rural Water System Environmental Impact Statement -
Project Scoping

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Bureau of Reclamation as lead Federal agency, along with the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) as cooperating agencies, are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the potential environmental impacts of constructing the WMAT Rural Water System to divert, store, and distribute water from the North Fork of the White River for the use and benefit of the WMAT. The Rural Water System would serve the purpose of providing a long-term, dependable, and sustainable water supply for residents and businesses on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, Arizona. The proposed action includes construction of a dam, storage reservoir, pumping plant, treatment facilities, and a distribution system.

This action would be implemented pursuant to the WMAT Water Rights Quantification Act (Title III of the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 [Act]), in which the United States Congress mandated Reclamation to plan, design, and construct the WMAT Rural Water System. In addition, the Act requires Reclamation to operate and maintain the completed system for 3 years following construction. After the 3-year period, the WMAT would take over ownership, operation, and maintenance of the water system. A brief description of the proposal is provided in Attachment 1 of this memorandum. Additional information can be accessed at www.usbr.gov/lc/phoenix/.

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. Two scoping meetings have been scheduled in the communities of Cibecue and Whiteriver, Arizona, on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. During the scoping meetings, Reclamation, WMAT, and BIA will present information about the proposed action, invite comments on environmental issues relative to the EIS, and solicit alternatives to the proposed action that could be considered and analyzed in the EIS. The schedule for the scoping meetings is as follows:

- **Friday, September 20, 2013** – 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Cibecue Complex – Feeding Center, 10 West 3rd North Cromwell Road, Cibecue, Arizona 85911
- **Saturday, September 21, 2013** – 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Whiteriver Unified School District Office - Training Room II, 963 South Chief Avenue, Whiteriver, Arizona 85941

Each meeting will include a brief presentation on the proposed action, and an opportunity to comment in an open-house format before and after the presentation. At the meetings, comments will be accepted in writing or by audio recording.

In addition to attending the scheduled public scoping meetings, you are welcome to submit written comments at any time during the comment period. Comments must be submitted by **October 28, 2013**, to ensure that appropriate inputs are reflected in the EIS; however, the agencies and WMAT will continue to accept comments throughout the environmental analysis process. Written comments may be sent via U.S. mail or e-mailed to the attention of Mr. John McGlothlen, Phoenix Area Office, Bureau of Reclamation, 6150 West Thunderbird Road, Glendale, Arizona 85306-4001 or jmcglothlen@usbr.gov.

Before including your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

If you plan to attend a scoping meeting and require special assistance, please contact Ms. Jessie Haragara at 623-773-6251 or e-mail at jharagara@usbr.gov. Please notify Ms. Haragara at least 2 weeks in advance of the meeting to enable Reclamation to secure the needed services. If a request cannot be honored, the requestor will be notified.

Thank you for participating in this environmental review process.

Attachment 1 – Project Background and Map



ATTACHMENT 1

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT or Tribe) of east-central Arizona has been working to develop a reliable and high quality water supply system for several decades, having previously depended on limited ground water sources. 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 residents and businesses on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

The WMAT Water Rights Quantification Agreement was confirmed by the United States Congress in the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-291, Title III, 124 STAT 3064, 3073 [2010]). This Act authorized and directed the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to construct the WMAT Rural Water System to divert, store, and distribute water from the North Fork of the White River to the WMAT. Section 304(c) of the Act designated Reclamation as the lead Federal agency with respect to ensuring compliance with applicable environmental laws and regulations associated with implementation of the WMAT Rural Water System.

The proposed action would include construction and operation of the WMAT Rural Water System, including 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, including Whiteriver, Fort Apache, Canyon Day, Cedar Creek, Carrizo, and Cibecue. The construction of the Miner Flat Dam, a roller-compacted concrete dam, would create a new reservoir called the Miner Flat Reservoir. Water from the Miner Flat Reservoir would be released to the North Fork of White River, diverted from the stream channel upstream from the community of Whiteriver, and subsequently treated and conveyed via pipeline to downstream Fort Apache Indian Reservation communities. While the primary objective of the reservoir would be to provide a more reliable and sustainable fresh-water supply to WMAT residents and businesses, the project is anticipated to provide multipurpose benefits, including recreational opportunities, hydropower potential, limited flood control, irrigation, improved in-stream flows for riparian and aquatic the habitat, and improved stream temperatures for production of trout at the Alchesay National Fish Hatchery.

The proposed action would fulfill Reclamation's statutory mandate under the Act to plan, design, and construct, as well as to operate, maintain, and replace the WMAT Rural Water System until the date on which title to the WMAT Rural Water System is transferred to the Tribe as provided in the Act.

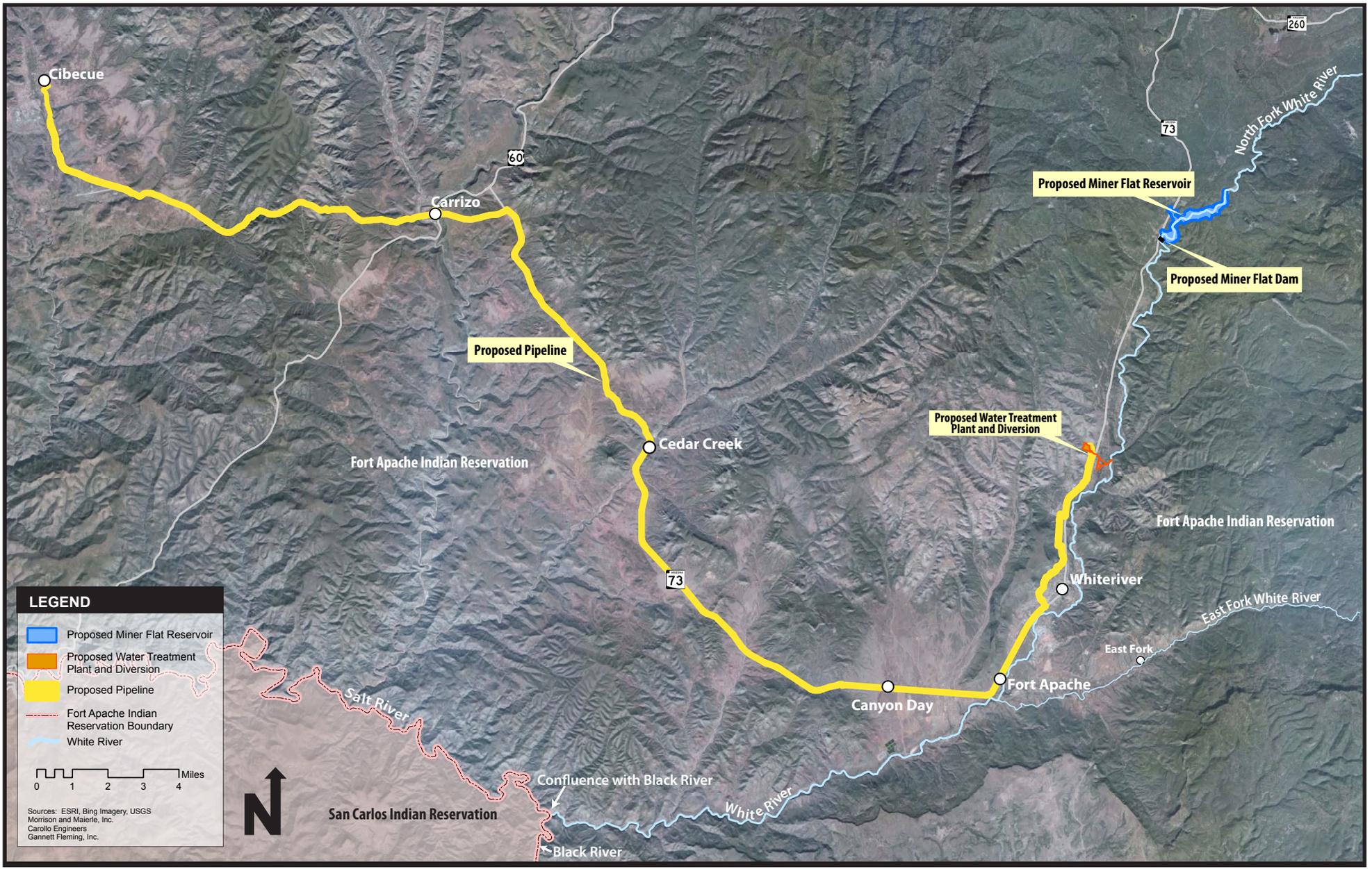
For the WMAT, the purpose of the proposed action is to provide a secure, safe and dependable, good-quality, fresh water supply for its communities and tribal members. This project would ensure a long-term and reliable water supply for the Tribe well into the future. Upon completion of construction and operation of the new facilities for a period of three years by Reclamation, the WMAT would become the titled owner and operator of the completed water system.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is also a cooperating agency on this project because of its statutory responsibility regarding Indian Trust Assets.

Additional information on the project can be found on Reclamation's Phoenix Area Website (<http://www.usbr.gov/lc/phoenix/>) – look for the link for the WMAT Rural Water System Project.



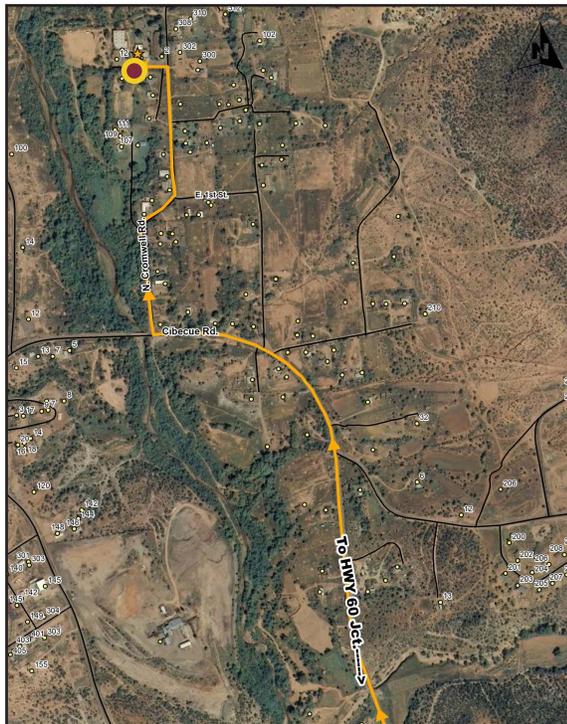
WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE RURAL WATER PROJECT: Project Overview Map





WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE RURAL WATER PROJECT

Meeting Locations



Friday, September 20, 2013
6-9 PM

Cibecue Complex – Feeding Center
10 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