

CHAPTER VIII

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LEAD AND PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is the lead agency for development of the project plan, by virtue of its ownership of the canal. Imperial Irrigation District (IID), which operates the canal and receives most of the conveyed water, was the cooperating agency in producing the final environmental impact statement/final environmental impact report (FEIS/FEIR). The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), whose irrigation water is also provided by the canal, and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), which has an interest in funding the project in consideration of additional usable water supply that the project would provide, also were participants.

Reclamation is also the lead agency in the analysis of project impacts and development of a mitigation plan. In addition to the water districts identified above, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) also were participating agencies.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement activities began with the All-American Canal (AAC) Relocation Study. Public involvement activities on

that study involved extensive informal contacts and meetings with concerned Federal, State, and local agencies, and water management entities. MWD suggested that the future AAC Relocation Project become a water conservation project funded by, and for the primary benefit of, California agencies holding water delivery contracts with the Secretary of the Interior.

Interest in the AAC Lining Project has been strong. Local groups with the greatest interest include IID, CVWD, and MWD. IID and CVWD have vested interest in the integrity and reliability of the AAC for continued water delivery. MWD indicated its interest in funding lining of the AAC, provided the conserved water made available could be used in the MWD service area. IID and CVWD also share an interest in the conserved water.

A notice of initiation was distributed in 1983 on the relocation study to all interested agencies and parties. A notice of intent to prepare a draft environmental statement on the AAC Relocation Project was published in the *Federal Register* in 1985. The notice of intent was amended in February 1988 to include preparation of a separate environmental impact statement for the Coachella Canal, also under investigation for lining as described in chapter I.

An environmental scoping meeting was held in El Centro, California, in April 1988 to identify public concerns. The scoping

was continued with meetings in September 1989 and May 1991 to reiterate scoping issues and provide information about the project.

In addition to the public meetings, team members have been associated with and have chaired various interagency work groups to define in detail potential impacts from the project and to recommend mitigation. The various interagency work groups are represented by Federal, State, and local agencies. The interagency biological work group, through numerous meetings, achieved agreement among the involved agencies on the criteria for evaluating project effects and on mitigation parameters for biological resources. A fisheries work group has met several times to coordinate evaluation of fish population and to conduct artificial reef tests. A large mammal entry/escape work group has met three times to evaluate the effectiveness of the escape ridges.

Numerous meetings with the various agencies and one-on-one contacts have been an ongoing part of the study process. Field work has required contact with local owners as well as various city, county, and local agencies and departments. Various speeches and slide shows have been presented. In particular, the proposed Coachella Canal in-place lining prototype was presented to various groups and associations.

At various points in the study, Reclamation has provided news releases and fact sheets about the study to keep the public informed. The public meeting in September 1989 and the prototype testing received local, State, and national attention through various newspaper and national magazine articles. In addition, discussions and workshops on the proposed project sponsored by the Board of Directors of IID have been publicized in local newspapers.

AGENCY COORDINATION

In order to comply with wetlands policies, mitigation plans for project effects on wetlands have been coordinated with FWS and CDFG. As stated earlier, copies of correspondence, reports, and decisions have continually been sent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Coordination with these agencies, who have regulatory responsibilities for the AAC wetlands, included both informal contacts and formal correspondence. The wetlands policies of these agencies would be satisfied by the mitigation programs developed for the project.

FWS concluded that because this proposed project would not dry up the wetlands complex between Drops 3 and 4, formal consultation on endangered species would not be needed for effects along the AAC (attachment E). If any of the candidate species become listed before completion of the project, consultation will be required.

Assessment of project impacts and development of the mitigation plans have been coordinated with the cooperating agencies named above and with the city of San Diego, which shares capacity in the canal and is repaying some of the construction cost to the Federal Government; with the Quechan Indian Tribe, through whose tribal lands the canal runs; and with the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), United States Section, which is conducting consultation with Mexico.

Meetings with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Tribe over significant and sensitive cultural issues around Pilot Knob have taken place, as have meetings with the BLM concerning the Area of Critical Environmental Concern along the AAC.

Coordination has been initiated and is ongoing with the California State Historic Preservation Officer regarding cultural resources along the AAC.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

Through the IBWC, the United States is conducting a consultation with Mexico regarding the lining project as stipulated in IBWC Minute No. 242, Point 6 pursuant to the water treaty between the United States and Mexico. A summary of the ongoing consultation and the analyses by Mexico are included in attachment D of the Geohydrology Appendix.

Through the consultation, the United States Section of IBWC has informed Mexico of the project and its effect on ground water, and has received Mexico's analysis of impacts within Mexico for evaluation in conjunction with United States studies. The result of this consultation is being documented by IBWC and will be presented in a report upon conclusion of the consultation with Mexico, and review and concurrence by the Department of State of which the United States Section of IBWC is an agency. A summary of the ongoing consultation and the analyses by Mexico are included in attachment D of the Geohydrology Appendix.

These activities are in compliance with Executive Order 12114—Environmental Impacts Abroad of Major Federal Actions, which provides guidance for the adaptation of the National Environmental Policy Act process to transboundary impacts affecting other nations.

QUECHAN INDIAN TRIBE

During the environmental impact statement process, Reclamation representatives met with the Quechan Indian Tribe (Tribe) to explain the project and receive their oral comments. Afterwards, the Tribe was kept informed by letter of changes to the array of alternatives and to the preferred alternative. The Tribe also received copies of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) and appendices.

Indian Trust Assets

The Tribe was receptive to allowing construction workers to cross reservation land if necessary. The Tribe also expressed interest in selling gravel from the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation for use in construction. The gravel would have to be tested by the contractor for suitability before any final agreement can be reached.

Cultural Resources

A Reclamation archeologist met with the Tribe's cultural advisor regarding cultural resources, and agreement was reached concerning tribal observation of construction activities in culturally sensitive areas.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

FWS has participated in the development of the project plan, evaluated the biological aspects of the project, and prepared recommendations on mitigation measures

to comply with the Federal Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (Public Law 85-624).

Attachment C presents FWS recommendations on mitigation as well as Reclamation's response to each of these recommendations.

Attachment E presents FWS position on the Endangered Species consultation.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT AND CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT COMPLIANCE

Project planning has been conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Reclamation is the lead Federal agency for NEPA compliance, while IID is the lead State agency for CEQA. This document is intended to fulfill disclosure requirements for both processes.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES

There are no unresolved environmental issues in connection with this project.

COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The All-American Canal Lining Project draft environmental impact statement/draft environmental impact report (DEIS/DEIR) was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and released to the public on July 9, 1991.

Approximately 500 copies of the DEIS/DEIR were distributed for review.

Reclamation received both written and oral comments. Reclamation thanks the commentors for sharing their concerns and ideas. All of these comments were reviewed and considered in preparation of this FEIS/FEIR. Reclamation received written comments from 27 agencies and individuals. All of these letters, and Reclamation's response to them, have been reproduced in attachment F.

Two formal public hearings were held to receive comments on the DEIS/DEIR. The first was held in Yuma, Arizona, on September 11, 1991, and the second was in El Centro, California, on September 12, 1991. The official transcripts of the proceedings are available for inspection at Reclamation's Lower Colorado Regional Office, at the address given on the filing page (first page) of this FEIS/FEIR.

The hearings were conducted by William Swan, Attorney/Advisor, Department of the Interior, Office of the Field Solicitor, Phoenix, Arizona. Reclamation was represented by David Gudgel, Jim Sizemore, and James Rorabaugh.

The first hearing was held September 11, 1993, at 6:30 p.m., at Reclamation's Yuma Projects Office, Yuma, Arizona. Three individuals presenting oral statements.

The second hearing was held September 12, 1991, at the Imperial Irrigation District Auditorium, El Centro, California. Eight individuals presented oral statements.

Major comments received at the public hearings, along with Reclamation's response, are listed in attachment F, following the response to written comments.

PERMITS, AGREEMENTS, AND CONSTRUCTION COORDINATION

A list of the permits and other coordination activities necessary prior to and during construction is presented on the following page.

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List of permits, agreements, and construction coordination

Agency	Action or activity
Federal Government	
Department of the Interior	Project agreement setting forth conditions under which the project will be funded, constructed, and operated.
Bureau of Land Management	Agreement to manage public domain land for establishment of mitigation habitat. Approval to use public domain land for access and for construction activities. Interim recreation management plan for lands adjacent to the canal. Agreement on archeological and cultural recovery plans.
Bureau of Indian Affairs	Issue of any permits or rights-of-way easements for activities that cross the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation.
U.S. Border Patrol	Coordination of activities adjacent to international boundary.
International Boundary and Water Commission	Coordination of activities adjacent to international boundary.
Quechan Indian Tribe	
	Concurrence for activities on Fort Yuma Indian Reservation outside of canal right-of-way. Coordination with respect to cultural resources found during surveys and construction.
State of California	
Historic Preservation Office	Agreement on archeological and cultural recovery plans.
Department of Fish and Game	Section 1601 Permit for wetlands alteration.
Department of Transportation	Coordination of construction at canal crossings of Interstate 8.
Regional Water Quality Control Board	Clean Water Act, Section 402 Permit (permit for construction water discharge).
Local Entities	
Imperial County	Approval of site reclamation plan for quarry activities. Air quality permit.
Imperial Irrigation District	Coordination of construction activities.