



United States Department of the Interior



IN REPLY REFER TO:

LC-2012
ENV-7.00

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Lower Colorado Regional Office
P.O. Box 61470
Boulder City, NV 89006-1470

JAN 25 2005

Mr. Jim Bartel, Field Supervisor
Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 1
Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office
Attention: Ms. Carol Roberts
6010 Hidden Valley Road
Carlsbad, CA 92009

Subject: Request for Confirmation of Conference Opinion (1-6-96-F-12) as a Biological Opinion for Peirson's Milk-Vetch (*Astragalus magdalenae* var. *peirsonii*) for the All-American Canal Lining Project, Imperial County, California (Your Office Letter Dated November 15th, 2004)

Dear Mr. Bartel:

The subject letter requested additional clarification on the location and acreage to be affected by the lining project as it relates to minimizing and offsetting impacts to Peirson's milk-vetch. The All-American Canal Lining Coordinating Committee (Committee) has not been provided with design overlays to date and only a preliminary design may be available by the end of January 2005. Because the proposed design footprint is necessary to determine proximity to sensitive plant areas and acreage that may be affected by project activities, it is not possible to respond to your questions at this time. However, as the design is presented to the Committee for review and becomes firmer we will be better able to respond to your questions and consider your recommendations.

We can respond to your question and recommendation, beginning on page 2, last paragraph, about the location for release of razorback sucker that may be stranded in the dewatered old canal. We agree that Senator Wash Reservoir is no longer an acceptable release location. Prior to the dewatering phase, Reclamation will coordinate with other concerned agencies on actions to be undertaken and potential release locations on the Lower Colorado River above Imperial Dam. This action will be consistent with Reclamation's Biological and Conference Opinion on Lower Colorado River Operations and Maintenance - Lake Mead to Southerly International Boundary (AESO/SE: 1997, File 2-21-95-F-216; AESO/SE: 2002, File 2-21-95-F-21R) and the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program that is being developed and should be in affect by April 2005 for a 50 year period.

Reclamation and the Committee look forward to continued cooperation with the Service on the All-American Lining Project. Please contact Mr. James Green at 702-293-8519 if you have any questions regarding the responses provided.

Sincerely



Deanna J. Miller, Director
Resources Management Office

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Steve Thompson
Operations Manager
Attention: Mr. Ken McDermond, Deputy CNO Manager
California/Nevada Operations Office
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Mr. Mike King
Project Director
Attention: Mr. Michael Remington
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Ms. Maureen Stapleton
General Manager
San Diego County Water Authority
Attention: Mr. Dan Fogerson
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Mr. Charles F. Keene
Environmental Program Manager
California Department of Water Resources
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(w/cy inc. letter to ea)