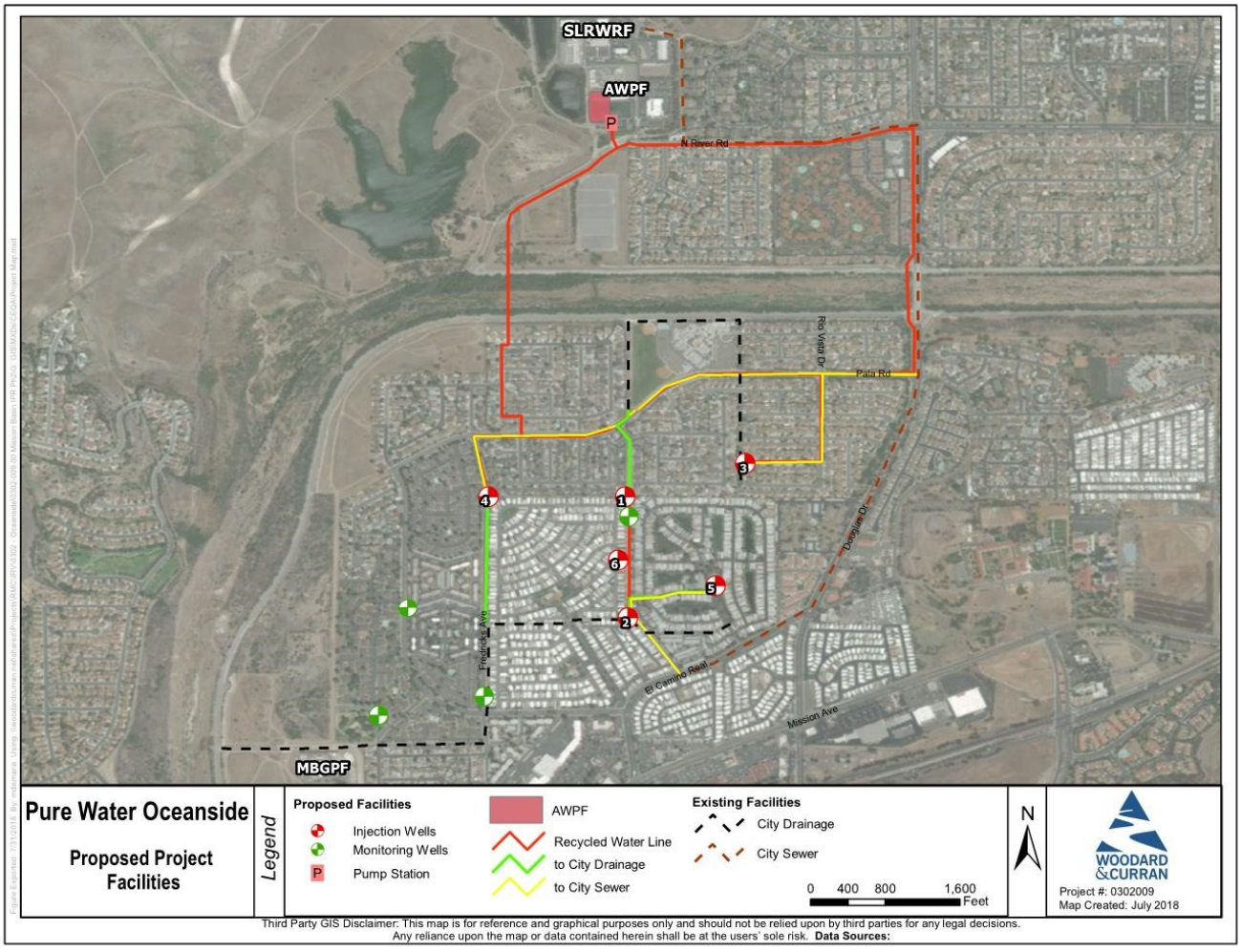
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

# National Environmental Policy Act Finding of No Significant Impact

## Pure Water Oceanside, San Diego County, California
## Lower Colorado Region, Southern California Area Office




**U.S. Department of the Interior** **December 2019**

# Mission Statements

The Department of the Interior (DOI) conserves and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people, provides scientific and other information about natural resources and natural hazards to address societal challenges and create opportunities for the American people, and honors the Nation's trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities to help them prosper.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

**National Environmental Policy Act**
**Finding of No Significant Impact**

No. 20-SCAO-002-FONSI

Pure Water Oceanside
San Diego County, California

The Bureau of Reclamation approved a Title XVI feasibility study for Pure Water Oceanside in San Diego County, California. The City of Oceanside has applied for financial assistance to construct the project under Title XVI as amended by the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act.

Pure Water Oceanside will construct an advanced water treatment facility, conveyance pipelines, injection wells, monitoring wells, and backwash piping. The project will treat secondary effluent from the existing San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility for indirect potable reuse. Product water will be conveyed to injection wells to replenish the Mission Sub-basin for later extraction and use as potable water.

Based on our review of the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for Pure Water Oceanside, California State Clearinghouse No. 2018091044, we have determined that the financial assistance does not constitute a major federal action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Accordingly, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

Recommended: /s/ Date: 12/23/29
Doug McPherson, Environmental Protection Specialist

Reviewed By: /s/ Date: 12/23/19
Meghan Thiemann, Regional Title XVI Coordinator

Approved: /s/ Deb Whitney acting for Date: 12/30/19
Jack E. Simes, Jr., (Acting) Area Manager
Southern California Area Office

Cover aerial taken from the initial study prepared by the City of Oceanside showing the location of the advanced water purification facility north of the San Luis Rey River in Oceanside, California, with alternative pipeline alignments and injection well locations. The City has selected injection well sites 1, 3, and 6, and the eastern pipeline alignment under the San Luis Rey River.

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Pure Water Oceanside is a potable reuse project that will augment the Mission Groundwater Basin with advanced treated recycled water. The project will inject 3 million gallons per day (mgd) of advanced treated recycled water into the Mission Groundwater Basin for later extraction by existing downgradient wells. After treatment at the existing Mission Basin Groundwater Purification Facility, the water will supplement the City's potable supply by 3,360 acre-feet per year (AFY).

A feasibility study report for the Mission Basin Groundwater Purification Facility Demonstration Project was approved by the Director of Policy and Administration on February 27, 2017, finding that the report meets requirements defined under Title XVI (section 1604) of Public Law 102-575, as amended. The project was later renamed Pure Water Oceanside. The City of Oceanside applied for financial assistance under Funding Opportunity Announcement No. BOR-DO-19-F018, *WaterSMART: Title XVI WIIN Water Reclamation and Reuse Projects for Fiscal Year 2019*.

**PURPOSE AND NEED**

The capacity of the existing Mission Basin Groundwater Purification Facility is 6.3 mgd. Recent declines in groundwater levels, limited recharge due to drought conditions, and increased use of the basin by other pumpers, has resulted in the City not being able to realize the full capacity of the facility. Groundwater levels will continue to drop if no action is taken, and production at the MBGPF will continue to decrease.

The project will replenish the groundwater basin with advanced treated wastewater and allow the City to increase potable water production at the Mission Basin Groundwater Purification Facility. The project will increase supply reliability, offset purchase of imported water, and reduce wastewater discharges via the Oceanside Ocean Outfall.

**AUTHORITY**

The funding opportunity announcement was issued under the Water Reclamation and Reuse Program, authorized in 1992 by Title XVI of Public Law 102-575, as amended (43 United States Code 390h), including amendments in Title II, Subtitle J of the WIIN Act, Public Law 114-322. Through the Title XVI Program, the Bureau of Reclamation provides financial and technical assistance to local water agencies for the planning, design, and construction of water reclamation and reuse projects.

The WIIN Act was enacted in December of 2016 to address water resources infrastructure critical to the Nation's economic growth, health, and competitiveness. Section 4009(c) of Subtitle J of the WIIN Act amended the Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Program. Prior to the WIIN Act, funding for water recycling project construction could only be provided for congressionally authorized Title XVI projects. The WIIN Act amendments allow new water recycling projects to be eligible for Federal funding if the feasibility study is approved under Title XVI.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Pure Water Oceanside includes a 4.5 MGD advanced water treatment facility, pump stations, 14,000 feet of conveyance pipelines, 3 injection wells, 11,900 feet of backwash pipelines, and 3 monitoring wells. The advanced water treatment facility will be in a new 35,200 square foot building at the San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility (APN 157-021-04-00), 3950 North River Road, within an existing graded area and former recycled water reservoir. The construction footprint is 350-feet by 200-feet.

The advanced water treatment facility will treat secondary effluent from the existing San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility using membrane filtration (ultrafiltration) followed by reverse osmosis and advanced oxidation with ultraviolet and free chlorine disinfection. Waste concentrate from reverse osmosis will be discharged to the Pacific Ocean via the existing Oceanside Ocean Outfall. The project will modify the San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility with mechanical upgrades to the Plant 2 Secondary Clarifiers for nitrification-denitrification of secondary effluent.

An electrical feed line from the transformer adjacent to the San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility administration building will provide power to the advanced water treatment facility. A backwash line will also be constructed along the access road heading north to the Plant 1 Primaries for Micro-Filtration backwash and off-spec water.

Advanced treated recycled water will be conveyed to injection wells by 16-inch diameter conveyance pipelines, crossing under the San Luis Rey River using horizontal directional drilling methods to avoid impacts to riparian habitat. Three injection wells will be constructed south of the San Luis Rey River. Each well site will be equipped with an injection well, piping, valves, and appurtenances; electrical and control equipment for power distribution to the facilities and local/remote control of monitoring of well operations; and a concrete pad for mounting piping, electrical, and other support equipment.

Injection wells require periodic backwashing to dislodge accumulated solids in and around the well casing and gravel pack. The 16-inch backwash disposal pipeline will convey backwash water back to the San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility via existing sewers. The injection wells will have control equipment so that only one injection well will backflush at a time. This allows the existing sewer to convey the increased flow without upsizing facilities.

Three monitoring wells downgradient of the project will be constructed. Locations are approximate pending approval by the California State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water. The San Diego County Department of Environmental Health issues monitoring well construction permits and inspects construction to make sure it meets California Department of Water Resources well standards.

The City of Oceanside selected injection well sites 1, 3, and 6. The conveyance pipeline will be installed along the eastern alignment, crossing under the San Luis Rey River adjacent to the Douglas Drive bridge. The City Planning Commission approved conditional use permit CUP 18-00021 to construct and operate the advanced water treatment facility and ancillary supporting infrastructure (piping/wells/pump stations) by resolution no. 2018-P60 on December 3, 2018. The City Council approved plans and specifications and awarded construction contracts for Pure Water Oceanside on December 18, 2019.

**ADOPTION OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT**

NEPA requires review of a proposed Federal action to determine its impact on the human environment. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations direct Federal agencies to cooperate with State and local agencies to the fullest extent possible to reduce duplication between NEPA and State and local requirements (40 CFR 1506.2). Department of Interior regulations for implementing NEPA encourage tiering of environmental documents and provide for adoption of existing environmental documents if, upon evaluation by a responsible official, it is found to comply with relevant provisions of the CEQ regulations.

The City of Oceanside prepared an initial study for Pure Water Oceanside (SCH No. 2018091044) and adopted a mitigated negative declaration, finding that preparation of an environmental impact report is not required under the California Environmental Quality Act. The Oceanside City Planning Commission adopted the mitigated negative declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program by approving resolution no. 2018-P59 on December 3, 2018,

Reclamation staff reviewed the initial study and concluded that it adequately identifies and discloses the reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of the action. We adopt the document in accordance with regulations for implementing NEPA promulgated by the CEQ at 40 CFR 1506.3 and by the Department of the Interior at 43 CFR 46.320(a).

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The initial study concluded that the project will not result in any significant adverse impacts. Mitigation measures were adopted for construction-phase air emissions, biological resources, cultural resources, hazardous materials, and both construction-phase and operational noise impacts.

**OTHER FEDERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Clean Air Act
The San Diego air basin is designated nonattainment/moderate for 2008 8-hour ozone, maintenance for 1997 8-hour ozone, maintenance for ozone 1-hour, maintenance for carbon monoxide, and attainment for lead, NO2, PM2.5 and PM10. The regulatory thresholds at 40 CFR 93.153(b) will not be exceeded during construction or operation. No conformity determination is required. A standby generator will require a permit from the San Diego Air Pollution Control District.

Endangered Species Act
The action will not affect federal threatened or endangered species or critical habitats. No listed plant species were observed during the field surveys. There will be no direct impacts to native habitat areas. Mitigation measures have been adopted to avoid indirect effects.

The advanced water treatment facility will be installed within the existing San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility. Pipelines, injection wells, and monitoring wells will be installed within developed areas of low and medium density residential neighborhoods and general commercial areas. The conveyance pipeline will cross under the San Luis Rey River at Douglas Drive by horizontal direction drilling at a depth of 40 feet to avoid habitat areas. Entry and exist pits will be in disturbed non-habitat areas by Douglas Drive bridge.

Southern cottonwood willow riparian forest is present in the San Luis Rey River, a soft-bottomed channel bounded by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers levees. This riparian vegetation in the river is designated as critical habitat for endangered least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher. Vireo are known to nest in this riparian habitat.

Critical habitat for threatened coastal California gnatcatcher is designated west of the San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility, north of the San Luis Rey River. This habitat will be avoided. The biological study identified suitable gnatcatcher habitat near a monitoring well site in Fireside Park and in the San Luis Rey River corridor adjacent to the Douglas Drive pipeline alignment. No gnatcatchers have been reported at either location.

The City of Oceanside has adopted mitigation measures to avoid indirect effects to vireo, flycatcher and gnatcatcher. Construction near habitat will be scheduled outside of the non-nesting season and pre-construction surveys are required.

National Historic Preservation Act
No properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places were identified within the Area of Potential Effect. Three cultural resources were recorded within the study area. The Rancho Francisco Pico/Whelan Ranch (P-37-011470) site was not relocated and no evidence of the site was observed within the study area. Prehistoric site P-37-011468 was also not relocated during surveys and the mapped location of the site is graded and highly disturbed. The San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility (P-37-037110) was determined not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The Study Area is considered sensitive for cultural resources. The City of Oceanside adopted mitigation measures including monitoring by a qualified archaeologist and a Luiseño Native American Monitor.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act
The project does not involve removal of any native vegetation that could support migratory bird nests. Adverse effects on migratory birds are not anticipated. There will be no take of migratory bird species. Vegetation clearing will occur outside of the bird nesting season. Biological monitoring is required before construction activities during the nesting season.

Water Resources
The project is in the Lower San Luis Rey River Valley in the Mission Sub-basin of the San Luis Rey Valley Groundwater Basin. The project will have a beneficial effect on the groundwater basin by increasing groundwater levels and helping contribute to local water supply. Implementation of the project is expected to improve groundwater quality with respect to salinity. Total dissolved solids are expected to decrease due to the quality of the advanced treated wastewater. The project is likely to further mitigate historical seawater intrusion from the continued injection of freshwater and maintenance of seaward groundwater gradients. An existing contaminant plume in the shallow aquifer is not expected to be affected, due to distance of the injection wells from the plume.

Farmland Protection Policy Act
The Project will not convert prime or unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance, or conflict with existing agricultural use zoning. No Prime or Unique farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance occurs in the project study area. Farmland of Local Importance is mapped west of the San Luis Rey Water Reclamation Facility around Whelan Lake, and will not be impacted. The project is within a developed urban area mapped as developed land in the California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program and mapped within the San Diego California Urban Area by the Census Bureau.

Clean Water Act
Waste concentrate generated at the advanced water treatment facility, estimated to be 0.8 mgd, will be discharged to the Pacific Ocean via the existing Oceanside Ocean Outfall in accordance with the City's existing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, no. CA0107433. The project will reduce the volume of secondary wastewater discharged to the ocean.

Construction activities will comply with the Statewide General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity, NPDES permit no. CAS000002. A Storm Water Quality Management Plan was completed in September 2018 to add the advanced water treatment facilities in compliance with the NPDES permit for Discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems Draining the Watersheds within the San Diego Region, no. CAS0109266.

The pipeline crossing under the San Luis Rey River requires a Clean Water Act section 404 Nationwide Permit 12 from the Army Corps of Engineers. A Clean Water Act section 401 water quality certification will be required from the California State Water Resources Control Board.

Wetlands and Floodplains
No wetlands will be disturbed. Wetland habitat in the San Luis Rey River will be avoided by horizontal directional drilling to install the conveyance pipeline.

A portion of the land is in the flood zone. Elevation and flood proofing will comply with City of Oceanside Ordinance 94-03 and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements.

Socioeconomic Resources
The project will not have significant social or economic effects. The project will not induce population growth. No housing or people will be displaced. No communities will be divided. No effects to public health and safety were identified.

Environmental Justice
No impacts relevant to Environmental Justice were identified. The injection wells will be within a community designated as disadvantaged by the California Department of Water Resources. Disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects are not anticipated.

Indian Trust Assets
No Indian trust assets have been identified in the project area.

Wild and Scenic Rivers
No Wild & Scenic Rivers or waterways listed on the National Rivers Inventory are involved.

Coastal Zone Management Act
The project is about 3 miles inland from the California Coastal Zone Boundary.

Coastal Barrier Resources Act
The federal expenditure will not encourage development or modification of coastal barriers. The project is not within any units of the Coastal Barrier Resources System. The Coastal Barrier Resources Act applies on the Atlantic, Gulf, and Great Lakes coasts. No system units are located along the Pacific coast.

Safe Drinking Water Act
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency maintains an inventory for Underground Injection Program. The City of Oceanside will register the injection wells with the EPA.

Sole Source Aquifers
The Mission Sub-basin is not an EPA-designated sole source aquifer.

**AGENCY CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)
A finding of "*No Historic Properties Affected*" will be submitted to the SHPO.

Fish and Wildlife Service
Consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not required. The project as mitigated will not affect federal listed species or critical habitats. If the mitigation measures prove insufficient to avoid effects to listed species or critical habitat, the Southern California Area Office will initiate consultation with the Carlsbad (California) Fish and Wildlife Office.

California Coastal Commission
Coastal Zone Management Act consistency certification is not required.

Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Consultation with the NRCS District Conservationist is not required.

Tribal Consultation
The City of Oceanside has consulted with several Tribes under California law AB 52. The Southern California Area Office will invite any interested Federally-recognize tribe to consult as part of the SHPO consultation under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS**

Mitigation measures adopted by the City of Oceanside are attached. The mitigations are self-imposed by the City of Oceanside and are considered ameliorative design elements per 43 CFR 46.130(b). No additional environmental commitments are required by the Bureau of Reclamation.

**REFERENCES**

Pure Water Oceanside Mitigated Negative Declaration, SCH No. 2018091044, Woodard & Curran, November 2018. https://www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/gov/dev/planning/ceqa/oceanside_pure_water.asp

**ATTACHMENTS**

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

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