RECLAMATION
Managing Water in the West

National Environmental Policy Act
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFCANT IMPACT

No.10-SCAO-003-FONSI

Groundwater Recovery Enhancement and Treatment (GREAT) Program
Ventura County, California

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is providing American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to the City of Oxnard (City) to implement Phase 1 of the Groundwater Recovery Enhancement and Treatment (GREAT) Program in Ventura County, California. The project will install an Advanced Water Purification Facility and a Recycled Water Backbone system using an abandoned pipeline.

Based on our review and evaluation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) certified by the City under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) on September 14, 2004, and an Addendum dated November 21, 2006, we have determined that the proposed action 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 (NEPA) of 1969. Accordingly, preparation of an environmental impact statement on the proposed action is not required.

Recommended: /s/ Date: 12/8/09
Doug McPherson, Environmental Protection Specialist

Reviewed By: /s/ Date: 12/8/09
Dennis Wolfe, Area Engineer

Approved: /s/ Date: 12/8/09
William J. Steele, Area Manager

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Lower Colorado Region
Southern California Area Office
Temecula, California

BACKGROUND
The GREAT Program is proposed on the Oxnard Plain in Ventura County, California, approximately 60 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles and 35 miles south of Santa Barbara. The Oxnard Plain includes urban and suburban areas in the City of Oxnard and adjacent communities, as well as substantial agricultural areas. The primary sources of domestic water for the City are imported surface and groundwater from other water districts and groundwater wells.

Limitations on both local and imported water sources plus increasing cost of imported water prompted the City to study alternative water supply sources. The result was development of the Groundwater Recovery Enhancement and Treatment (GREAT) Program, a water resources project that combines wastewater recycling and reuse, groundwater injection, storage and recovery, and groundwater desalination.

The GREAT Program will be implemented in phases. Phase 1 includes an Advanced Water Purification Facility (AWPF) and a Recycled Water Backbone (RWB) system using an abandoned pipeline. The Phase 1 project will result in the capacity to recycle approximately 7,000 acre-feet of water annually for direct reuse and groundwater recharge. Ultimately, 28,000 acre-feet annually for will be produced for groundwater recharge as well as direct reuse.

Assistance Agreement No. R10AC35R12 provides Federal funding for Phase 1 of the GREAT Program. Elements to be funded include construction of the AWPF to produce recycled water and the RWB pipeline to transport the recycled water for use by the City. Identified environmental impacts were evaluated in a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), SCH No. 2003011045, for the Oxnard GREAT Program certified under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The RWB pipeline was a minor modification addressed as an Addendum to the PEIR.

PURPOSE AND NEED
Existing water supply sources are insufficient to meet the City's growing demands and have limitations with respect to water costs and reliability. There is also a need to manage the water resources in the Oxnard Plain due to environmental impacts. Water users in the southern Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley areas rely on groundwater wells mainly for irrigation of crops. Groundwater recharge has not kept up with the rate of withdrawal resulting in a water imbalance condition.

The City currently discharges secondary treated effluent from the Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant (OWTP) directly to the City-permitted deep ocean outfall. This discharge currently does not contribute to the benefit of the region's water resources. Reclaiming this lost resource is the foundation of the GREAT Program. The AWPF will provide advanced treatment of the wastewater to allow reuse for municipal and industrial uses, groundwater injection to form a seawater intrusion barrier and agricultural irrigation.

AUTHORITY
Section 9113 of Public Law (PL) 111-11, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, amended the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act (Title XVI of PL 102-575) by adding Section 1654: Oxnard, California, Water Reclamation, Reuse and Treatment Project. The Secretary of the Interior in cooperation with the City of Oxnard, California, may participate in the design, planning and construction of Phase 1 permanent facilities for the GREAT project to reclaim, reuse and treat impaired water in the area of Oxnard California. This authority is delegated to Reclamation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
A map of the Phase 1 project is attached. The agreement covers construction of the AWPF and the RWB pipeline. The AWPF will have an initial capacity of 6.25 million gallons per day (mgd) of recycled water, capable of expansion to 25 mgd. The AWPF will produce recycled water that conforms to Title 22 recycled water standards established by the California Department of Public Health. The AWPF includes a multiple barrier treatment train consisting of microfiltration (MF), reverse osmosis (RO), and ultraviolet (UV)-light-based advanced oxidation (AOX) processes to purify the secondary effluent.

The Phase 1 project will also convert an abandoned sewer line to carry the Recycled Water Backbone Pipeline from the AWPF to the northwest portion of the City, serving municipal and industrial facilities along its route. The Recycled Water Backbone Pipeline includes approximately 22,000 feet of slip line, 6,000 feet of pipe burst and 21,100 feet of open cut with pipe sizes ranging from 8-inch to 32-inch.

ADOPTION OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

The National Environmental Policy Act (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.

In accordance with CEQ regulations for implementing the procedural requirements of NEPA, Reclamation staff reviewed the GREAT PEIR and the Addendum to the PEIR and concluded that the documents adequately identify and disclose the reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of the proposed action. We adopt the documents as our Environmental Assessment in accordance with CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1506.3) and Department of the Interior regulations for implementing NEPA (43 CFR 46.320(a)).

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The PEIR assessed impacts to various alternatives, including Phase 1 of the GREAT Program, No Project, Purchase of Additional Groundwater or Surface Water, and Seawater Desalination.

Under the No Project Alternative, the goals of the GREAT Program would not be met and the beneficial impacts to groundwater recharge would not be realized.

Under the Purchase of Additional Groundwater or Surface Water Alternative, the City would purchase additional surface or groundwater to meet existing and projected future demands. Existing water supply sources are limited due to groundwater overdraft and pumping restrictions. This alternative would result in significant economic ramifications for the City and result in worsening of groundwater overdraft conditions in the Oxnard Plain aquifer. Imported surface water would be purchased at a premium cost and has the potential to contribute to adverse effects to northern California Bay-Delta ecosystems through increased cumulative demands on their water sources.

The Seawater Desalination Alternative includes economically infeasible costs on the scale necessary to meet the proposed GREAT Program objectives. Also, local water would not be recycled under this alternative.

The Preferred Action is to construct and implement Phase 1 of the GREAT Program. Reclamation's agreement with the City will provide partial funding for the AWPF and RWBS project.

SUMMARY OF CEQA FINDINGS AND OTHER FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The City prepared a PEIR and Addendum for the GREAT Program which determined that impacts to the environment are not significant. Mitigation measures will be implemented by the City to reduce potential impacts to less than significant in the areas of Land Use, Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources, Water Resources, Air Quality, Traffic and Transportation, Noise, Visual Resources/Aesthetics, Public Services and Utilities, and Hazardous Materials and Waste. Construction impacts will be temporary. Refer to the attached PEIR Executive Summary for additional details.

Subsequent to PEIR certification, changes to the recycled water delivery system were proposed. The GREAT Program did not consider municipal and industrial use within the City for the recycled water. However, the City recently abandoned the Redwood Trunk sewer line that extended from the northwest portion of the City to the OWTP. This abandoned sewer line will be converted to carry a Recycled Water Backbone Pipeline from the AWPF to the northwest portion of the City, serving municipal and industrial facilities along its route. An addendum to the GREAT Program PEIR regarding the City of Oxnard Recycled Water Use Ordinance and Recycled Water Backbone System is attached.

<u>Geology Soils and Mineral Resources</u>

An unavoidable significant environmental impact in the area of Geology Soils and Mineral Resources is identified in the PEIR. The AWPF will be located within a tsunami hazard zone and may pose a risk to workers at the staffed facility during construction and operation. The existing tsunami warning system is effective for earthquakes generated beyond the Santa Barbara Channel. It is ineffective for tsunamis generated by earthquakes on local offshore faults. Geologic hazards associated with tsunamis are present with or without implementation of this project.

Land Use
The AWPF site is located in a designated industrial use area and will be compatible with existing and planned uses of the neighborhood. The RWBS pipeline is located almost entirely within existing paved roadways. The pipeline would be buried at a depth that will allow agricultural operations to continue, excavated soils would be stock piled and replaced, and the pipeline construction area would be returned to its preconstruction condition. No Prime or Unique Farmland will be removed from production by the pipeline facilities proposed as part of this project.

Cultural Resources
The proposed AWPF is located within the vicinity of the Oxnard Wastewater treatment facilities and other industrial facilities and will not have impacts on cultural resources. In general, the proposed RWBS pipelines will replace an existing abandoned pipeline and/or be placed within or adjacent to existing roadways. The existing roadways are already extensively disturbed from road construction, buried utilities, other industrial and urban development, and agricultural practices. The proposed project avoids historic properties. Reclamation will conduct consultations under the National Historic Preservation Act, including Native American consultations, as required.

Paleontological Resources
Construction activities for the AWPF and RWBS in previously disturbed areas and at depths less than a few feet below grade will have no impact on paleontological resources. No fossil site is recorded as being discovered in the younger alluvium of the Oxnard Plain within the proposed depth of excavation for the project in the immediate vicinity of the project site. Direct impacts may result from earth moving activities in previously undisturbed strata. The proposed project is not likely to have significant impacts on paleontological resources.

Water Resources
Construction and operation of the proposed project has the potential to impact surface water hydrology and water quality, surface drainage/flooding, ocean water quality, and groundwater hydrology and quality. The project will incorporate specific design features and construction measures, including best management practices, in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations and standards, identified in more detail in the PEIR. This includes compliance with the Clean Water Act and any required permits under that act. Construction of the AWPF and RWBS will not result in significant water resources impacts with implementation of these measures.

Coastal Zone
The AWPF is located within the City, outside of the Coastal Zone boundary. Sections of the proposed pipelines are located within the Coastal Zone. The City of Oxnard Coastal Land Use Plan standards will apply to these pipeline sections. No significant impacts to coastal resources will result from the construction of the AWPF and RWBS.

Air Quality
Impacts to air quality will be temporary during construction activities. Fugitive dust will be controlled during grading, excavation, and construction activities, as described in the attached PEIR Executive Summary. This project will have no significant impacts on air quality. Emissions will not exceed Clean Air Act conformity applicability *de minimis* thresholds at 40 CFR 93.153(b) and will not be regionally significant.

Traffic and Transportation
Impacts to traffic and transportation will be temporary during construction activities. The City will require and approve a Transportation Management Plan for construction activities. This project will have no significant impacts on traffic and transportation.

Noise
Noise impacts will be temporary during construction activities and will be minimized following measures described in the attached PEIR Executive Summary. The project will have no significant noise impacts.

Visual Resources/Aesthetics
Above ground structures will be designed to be consistent with the Community Design Element of the City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan and finished with a non-reflective material to reduce glare. Lighting will be limited to areas required for safety and directed and shielded to reduce light scatter and glare. Following

construction, pipeline corridors will be returned to pre-existing or better conditions. Construction will be conducted consistent with the Ventura County General Plan and City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan. This project will have no significant impacts on Visual Resources/Aesthetics.

Public Services and Utilities
Theft/vandalism deterrents such as fencing will be employed to protect construction and facility equipment. Prior to construction, underground utilities will be identified for avoidance. This project will have no significant impacts on Public Services and Utilities.

Hazardous Materials/Waste
The project will incorporate specific project design features and construction measures, including best management practices, in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations and standards for hazardous materials, described in more detail in the PEIR. The City will employ general procedures, identified in more detail in the PEIR, to avoid potential significant effects associated with the handling and disposal of hazardous wastes. Construction of the AWPF and RWBS will not result in significant hazardous materials and waste impacts with implementation of these measures.

Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice
Socioeconomic effects of the proposed project are expected to be generally beneficial. No significant impacts to socioeconomic/environmental justice will result from this project.

Wetlands and Floodplain
No jurisdictional wetlands will be impacted by this project.

Endangered Species Act
The action will not affect Federally-listed species or designated critical habitat. Within the areas directly affected by the Project, there are no federally-listed species. In adjacent aquatic and terrestrial habitats, the EIR identified the following listed species: Ventura marsh milkvetch (*Astragalus pycnostachyus* var. *lanosissimus),* Salt marsh bird's beak (*Cordylanthus maritimus* ssp. *maritimus),* California brown pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*), California least tern (*Sterna antillarum brownii*), Light-footed clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris levipes*), Western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*), and tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberry*). Federally protected marine mammals include northern elephant seal (*Mirounga angustirostris*), California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*), and harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*). The habitats where these species occur will not be disturbed.

Critical habitat has been designated for the western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*) along Ormond Beach and a portion of the NBVC Point Mugu. Western snowy plover nests in depressions or scrapes on the open sandy beach, and forages along the shoreline. The project will not impact plover critical habitat. No other critical habitat has been designated in the area.

Sensitive Management Areas
Most of the affected Project area consists of agricultural lands, annual (ruderal) grasslands, and landscaped vegetation with little habitat value. Undisturbed open lands are present in the general vicinity, including coastal and inland marshes, and beach strand and coastal dune. Aquatic estuarine and marine habitats are also present in the vicinity. No significant impacts to natural aquatic or terrestrial habitats will occur from this project.

Mugu Lagoon National Wildlife Refuge, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, and the City of Oxnard General Plan Resource Protection Zone are all present in the general vicinity of the Project. The nearest management area, the City Resource Protection Zone, is at least 1500 feet away from all project elements. The other management areas are several miles at the closest point to any Project elements. None of these management areas will be impacted by the Project.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council has designated Essential Fish Habitat for Pacific Coast groundfish and northern anchovy/coastal pelagics within marine and estuarine areas within the general Project area. This project will not impact these habitats.

Indian Trust Assets
No known Indian Trust Assets will be impacted.

Wild and Scenic Rivers
No creeks in the region will be directly disturbed and none are designated Wild and Scenic Rivers.

AGENCY CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Fish and Wildlife Service
Consultant staff contacted the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office during preparation of the PEIR. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service provided a letter documenting species concerns within the area.

California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)
Reclamation will consult with the SHPO as required to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act.

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

REFERENCES

Groundwater Recovery Enhancement and Treatment (GREAT) Program Final Environmental Impact Report, prepared for City of Oxnard by CH2M HILL, May 2004. State Clearinghouse Number 2003011045.

Addendum to the GREAT Program Environmental Impact Report, approved by the Oxnard City Council, November 21, 2006.

ATTACHMENTS

1) Map
2) Addendum to GREAT Program EIR
3) GREAT Program EIR Executive Summary