

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**Cibola Old Channel Restoration Project**

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

**Bureau of Reclamation**

**Yuma Area Office**

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and based on the following, the Bureau of Reclamation has determined that implementation of the Proposed Action to install pipelines on the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) to supplement flow through the lower 1.5 miles of the Cibola Old Channel would not result in a significant impact on the quality of the human and natural environment. The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) provides details on the Proposed Action and an analysis of the potential impacts and should be used as a companion document to this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to supplement water flows through the latter 1.5 miles of the Cibola Old Channel to increase water velocity and decrease sedimentation. Decreased water flow and increased sedimentation over the years have resulted in increased shallowness of the lower portion of the Cibola Old Channel. Surface water enters the Cibola Old Channel through two sources: 1) through a pair of permeable rock "inlet" structures on the upstream and downstream side of High Levee Pond at the head of Cibola Old Channel, and 2) through the Palo Verde Outfall Drain, which discharges excess irrigation water from the Palo Verde valley into the Cibola Old Channel approximately 1.5 miles downstream of High Levee Pond. The Cibola Old Channel is approximately 10 miles in length. The proposed project's objectives include improving the environment by providing increased flows through the lower 1.5 mile section of the Cibola Old Channel, as well as maintaining and protecting the existing wetlands in the lower reach by ensuring water flow to help support and sustain the aquatic environment.

The analysis presented in the EA focused on the resource areas identified as potentially affected by the alternatives considered, including the No Action alternative. Reclamation determined that the potential effects on transportation, population, and safety were negligible and did not conduct further analysis on these topics. Reclamation assessed the potential effects on land use, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, Indian trust assets, environmental justice and socioeconomic conditions, hazardous materials or solid waste, noise, water resources, geology and soils, visual resources, floodplains, recreation, and cumulative impacts. The potential for impacts was reduced by using mitigation measures and best management practices (BMPs) where applicable.

Reclamation identified several measures and BMPs to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects that may result from the implementation of the Proposed Action. A brief summary of the environmental commitments and practices Reclamation has committed to are listed below:

### Hazardous Materials and Solid Waste

- A site specific contingency spill plan will be developed and implemented. The plan will consist of reporting guidelines in the event of a spill, good housekeeping techniques, and employee training in the use of required equipment and proper handling of potentially hazardous materials.
- Hazardous materials used for this project will be contained within vessels engineered for safe storage.
- Areas for refueling of equipment will be chosen to prevent any accidental fuel leakage from contaminating surface water, groundwater, or soils.

### Water Resources


- During construction, no refueling equipment will be permitted within 100 feet of the Cibola Old Channel, the Colorado River, or any other surface water conveyance system.
- Required Clean Water Act Section 404 and 401 permits will be obtained prior to project commencing.
- Water quality testing will be conducted annually after the project is implemented for a period of 3 years to assess project effects.

### Recreation

- Reclamation is committed to work with the Refuge staff to mitigate negative affects due to the recreational public being attracted to areas opened by the project.
- Reclamation is willing to provide barriers or other management solutions to prevent illegal off-road use, illegal campfires, illegal littering and dumping, and illegal overnight camping.
- Signs indicating that “no overnight camping, no fires, and no illegal OHV use allowed” will be placed near the proposed project site once construction is completed to abate anticipated illegal recreational activities.

Based on the analysis of the environmental impacts, BMPs, and environmental commitments, as presented in the EA, Reclamation has concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action does not pose a significant adverse impact to the quality of the human and natural environment. Therefore, Reclamation will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the project.

  
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 Maria Ramirez, Area Manager

  
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