



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

East Highline Reservoir and Intake Channel
Project, Imperial County- California
YAO-FONSI 24-02

Lower Colorado Basin, Interior Region 8 – Yuma Area Office



West view of the proposed Reservoir site

Mission Statements

The U.S. Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.

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.

Introduction and Proposed Action

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 would not result in a significant impact on the quality of the human and natural environment, therefore an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. The Proposed Action consists of constructing an intake channel and a water storage reservoir with the estimated capacity of 2,100 acre-feet, north of the All-American Canal (AAC) and east of the East Highline Canal (EHL). Water is currently delivered by IID through the AAC from the Colorado River, and is primarily used for non-potable uses, such as agriculture and non-urban purposes, as well as groundwater recharge. The purpose of the project is to augment Imperial Irrigation District's (IID) current levels of water management and operational flexibility while creating an additional tool to assist in meeting system and on-farm conservation program goals.

The Proposed Action will allow IID to better match water demands by creating a more efficient canal system with the additional water management facility upstream of most of IID's water service. Improved management of Colorado River water deliveries to agricultural users within IID's distribution system will further maximize water conservation opportunities yielding an estimated 15,000 acre-feet of conserved water annually.

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) provides further details on the Proposed Action and the analysis of the potential impacts and should be used as a companion document to this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Resource Analysis

The analysis presented in the EA focuses on the resource areas identified as potentially affected by the Proposed Action and the No Action alternative, if implemented. It also serves as the baseline for the comparisons of alternatives. Reclamation determined that the potential effects on the following resources were either not present or found to be negligible and did not conduct further analysis; Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Access and Transportation, Agricultural Resources, Conservation Lands, Floodplains, Forestry, Fuels and Fire Management, Livestock Grazing, Public Health and Safety, Recreation/Travel/Wild and Scenic Rivers, Transmission Corridors, Urban Quality and Design of the Built Environment, Wildlife Corridor, Wild Horse and Burros, and Wild and Scenic Rivers. Other resources were found to not be affected by the Proposed Action because they would be completely mitigated with the implementation of standard stipulations. Mitigation measures and BMPs to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects that may result from the implementation of the Proposed Action are summarized below:

Air Quality and Green House Gas Emissions

- Compose an enhanced dust control plan that will be submitted to the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) for review and approval and provided to Imperial County Public Works Department (ICPWD).

Biological Resources

- Project construction limits and activities will be restricted to highly disturbed areas to the extent practical.
- Staging areas and improvements to access roads would be limited to previously disturbed areas and located away from the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).
- All construction equipment will be cleaned and free of plant parts before moving into construction sites.
- There will be no impacts to waters of the U.S.
- Trash and food materials will be properly contained within vehicles or closed refuse bins while on site and will be regularly removed from the construction site for proper disposal.
- Worker Environmental Awareness Program training will be provided to construction personnel prior to commencing activities on resource protection measures.
- Biologist/botanist shall consult with the applicable agency (i.e., CDFW and/or USFWS) and obtain written concurrence for measures required for federally or state-listed plant species, if observed.
- Night-time activities should be minimized to the extent possible.
- Project proponent will comply with State of California permitting requirements (Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement).
- No less than 14 days prior to ground-disturbing activities (vegetation clearance and/or grading), a qualified wildlife biologist (i.e., a wildlife biologist with previous burrowing owl survey experience) shall conduct pre-construction take avoidance surveys on and within 200 meters (656 feet) of the construction zone to identify occupied breeding or wintering burrowing owl burrows.
- If burrowing owls are detected on site, no ground-disturbing activities shall be permitted within 200 meters (656 feet) of an occupied burrow during the breeding season (February 1 to August 31), unless otherwise authorized by CDFW.
- If avoidance of active burrows is infeasible during the nonbreeding season, then, before breeding behavior is exhibited and after the burrow is confirmed empty by site surveillance and/or scoping, a qualified biologist shall implement a passive relocation program in accordance with Biological Resources Report (i.e., Example Components for Burrowing Owl Artificial Burrow and Exclusion Plans) of the 2012 CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW 2012).

Archaeological, Cultural, and Tribal Cultural Resources

- Construction activities will be designed to avoid and minimize impacts to cultural resources by limiting project activities to previously disturbed areas.
- Opportunity for monitoring by Native American Tribes will be extended during all ground disturbing activities.
- Preconstruction fencing and a minimum buffer between Action Area and newly identified archaeological site P-13-018800 (SITE-EHL-1) will be implemented.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials or Solid Waste

- Due to past uses for agriculture, prior to grading activities, soil shall be sampled and analyzed for metals and residual pesticides in accordance with California DTSC guidance

documents. Any soils qualifying as hazardous waste shall be delineated, removed, and properly disposed of off-site.

- During construction, if aggregate aboveground oil/fuel storage capacity is greater than 1,320 gallons (or completely buried 42,000 gallons) and there is a reasonable expectation of an oil discharge into or upon navigable waters of the U.S. or adjoining shorelines, a spill prevention, control, and countermeasures (SPCC) plan pursuant to 40 CFR 112 (or, for small quantities, a spill prevention and response plan) shall be prepared and implemented during construction and, if applicable, during site operations.
- A hazardous materials contingency plan shall be created and followed during demolition, excavation, and construction activities for the Proposed Action. Contingency Plan shall include, at a minimum:
 - Identification of known areas with hazardous waste and hazardous materials of concern
 - Procedures for temporary cessation of construction activity and evaluation of the level of environmental concern.
 - Procedures for restricting access to the contaminated area except for properly trained personnel.
 - Procedures for notification and reporting, including internal management and local agencies (e.g., Imperial County Fire Department, Imperial County Public Health Department), as needed.
 - Health and safety measures for removal and excavation of contaminated soil.
 - Procedures for characterizing and managing excavated soils.
 - Procedures for certification of completion of remediation.

Several other resources were analyzed for impacts from the Proposed Action which were inconsequential and indicated that mitigation measures were not deemed necessary. Further details of these resources and their impacts can be found in the EA.

Approved: MICHAEL NORRIS Digitally signed by MICHAEL NORRIS Date: 2024.04.16 06:51:37 -07'00' Date: 4/16/24

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