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WIIN Act Quarterly Meeting

2021 Reconsultation of the Long-Term
Operation of the CVP and SWP

June 14, 2022

Agenda

- Background
- Scoping Process and Comments
- Initial Alternatives Status
- Next Steps

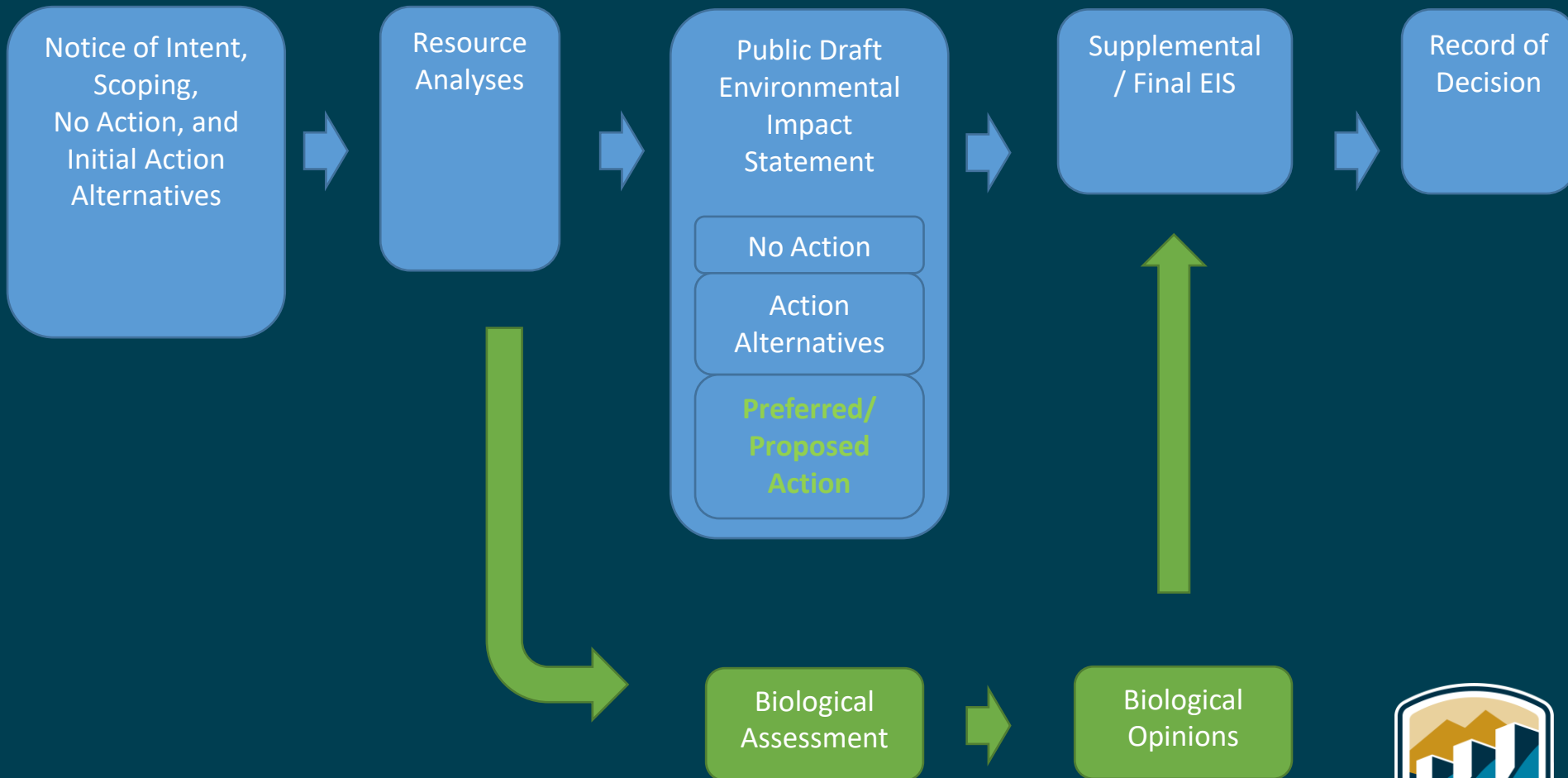


Background

- In September 2021, Reclamation requested to reinitiate consultation.
- Modifications would address Executive Order 13990 *Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis*
- Modifications would voluntarily reconcile CVP operating criteria with requirements of the SWP under the California Endangered Species Act.



NEPA and ESA Process





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Scoping Process and Comments

Scoping Process

- Reclamation published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on February 28, 2022 (FR 87, No. 39 p.11093)
- Reclamation hosted six virtual public scoping meetings between March 8 and March 17, 2022
- The scoping period closed on March 30, 2022
- A Scoping Report captured the comments received during the public comment period and scoping meetings

www.usbr.gov/mp/bdo

- The Public Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be developed with consideration of the public comments



Interest Groups who Submitted Comments

- Tribes
- Federal and State Agencies
- Public Water Management Agencies
- Farmers & Producers
- Commercial and Sport Fishing Organizations
- Power Utilities
- Conservation NGOs
- Local Citizens
- Commercial Water Developers



Project Purpose, Scope, and Analysis Related Comments

Examples:

- The Purpose and Need must clarify that meeting water supply contracts are a secondary project purpose after meeting compliance with ESA.
- The purpose, need, and alternatives should be tied directly to CVP statutory requirements and contractual obligations.
- Since it influences the range of alternatives, the scope of the Purpose and Need should state that multi-use water projects are primarily water supply projects paid for by local water agencies with long-term water supply contracts with Reclamation and DWR.
- The Purpose and Need should comply with CVPIA and reduce reliance on the Delta for water exports as required by the Delta Reform Act.



ESA Related Comments

Examples:

- Reclamation should not consider any of the actions challenged in the 2019 Biological Opinions for inclusion in any potential proposed actions or alternative analyses in this EIS because those issues are being litigated and should not be carried forward into this analysis.
- Reclamation has violated D-1641 water quality objectives that were part of the proposed action in 2021 and 2022 in a manner that causes additional impacts to listed species that were not considered in the 2019 Biological Opinions or ROD.



Biological Resources Related Comments

Examples:

- The EIS should consider Shasta strategies for cold-water pool management to protect winter-run Chinook salmon while minimizing water supply losses.
- Collaborate with California to alter existing Chinook salmon and steelhead hatchery practices to benefit wild populations of these species.
- The EIS should analyze the effects that temperature management measures to benefit salmonids would have on migratory birds and wetland habitat.



Agriculture Related Comments

Examples:

- Drinking water must be prioritized over agricultural exports.
- Reclamation should reduce diversion and export quantities by not providing water for high water-demand permanent crops
- Consider the importance of the Central Valley for agriculture production during the analysis.



Groundwater/Water Quality Related Comments

Examples:

- Include potential expanded on-farm recharge in strategic locations on the eastern edge of California's Central Valley, as well as proposed large-scale groundwater banking facilities.
- Fix issues relating to land subsidence along the Friant-Kern Canal, and intensive local development of groundwater managed aquifer replenishment projects in the San Joaquin River and Tulare Lake Basin, all along the Eastside of the Central Valley.
- Recognize impacts to water quality, including dry-year impacts and potential impacts on irrigation, crop yields, and salt-trapping in the Delta.



Cultural and Tribal Related Comments

Examples:

- The CVP must consider sovereignty of the Hoopa, Yurok, Karuk, and Wiyot tribes because actions that deplete water from rivers in northern California infringe on the tribes' sovereignty by affecting healthy salmon runs and availability of drinking water.
- Carryover storage in reservoirs should be saved for tribal trust responsibility.
- Salmon as a cultural resource should be analyzed in the draft EIS.



Water Storage and Conveyance Related Comments

Examples:

- The EIS should analyze the potential integration of the proposed Sites Reservoir Project with continued long-term CVP operations.
- Reclamation should analyze and mitigate for the negative impacts of reduced carryover storage for refuge water supply contractors in San Luis Reservoir.
- No alternative should consider releases from New Melones to meet Bay-Delta demands if they can be met by other reservoirs because New Melones is a priority for local water use.



Social and Economic Related Comments

Examples:

- The EIS should analyze the effects of reduced allocations to the district on poverty rates.
- Comply with Executive Order 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations” (February 16, 1994).
- In the Draft EIS, include information describing what was done to inform minority and low-income populations about the project and the potential impacts it will have on their communities.



Climate Change and Drought Related Comments

Examples:

- Reclamation should incorporate the potential for reduced streamflow conditions in the Delta and its watershed under climate change because a warmer climate will bring changes.
- Reclamation should develop a plan to meet minimum water quality objectives during droughts rather than relying on Temporary Urgency Change Petitions.
- Model and analyze effects during multi-year droughts such as 2016-2021.



Additional Comment Categories

- Recreation
- Regulatory
- Scoping Process
- Water Rights and Water Contracts
- Water Conservation
- Other



Next Steps for Scoping

- Public Draft EIS will be developed with consideration of the public scoping comments
- If after reviewing the scoping report you believe you submitted a comment and it was not included in the report, please reach out to sha-MPR-BDO@usbr.gov
- No new comments will be accepted at this time





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Questions?



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Initial Action Alternatives

Foundation for Initial Alternatives

- NEPA requires Reclamation to examine a reasonable range of alternatives
- Initial alternatives allow us to analyze a broad range of options before identifying the reasonable range of alternatives to be analyzed in the draft EIS
- Comments received from scoping will be considered during development of initial alternatives
- September WIIN Act quarterly meeting will discuss initial alternatives
- Goal is to complete a Proposed Action and alternatives for draft EIS by December 2022



Effects of Water Operations

- **Detailed Facilities Description**
 - Describes capabilities and operational limitations of physical structures, as well as authorities and related water delivery contracts
- **Water Operations and Ecosystem Analysis**
 - Captures broad trends and patterns for flow and water quality under hydrologic and operational conditions used to analyze effects for species
- **Species Conceptual Models**
 - Describes linkages between landscape attributes and environmental drivers to habitat attributes that may affect fish (stressors) based on life stage
- **Species Spatial and Temporal Domains**
 - Describes life stages and geographic locations for species
- **Deconstruction of Seasonal Operations Stressors**
 - Describes effects species may experience from components of Proposed Action.



Conservation Measures for Species

- **Stressor Summary**
 - Determines stressors likely to adversely affect species and identifies where conservation measures may be needed
- **Common Components**
 - Identifies components that will be common to all alternatives
- **Variable Components**
 - Identifies the variable components of each alternatives; these will be our initial alternatives



Knowledge Base Papers

The purpose of these reports is to compile datasets, literature, and models for analyzing the range of potential effects of key topics.

1. Delta Spring Outflow Management – Smelt Growth and Survival
2. Central Valley Tributary Habitat Restoration Effects on Salmonid Growth and Survival
3. Old and Middle River Management – Smelt, Chinook Salmon, and Steelhead Migration and Survival
4. Pulse Flow Effects on Salmonid Survival
5. Summer and Fall Habitat Management Actions – Smelt Growth and Survival
6. Shasta Cold Water Pool and Storage Management
7. Spring-run Chinook JPE
8. Steelhead JPE



Next Steps

- September 2022 Meeting – Initial Alternatives
- December 2022 Meeting – Public Draft Alternatives
- March 2023 Meeting – Public Draft EIS and Biological Assessment





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Questions?

Please reach out to: sha-MPR-BDO@usbr.gov

Additional information is provided on the Bay-Delta at:

<https://www.usbr.gov/mp/bdo/lto/index.html>