

United States Department of the Interior

**Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region
Sacramento, California**

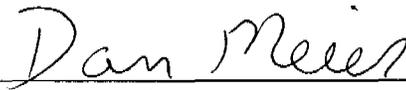
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**THE TEMPORARY ACQUISITION OF WATER
FROM SEMITROPIC WATER STORAGE DISTRICT FOR KERN NATIONAL
WILDLIFE REFUGE FOR WATER YEARS: 2005 - 2009**

Recommended:


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Date:

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FONSI Number:

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Temporary Acquisition of Water from Semitropic Water Storage District for Kern National Wildlife Refuge for Water Years: 2005 - 2009

There is a need to purchase water during 2005 through 2009 water years to meet Kern National Wildlife Refuge (KNWR) Level 4 requirements to provide critical wetland habitats for the benefit of migratory waterfowl, other migratory birds, and wetland-dependent wildlife. Pursuant to Section 3406(d)(2) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA), the Bureau of Reclamation is required to provide Level 4 water to meet optimum refuge water management needs.

The Proposed Action is for the Department of Interior to purchase up to 17,500 acre-feet of water annually from Semitropic Water Storage District (SWSD) to meet KNWR Level 4 water supply requirements for water years 2005 - 2009. The Proposed Action to purchase up to 17,500 acre-feet of water per water year would provide up to 15,050 acre-feet to KNWR after conveyance losses, which are assumed to be 14 percent of the purchased amount.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared which evaluates potential environmental impacts, both beneficial and adverse, associated with the Proposed Action and a No-Action Alternative. The Final EA is attached for reference. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, Reclamation has determined that the purchase of water from SWSD for use at KNWR would not result in a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based upon the following:

- Water purchased from SWSD is considered to be temporarily in excess by SWSD due to adequate water supplies from storage and hydrologic conditions. The water, if not purchased, would be exported for delivery to other willing buyers or placed in storage under the No-Action Alternative. No changes to Delta pumping operations would occur with implementation of the Proposed Action.
- Total return flows and the water quality of the return flows in SWSD and KNWR would not be substantially altered by the Proposed Action.
- Land uses would not change in SWSD or KNWR under the Proposed Action.
- The Proposed action will not adversely affect any Federal or State-listed special status species.

- Recreational opportunities at KNWR would improve due to the increased water supply. Recreational opportunities in the Delta, streams, or reservoirs would not be affected under the Proposed Action.
- Cultural resources would not be affected due to the Proposed Action because no land use changes or new construction would occur.
- Indian Trust Assets would not be adversely affected by the Proposed Action because none occur within the SWSD or KNWR.
- Minority or disadvantaged populations or communities would not be adversely impacted by the Proposed Action.
- The Proposed Action would not contribute to a cumulatively significant adverse impact when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions given the relatively small amount of water involved, and the short-term and temporary nature of the water acquisition.