

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Finding Of No Significant Impact

Todisco Ranch Conservation Project

FONSI 16-25-MP

Recommended by:


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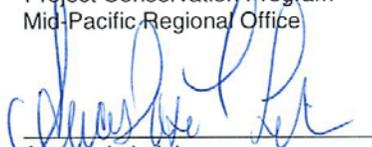
Date: 12/29/16

Concurred by:


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Date: 12/30/2016

Approved by:


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U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region

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1 Background

Reclamation will provide \$576,000 from the Central Valley Project Conservation Program (CVPCP) and the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Habitat Restoration Program (HRP) to the Sierra Foothill Conservancy (SFC) to purchase a conservation easement on the Todisco Ranch in Madera County. The easement will conserve 480 acres of grasslands, oak woodlands, stock pond, vernal pools and wetland swales in Madera County to protect and conserve critical aquatic and upland habitats for the Federal and state threatened California tiger salamander, as well as habitat for vernal pool species including the federally threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp and potentially the federally endangered vernal pool tadpole shrimp.

The environmental assessment (EA) was available for public review on November 9, 2016. The review period ended on November 23, 2016. No comments were received on the EA.

2 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

2.1 No Action

Reclamation will not provide \$576,000 from the CVPCP and HRP to the SFC to purchase a conservation easement on the Todisco Ranch to conserve 480 acres of grasslands, oak woodlands, stock pond, vernal pools and wetland swales in Madera County to protect and conserve critical aquatic and upland habitats for threatened and endangered species. SFC will be required to obtain the \$576,000 from other public or private sources. If alternative funding cannot be secured, the Proposed Action could not move forward.

2.2 Proposed Action

Reclamation will provide \$576,000 from the CVPCP and HRP to the SFC to purchase a conservation easement on the Todisco Ranch to conserve 480 acres of grasslands, oak woodlands, stock pond, vernal pools and wetland swales in Madera County to protect and conserve critical aquatic and upland habitats for threatened and endangered species. SFC will do the following:

1. Enter into a conservation easement purchase and sale agreement with the landowner.

2. Obtain and review the property's title report, resolve title related issues as needed, develop a conservation easement for the Ranch, complete a Baseline Documentation Report, and obtain title insurance for the easement.
3. Purchase and record the conservation easement.
4. Transfer the conservation easement to SFC long-term stewardship. SFC will transition the project to its Stewardship Director who will schedule yearly monitoring visits with the landowner to insure that the property is being used and managed in conformance with the terms and conditions of the conservation easement. Should the landowner's actions deviate from those allowed in the easement language, SFC will take action to correct it.

3 Findings

Based on the attached EA, Reclamation finds that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The EA describes the existing environmental resources in the area of the Proposed Action, and evaluates the effects of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives on the resources of Todisco Ranch. This EA was prepared in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior Regulations (43 CFR Part 46). Effects on environmental resources were examined and found to be absent or minor. That analysis is provided in the attached EA, and the analysis in the EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

Following are the reasons why the impacts of the proposed action are not significant:

1. The proposed action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)).
2. The proposed action will not significantly impact natural resources and unique geographical characteristics such as historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order (EO) 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3) and 43 CFR 46.215(b)).
3. The proposed action will not have possible effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).
4. The proposed action will neither establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).
5. There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR

1508.27(b)(4)).

6. The proposed action will not have significant cumulative impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
7. The proposed action will not adversely affect any districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)). Pursuant to 54 USC § 306108, commonly known as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800, Reclamation determined the undertaking has no potential to cause effects on historic properties and therefore, will result in no significant impacts to cultural resources.
8. The proposed action will not affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).
9. The proposed action will not violate Federal, state, tribal or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).
10. The proposed action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).
11. Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898).
12. The proposed action will not limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007 and 512 DM 3).