

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

MID-PACIFIC REGION

**SOUTH-CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AREA OFFICE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA**

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**SANTA CLARA CONDUIT DRAINING, INSPECTION, REPAIR AND REFILLING
SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT**

FONSI-08-78

Recommended by:

Patti Clinton
Natural Resource Specialist
South Central California Area Office

Date: _____

Concurred by:

Judia Tapia
Supervisory
Natural Resource Specialist

Date: _____

Concurred by:

Laura Myers
Resource Management Division Chief
South Central California Area Office

Date: _____

Approved by:

Will Shipp
Deputy Area Manager
South Central California Area Office

Date: _____

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT SANTA CLARA CONDUIT DRAINING, INSPECTION, AND REPAIR

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that the approval of the Santa Clara Conduit project is not a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an environmental impact statement is not required. This Finding of No Significant Impact is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA) Number EA-08-78, *Santa Clara Conduit Draining, Inspection, and Repair, Santa Clara Valley Water District* and is hereby incorporated by reference. Best management practices (BMPs) and mitigation are included with the Proposed Action and can be found in EA-08-78, *Santa Clara Conduit Draining, Inspection, and Repair, Santa Clara Valley Water District*.

BACKGROUND

The Santa Clara Valley Water District prepared the *Santa Clara Valley Water District Pipeline Maintenance Program Environmental Impact Report* (#2005101047, notice of determination dated 11/13/2007) that details the activities for their conveyance system. Reclamation prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA) and biological assessment for the *Pipeline Maintenance Program for the Pacheco and Santa Clara Conduits and Tunnels, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Draft EA-06-110* that details the actions for the Pacheco and Santa Clara Conduit pipeline maintenance. Public comment period closed November 9, 2007. Finalization of the EA is pending the biological opinion from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service).

FINDINGS

Air Quality: Traffic is a main generator of particulate matter and precursors to ozone; however, activities will require relatively small maintenance fleets. The contribution of pollutants from maintenance vehicles relative to the contribution from the existing traffic in the Proposed Action area will be indiscernible.

Most pipeline repair work will occur within a pipeline. Repair could involve some welding, soldering, and cementing of joints and pipeline components; however, the scale and size of repair work will be limited to a few areas. Repair work emissions will not interfere with implementation of the Basin Plan.

Surface Water Resources: Draining the pipeline will cause temporary increases in the rate and volume of runoff in receiving waters in the Proposed Action area. Discharge of pipeline water into local waterways, open fields, swales, or wetlands will be likely.

Turbidity in receiving water could increase. Turbidity, temperature, and pH will be monitored during discharges and water will be treated or discharge rates will be modified if Regional Water Quality Control Board objectives were exceeded.

Potential impacts to hydrology and water resources associated with the Proposed Action include potential to cause erosion, degrade water quality, and increase rates of runoff or flooding. Erosion during maintenance activities is minimized through the Erosion Control Plan, Bank Protection Work, and re-vegetation.

The Proposed Action has a potential to degrade water quality if exposed soils are flushed into waterways. Receiving water and discharge water will be monitored by a trained individual for turbidity prior to the discharge and periodically throughout the drainage operation. Silty or turbid water from project activities will not be discharged into streams, lakes or storm drains.

Additionally, a fast rise and fall in water levels could cause bank failures and deposition of soil in the channel. Flow rates can be manipulated to control discharges and avoid sudden changes in receiving water flows. Receiving waters and flow paths will be evaluated for erosion potential and observed for erosion at the time of discharge. Pipeline discharge rates will be modified as needed to avoid erosion. If necessary, flow velocities will be reduced through implementation of energy dissipation BMPs and mitigation measures such as small settling ponds which function to pond water prior to release. Soils and vegetation at discharge sites will be protected using a variety of conventional erosion control BMPs.

Bank protection work will occur prior to a planned discharge in areas where banks within 100 feet of the discharge point that appear to show signs of erosion or instability. Bank stabilization (hardscape methods) will be assessed before pipeline shutdown. Bank stabilization plans will be prepared prior to the work. Bank stabilization will minimize erosion effects.

Groundwater Resources: Draining the pipeline will cause temporary increases in the rate and volume of runoff in receiving waters in the Proposed Action area. Discharge of pipeline water into local waterways, open fields, swales, or wetlands will be likely. As the quantity of water that will percolate to the basin is small, it will not have a substantial effect on groundwater quality or quantity.

Land Use: The pipeline will be drained, inspected, repaired, and refilled. Approval of the Proposed Action will not lead to any land use changes.

Biological Resources: Reclamation prepared a biological assessment for the PMP and submitted it along with a request for consultation with Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Informal consultation has been completed with NMFS on the pipeline maintenance program. The NMFS “not likely to adversely affect” letter covers the Proposed Action. Reclamation has prepared a biological assessment for the Proposed Action and the Service will utilize it to prepare a biological opinion for the species and critical habitat under their jurisdiction. This EA will not be finalized until ESA compliance has been completed.

Geology: The Santa Clara Conduit is an existing structure already in place. The Proposed will not create additional geologic and soil-effects related to seismicity, including rupture along faults, subsidence, and liquefaction. There may be some geologic effects to the pipeline; however, these are previously existing effects and not a result of the Proposed Action.

Cultural Resources: The Proposed Action will result in Reclamation approving draining, inspection, maintenance, and refilling of the Santa Clara Conduit. As this feature is not yet 50 years old, it is not considered historic properties as defined by the regulations at 36 CFR Part 60.4. When the Santa Clara Conduit was constructed, grounds in which it was constructed were significantly disturbed. Barring any new excavation into intact subsurface deposits, the Proposed Action needed to maintain and enhance the water conveyance feature will have no potential to affect historic properties pursuant to the regulations at 36 CFR Part 800.3(a)(1).

Indian Trust Assets: There are no tribes possessing legal property interests held in trust by the United States in the water involved with this action, nor is there such a property interest in the lands designated to receive the water proposed in this action. This action will have no adverse effect on Indian Trust Assets.

Socioeconomic Resources: Maintenance of existing facilities does not include provision of additional capacity for growth. No new water conveyance facilities, roads, or other infrastructure will be included as part of the Proposed Action. There will be no growth inducing impacts associated with implementing corrective maintenance defined under the Proposed Action.

The maintenance labor will be sourced from the existing SCVWD mechanical, engineering, and field staff. The maintenance work has been performed on pipelines since initial installation in the 1960s on an as needed basis. The Proposed Action will not result in substantial increased demands for labor that could lead to population growth within the Proposed Action area.

Environmental Justice The Proposed Action will not disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations and communities.

Cumulative Impacts: The Proposed Action when added to other past, present, and future actions does not contribute to cumulative impacts to environmental resources.

Approval will not have highly controversial or uncertain environmental effects or involve unique or unknown risks. Impacts associated with the Proposed Action are minor, short-term, localized and temporary in nature; therefore, there are no significant cumulative impacts associated with this project.