

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Environmental Assessment/Finding of No New Significant Impact

Grassland Incremental Level 4 Groundwater Acquisition Pilot Project - Water Years 2012-2013

United States Bureau of Reclamation

**In cooperation with:
Grassland Water District**

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Mid Pacific Region
Sacramento, California

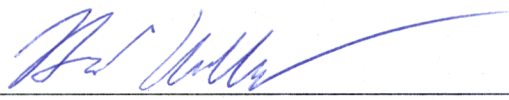
June 2012




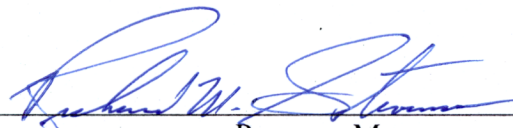
**United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region
Sacramento, CA**

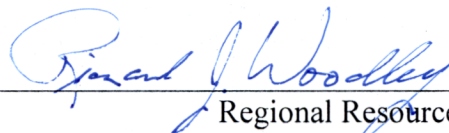
FINDING OF NO NEW SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**GRASSLAND INCREMENTAL LEVEL 4 GROUNDWATER ACQUISITION
PILOT PROJECT- WATER YEARS 2012-2012**

Recommended:  6/18/2012
Natural Resources Specialist
Mid-Pacific Regional Office
Date

Concur:  6/19/2012
Refuge Water Supply Program Manager
Mid-Pacific Regional Office
Date

Concur:  6/19/2012
Program Management Branch Chief
Mid-Pacific Regional Office
Date

Approved:  6/19/2012
Regional Resources Manager
Mid-Pacific Regional Office
Date

Finding of No New Significant Impact

GRASSLAND INCREMENTAL LEVEL 4 GROUNDWATER ACQUISITION PILOT PROJECT- WATER YEARS 2012-2013

This Finding of No New Significant Impact (FONNSI) is supplemental to the August 15, 2008 Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact for the **GRASSLAND INCREMENTAL LEVEL 4 GROUNDWATER ACQUISITION PILOT PROJECT- WATER YEARS 2008-2010 (EA/FONSI)**. The 2008 EA/FONSI is incorporated by reference into this FONNSI and is included as Attachment 1. Also incorporated by reference into this FONNSI is Grassland Water District's California Environmental Quality Act document titled "Addendum to Initial Study and Negative Declaration and a Monitoring Plan", dated May 29, 2012 (IS/ND). This IS/ND is included as Attachment 2. Both the EA/FONSI and the IS/ND documents are incorporated by reference in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality's March 6, 2012 Memorandum on "Improving the Process for Preparing Efficient and Timely Environmental Reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act". The material contained in the EA/FONSI and IS/ND describe and disclose all relevant issues associated with the proposed action. The information in the EA/FONSI and IS/ND effectively evaluates and supports the conclusions in the FONNSI for issues related to surface water resources, groundwater resources, land use, fish and wildlife resources, recreation, cultural resources, air quality, Indian Trust Assets, and Environmental Justice. With respect to two of the key issues associated with the proposed action: groundwater and surface water, the analyses and information contained in the IS/ND is updated for the current proposed action and supersedes all previous documentation addressing groundwater and surface water for this project.

The EA/IS were distributed for public review in 2008. No comments were received on the IS. One comment from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board was received in response to the EA. A response to CVRWQCB was provided. On May 8, 2012 a copy of the IS/ND was provided to the CVRWQCB for review.

There continues to be a need to purchase water for critical wetland habitats to benefit migratory waterfowl, other migratory birds, and wetland dependant wildlife. Reclamation obtains refuge water supplies from willing sellers, pursuant to Section 3406(d)(2) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA). The proposed action is the Bureau of Reclamation's purchase of up to approximately 10,000 acre-feet (AF) of water per year (through February 28, 2014) from the Grassland Water District (GWD) to meet refuge water needs. All water will be provided from existing wells, previously used for irrigation by local landowners. Water would be conveyed using existing infrastructure. No new water conveyance construction would occur.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, Reclamation has found that the acquisition of water from, and conveyance to GWD will not result in a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Reclamation's finding that implementation of the proposed action will result in no new significant impact to the quality of the human environment is supported by the following factors:

1. Surface water and groundwater - The proposed action will result in no substantial change or impact to Central Valley Project (CVP) operations, nor to Delta pumping by the CVP. The acquired water will be delivered to the refuges using existing conveyance facilities. The conveyance of water will not impact existing water supplies. Implementation of groundwater pumping monitoring and management measures will ensure that the proposed action will not result in any significant adverse effect to existing water quality or groundwater levels.
2. Land Use – The proposed action will not adversely impact land management or agricultural practices within the Grassland Resource Conservation District (GRCD) or GWD.
3. Biological resources - The proposed action will not result in any physical changes to the environment resulting in significant adverse impacts to biological resources.
4. Threatened and endangered species – Implementation of the Monitoring Plan will ensure that conditions in GWD and GRCD that support biological resources would not change. No natural waterways containing sensitive fishes will be affected. On May 1, 2012, Reclamation provided a memo to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requesting that the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the Federally listed threatened giant garter snake. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with Reclamation's determination in a memo dated June 18, 2012. No further consultation is required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Habitat types and conditions that support biological resources in GWD would not change. The proposed action would support existing land uses and conditions.
5. Cultural resources – Based on the information available for the area and in accordance with the review conducted in 2008, there would be no impact to cultural resources. The project does not involve any construction or ground disturbing activities.
6. Indian Trust Assets - The absence of Indian Trust Assets in areas affected by the proposed action precludes any impact to this resource.
7. Environmental justice - Minority or disadvantaged populations or communities will not be adversely impacted by the proposed action.
8. Cumulative effects - The proposed action will 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.