

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Finding Of No New Significant Impact

Riparian Restoration for Riparian Brush Rabbit Refugia on the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge 2011 Additional Funding

Recommended: *Doug Kleinsmith* Date: 4/25/11
Environmental Specialist

Recommended: *D. C. Smith* Date: 4/28/11
Program Manager, Central Valley
Project Conservation Program

Approved: *James H. L. Lipp* Date: 4/28/2011
Chief, Division of Environmental
Affairs

FONSI No. 11-05-MP



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

Background

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) proposes to provide \$136,521 from the Central Valley Project Conservation Program (CVPCP) to River Partners to vegetate 4.5 acres of natural high ground at Lara Field at the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge (SJRNWR). Lara Field is currently dominated by annual grasses, and will be planted with dense thickets of native species. These additional funds also include costs associated with project planning, management, and monitoring (PMM) of the Lara Field restoration. In addition, \$42,246 from the CVPCP will be added to the project to cover the PMM costs associated with Lara Levee habitat restoration. This project builds on the successes of prior restoration efforts to restore essential native vegetation habitat corridors and upland refugia for riparian brush rabbit (*Sylvilagus bachmani riparus* or RBR) and other terrestrial species.

The project is located on the 3,166-acre West Unit of the SJRNWR, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The purpose of the action is to restore native vegetation on uplands at SJRNWR to provide habitat for priority species, including RBR and riparian woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes riparia*).

Findings

Reclamation prepared an environmental assessment (EA) on *Riparian Restoration for Riparian Brush Rabbit Refugia on the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge* in August 2010 which is incorporated by reference. Reclamation signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) 10-33-MP on September 1, 2010 based on this EA for the initial funding to vegetate 1.8 miles (17.5 acres) of both sides of Lara Levee for restoration at the SJRNWR for the RBR. The proposed action and impact descriptions in the EA also include the action described above and thus the EA does not need to be supplemented. The Division of Environmental Affairs of the Mid-Pacific Region of Reclamation has found that the proposed action is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required for carrying out the proposed action. The EA complies with the Council of Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations and other requirements such as the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and local and State requirements. It meets Reclamation's public involvement requirements.

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

1. On May 10, 2010, Reclamation initiated informal consultation with the USFWS on the activities for projects in the CVPCP and the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Habitat Restoration Program for Fiscal Year 2010. The USFWS concurred on August 17, 2010 that the projects, including riparian restoration for endangered species on the SJRNWR, are not likely to adversely affect listed species.
2. The Proposed Action is the type of activity that has the potential to affect historic properties. The USFWS completed Section 106 compliance pursuant to their Programmatic Agreement. No historic properties were identified within the project area. Reclamation notified the State Historic Preservation Officer that Reclamation's responsibilities under Section 106 of the NHPA have been fulfilled.

3. The proposed action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets.
4. Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities.
5. The proposed action will not have significant cumulative impacts.
6. There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial.