

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Madera Irrigation District Water Conservation, Telemetry Upgrade & Improvement Project

FONSI 13-21-MP

Recommended by:

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Introduction

The United States Department of Interior (DOI) Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) will provide DOI's WaterSMART Program: Water and Energy Efficiency grant to the Madera Irrigation District (MID) to construct the Water Conservation, Telemetry Upgrade & Improvement Project (Proposed Action). The Proposed Action/Project area is located 18 miles northwest of the City of Fresno, in Madera County, California. MID has three sources of water: the San Joaquin River, Fresno River, and pre-1914 water rights to Big Creek and Soquel Creek. This water is stored at either Millerton Lake behind Friant Dam or Hensley Lake behind Hidden Dam. MID's primary connection to Reclamation activities is through contracted water deliveries. MID receives on average approximately 179,000 acre-feet/year (afy) of federal and non-federal water supplies. MID's water losses are approximately 61,000 afy in above average rainfall seasons and approximately 9,000 afy in below average rainfall seasons due to imbalances in channel flows, unanticipated high flows from storm waters piped from the City of Madera, and unforeseen dike breaching caused by ground squirrels burrowing into the embankments.

The need for the Proposed Action, consistent with the purpose of Reclamation's WaterSMART Program, is to conserve and use water more efficiently and increase the use of renewable energy by advancing system-wide automation of MID's canals with precise metered control gate operations and solar-powered remote monitoring. This improvement would allow MID to more efficiently manage each growers' needs and maintain a water balance throughout each canal segment without excess water flow resulting in spills.

Reclamation prepared the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the effects of the Proposed Action. The EA was available for public review from March 7, 2014 to March 13, 2014. One comment was received from A T.E.E.M. Electrical Engineering, Inc. suggesting that MID integrate the Rubicon Supervisory Control and Data Acquisitions (SCADA) software with MID's existing ClearSCADA software. The suggestion was forwarded to MID for their consideration. No additional impacts to the environment were identified.

No Action

Reclamation would not provide grant funds to MID to support construction of the Proposed Action. The irrigation system currently in place would continue to operate and provide irrigation service to its users. Canal spill and compensatory early upstream releases from stored allocations behind federal dams would continue. There would be no increase in water conservation and management.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action consists of Reclamation providing grant funds to MID to support the construction of the Water Conservation, Telemetry Upgrade & Improvement Project. The Proposed Action would involve retrofitting or replacing 17 manual check structures and control gates within MID's extensive canal system with automated flume gates and flow meters. MID also proposes to integrate remote sensing capability with additional solar panel powered SCADA

system connections to these and three additional sites. The grant funds would also go toward the SCADA master station setup at MID's main office.

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 Proposed Action area, evaluates the effects of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives on the resources, and proposes measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects. The EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and DOI Regulations (43 CFR Part 46). The analysis provided in the attached EA is incorporated by reference.

1. The Proposed Action will not significantly affect air quality or increase greenhouse gas emissions.
2. The Proposed Action will not significantly affect water resources.
3. The Proposed Action will not significantly affect threatened or endangered species.
4. The Proposed Action will not affect historic properties.
5. The Proposed Action will not affect Indian Trust Assets.
6. The Proposed Action will not affect Indian sacred sites.
7. The Proposed Action will not disproportionately affect minorities and low income populations and communities.
8. The Proposed Action will not result in adverse cumulative effects.
9. There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial.