

# RECLAMATION

## *Managing Water in the West*

### FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

#### **Temporary Transfer of Water from the City of Redding's Sacramento River Settlement Contract to the City of Redding's Central Valley Project Water Service Contract Mid-Pacific Region**

FONSI 15-02-NCAO

Recommended by:



Date:

1/14/2015

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

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# **Introduction**

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Northern California Area Office of the Bureau of Reclamation, has determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for the temporary transfer of up to 2,000 acre-feet (af) of water from the City of Redding's (City) Settlement Contract to the City's Buckeye Contract. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA) Number EA-15-02-NCAO, Temporary Transfer of Water from the City of Redding's Sacramento River Settlement Contract to the City of Redding's Central Valley Project Water Service Contract Mid-Pacific Region, which is hereby incorporated by reference.

## **Background**

The City of Redding (City) has two distinct water contracts with the Bureau of Reclamation, which have identical service areas. One is a Sacramento River Settlement Contract (Contract # 14-06-200-2871A-R-1), hereinafter referred to as the Settlement Contract, that provides for up to 17,850 acre-feet (af) of base supply and 3,150 af of Central Valley Project (Project) water. The other is the Project Water service contact (Contract #14-06-200-5272A-LTR1), hereafter referred to as the Buckeye Contract, that provides up to 6,140 af of Project Water.

In conformance with Article 3(e) of the City's Settlement Contract, the City has and continues to request Reclamations permission to transfer Project Water from the Settlement Contract to the Buckeye Contract to meet potential short falls in water to allow continued service to areas served by the Buckeye Contract.

## **Alternatives Including Proposed Action**

### **No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative would consist of Reclamation not approving the transfer of Project Water from the Settlement Contract to the Buckeye Contract.

### **Proposed Action**

Reclamation would approve an annual transfer of up to 2,000 af of Project Water from the Settlement Contract to the Buckeye Contract until February 28, 2023. The transferred Project Water would be delivered to the City's Buckeye Contract with Whiskeytown Reservoir as it source. Project Water would serve the Buckeye Contract service area through an existing point of diversion on the Spring Creek Conduit which is located above the Spring Creek and Keswick powerplants. This water would be used to meet existing M&I needs typically of the winter months. The transferred water would become part of the Buckeye Contract with an appropriate reduction in Project Water from the remaining Settlement Contract amount of the present contract water year. Transfer water would not interfere with CVP operations. Existing facilities

would be used for transfer water and no new ground disturbing activities are anticipated. Only minor adjustments to distribution quantities of each existing contract would be reflected in the annual accounting. .

## **Findings**

The attached EA describes the existing environmental resources in the Proposed Action area and evaluates the effects of the No Action and Proposed Action Alternatives on the resources. Effects on several environmental resources were examined and found to be absent or minor. This analysis is provided in the attached EA, and the analysis in the EA is hereby incorporated by reference. This FONSI is based on the following:

### **Surface Water Resources**

Under the Proposed Action, the transfer of water from the Settlement Contract account to the Buckeye Service contract would ensure adequate water for the areas served by this contract. Additionally, this water would be made available through gravity flow in existing infrastructure. There would be no noticeable differences in quantity or quality of water returning to the Sacramento River.

The transfer of up to 2,000 af of Project Water from Whiskeytown Reservoir would only require minor operational changes. The quantity and timing of delivery would occur at a rate lower than treatment facility capacity (less than 33 cfs) resulting in a relatively slow demand over time. This slow delivery results in only minor operational changes required at the Spring Creek Conduit to meet this need. Additionally, the basin drainage area above Whiskeytown Dam is large enough (203 square miles) to provide more than enough natural runoff to offset this need alone, so that there would not be any anticipated need to increase diversions from Carr Power House from the Trinity River basin. Furthermore, the volume of water contemplated is very small relative to the winter-time storage of Whiskeytown (i.e., 210 thousand acre-feet), and within basin natural runoff, so that any water elevation change that could occur in Whiskeytown Reservoir would be insignificant. For similar reasons, the reduction in flow of the Sacramento River between Keswick and the FWTP would be insignificant because it would be small relative to the mainstem flow and would be temporary in nature. Therefore, there would be no adverse impacts from the Proposed Action to surface water resources.

### **Hydropower Generation**

The City's proposed transfer of up to 2,000 acre-feet (AF) of Project Water would change the delivery point from downstream of Reclamation's Spring Creek and Keswick generators to an alternate upstream delivery point known as the Spring Creek Conduit that serves the Buckeye Contract. As a consequence, the transfer water diverted at this different location would result in a loss in hydropower generation at Spring Creek and Keswick Power plants. This loss of power production would affect the cost recovery borne by other Project customers. As a consequence, the City would be required to replace the value of the energy associated with the foregone generation created by a transfer, consistent with their Contract with WAPA.

## **Biological Resources**

As with the No Action Alternative, under the Proposed Action no significant change would occur to the quantity or quality of water resources in areas affecting listed species or their habitat. Use of the different point of diversion is located upstream of impassable barriers to listed fish species. In addition, no impacts to listed fish species are anticipated because the action would not result in any significant impact to the flow of the Sacramento River between Keswick Dam and the FWTP and the transfers would occur during the winter when water temperature-related issues are not a concern.. Similarly, there would be no additional diversions through Judge Francis Carr Powerhouse from the Trinity River basin so that natural resources of that basin would not be affected.

## **Cumulative Impacts**

The Proposed Action could be implemented in successive years due to extended drought that may result in reduced Project Water allocations to M&I. As a result, the overall effect of the Proposed Action would be to maintain current water supply demands for areas served by both water contracts that would otherwise not be available in the absence of approval. In doing so, the Proposed Action serves to eliminate cumulative adverse impacts that could otherwise occur in the No Action Alternative.

There would be no cumulative impacts to the biological resources in either the No Action or Proposed Action alternatives. Water would be conveyed periodically and temporarily in existing infrastructure and at a time of the year that cumulative impacts would not occur.

The Proposed Action is not anticipated to have any cumulative impacts on hydroelectric generation because the action would be periodic and temporary in nature and represents a relatively small quantity of water. In addition, there are no other known significant changes to any hydroelectric generation that could be influenced by this action. Furthermore, a contract between the City and WAPA is in place to compensate WAPA when energy production is altered.

## **Indian Trust Assets**

The closest Indian Trust Asset is the Redding Rancheria immediately south of the City, and hence across town from the area of proposed water use. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not affect the City's ability to service the Rancheria or its casino, gas station, and hotel properties

## **Indian Sacred Sites**

Reclamation has determined that there would be no impacts to Indian sacred sites as a result of the Proposed Action because it would not affect the physical integrity of sacred sites or limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites.

## **Cultural Resources**

Under the Proposed Action alternative, the water transfer would only use existing conveyance infrastructure and does not change land use but does maintain water use by the City of Redding. In doing so, the Proposed Action would merely allow continued service to existing residential developments. Cultural resources would not be affected by the Proposed Action

## **Environmental Justice**

The No Action Alternative could disproportionately affect minority and low-income populations if their distribution was uneven within the water service boundaries served by the Buckeye Contract. In contrast, implementation of the Proposed Action would help maintain water service to areas served by the Buckeye Contract.