

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

## **Exchange Agreement for Water in San Luis Reservoir and Millerton Lake Between Kern-Tulare Water District, Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District, and the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors**

FONSI-15-015



## **Mission Statements**

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and manage the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provide scientific and other information about those resources; and honor its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

**BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**  
**South-Central California Area Office, Fresno, California**

**FONSI-15-015**

**Exchange Agreement for Water in San  
Luis Reservoir and Millerton Lake  
Between Kern-Tulare Water District,  
Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District, and  
the San Joaquin River Exchange  
Contractors**

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# Introduction

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 Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for the facilitation of an exchange between Kern-Tulare Water (Kern-Tulare), Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District (Delano-Earlimart), and the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors (Exchange Contractors). This draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA)-15-015, *Exchange Agreement for Water in San Luis Reservoir and Millerton Lake Between Kern-Tulare Water District, Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District, and the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

## Background

The Exchange Contractors hold historic senior water rights to water supplies in the San Joaquin River watershed. In exchange for the Central Valley Project's (CVP's) regulation and diversion of the San Joaquin River water at Millerton Lake/Friant Dam, Reclamation agreed to provide water to the Exchange Contractors from the CVP's Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) supply.

Due to the current hydrologic and regulatory conditions, Reclamation informed the Exchange Contractors that only 75 percent of the Exchange Contractor's water supply can be delivered (650,000 acre-feet [AF] during a critical year) in 2015 pursuant to the 1967 Second Amended Exchange Contract (Contract No. Ilr-1144r). However, only a portion of this can be met from the CVP's Delta supplies. As a result, there is a need to provide San Joaquin River water from Millerton Lake pursuant to contract obligations.

In anticipation of San Joaquin river water being delivered to the Exchange Contractors, Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart have proposed to exchange some of their previously banked CVP water supplies for a portion of the San Joaquin River water that would be released by Reclamation from Millerton Lake into the San Joaquin River channel for delivery to the Exchange Contractors at Mendota Pool.

## Proposed Action

Reclamation proposes to facilitate exchanges between Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart and the Exchange Contractors as described below.

**Kern-Tulare Proposed Exchange**

Kern-Tulare proposes to exchange 9,000 AF of previously banked CVP water within Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District (Rosedale-Rio Bravo) and 2,000 AF of previously banked CVP water within West Kern Water Storage District (West Kern) for a like amount of San Joaquin River water, plus an additional amount that would have been lost due to conveyance in the San Joaquin River channel (potentially up to 25 percent depending on flow rates and schedules). The San Joaquin River water would be released from Millerton Lake into the Friant-Kern Canal for delivery to Kern-Tulare through their existing turnouts. To make the banked water available to the Exchange Contractors, Kern-Tulare's previously banked CVP water would be exchanged with Rosedale-Rio Bravo and West Kern for a like amount of State Water Project (SWP) water available in San Luis Reservoir per their approved banking and exchange agreements. The exchanged water would then be released from San Luis Reservoir and delivered to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool via the Delta-Mendota Canal.

**Delano-Earlimart Proposed Exchange**

Delano-Earlimart proposes to exchange up to 10,000 AF of previously banked CVP water within Rosedale-Rio Bravo for a like amount of San Joaquin River water, plus an additional amount that would have been lost due to conveyance in the San Joaquin River channel (potentially up to 25 percent depending on flow rates and schedules). The San Joaquin River water would be released from Millerton Lake into the Friant-Kern Canal for delivery to Delano-Earlimart through their existing turnouts. To make the banked water available to the Exchange Contractors, Delano-Earlimart's previously banked CVP water would be exchanged with Rosedale-Rio Bravo for a like amount of SWP water available in San Luis Reservoir per their approved banking and exchange agreement. The exchanged water would then be released from San Luis Reservoir and delivered to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool via the Delta-Mendota Canal.

**Environmental Commitments**

Reclamation, Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart, and the Exchange Contractors shall implement the environmental protection measures listed in Table 1 of EA-15-015 in order to avoid or reduce environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action. Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

**Findings**

Reclamation's finding that implementation of the Proposed Action will result in no significant impact to the quality of the human environment is supported by the following findings:

## **Resources Eliminated from Detailed Analysis**

As described in Table 2 of EA-15-015, Reclamation analyzed the affected environment and determined that the Proposed Action does not have the potential to cause direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse effects to the following resources: air quality, cultural resources, environmental justice, global climate change, Indian Sacred Sites, Indian Trust Assets, land use, or socioeconomic resources.

## **Water Resources**

Under the Proposed Action, up to 11,000 AF of Kern-Tulare's and up to 10,000 AF of Delano-Earlimart's previously banked CVP water supplies would be exchanged for SWP water in San Luis Reservoir pursuant to their previously approved banking and exchange programs. The exchanged water would then be delivered to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool via the Delta-Mendota Canal, the preferred point of delivery for the Exchange Contractors. As this water is existing supplies held in San Luis Reservoir for Rosedale-Rio Bravo and West Kern, no additional Delta pumping would be needed to facilitate this exchange. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not affect CVP or SWP operations and would not change existing diversion points from the Delta under Reclamation's or the California Department of Water Resource's water rights permits. The Proposed Action would not interfere with Reclamation's obligations to deliver water to other contractors, wetland habitat areas, or for other environmental purposes.

In exchange for the previously banked CVP water delivered to the Exchange Contractors, a like amount of San Joaquin River water plus an additional amount that would have been lost due to conveyance in the San Joaquin River channel (potentially up to 25 percent depending on flow rates and schedules) would be released from Millerton Lake and delivered to Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart via the Friant-Kern Canal.

As a result of the exchange, 2015 Friant-Kern Canal operations would have an increased water supply for conveyance all the way to Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart's turnouts. The increased flows would benefit other Friant contractors that are pursuing other operational exchange opportunities in the canal.

The exchanges would utilize existing facilities and not require new infrastructure, modifications of existing facilities, or ground disturbing activities. The water would be used for existing agricultural purposes. No native or untilled land (fallow for three years or more) would be cultivated with water involved with these actions.

## **Biological Resources**

The Proposed Action would decrease the amount of water released into the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam. This amount of water would only represent a portion of the Exchange Contractor's contractual supply, and a large amount of water would still be released into the river for delivery to the Exchange Contractors at Mendota Pool. This slight change in the amount of water flowing

down the San Joaquin River would have *No Effect* on federally protected fish species because none currently occur in this section of the river. This would also have *No Effect* on giant garter snakes because a substantial amount of water would still make it to Mendota Pool and the Mendota Wildlife Area would continue to be managed to provide habitat for special-status species.

The amount of water diverted into the Friant-Kern Canal from Friant Dam would increase under the Proposed Action. The Friant-Kern Canal is concrete-lined and has steep sides that are maintained and kept free of vegetation. The access roads that border the Friant-Kern Canal are maintained regularly to prevent intrusion by vegetation and small burrowing mammals. Although the Friant-Kern Canal passes through some natural areas that provide suitable habitat for special-status species, no special-status species are expected to occur within the canal itself. Because no special-status species occur within the Friant-Kern Canal, none would be affected by the Proposed Action.

The exchanged water would be used in Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart, and the Exchange Contractors' service areas. These service areas consist almost entirely of actively cultivated agricultural lands which no longer provide suitable habitat for federally listed species. Some remnant areas of natural land border the eastern edge of Kern-Tulare and portions of the Exchange Contractors' service areas are bordered by wildlife areas and refuges which are known to support special-status species (Volta Wildlife Area, Los Banos Wildlife Area, Grasslands Wildlife Management Area, and the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge); however, a majority of Kern-Tulare and the Exchange Contractors' service areas consist of intensively managed agricultural lands which do not provide suitable habitat for special-status species. No natural lands, or fallowed lands, that have been untilled for three or more consecutive years, would be converted as a result of the Proposed Action and the land use patterns of cultivated and fallowed fields which may provide suitable habitat for listed species or birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act would also not be changed as a result of the Proposed Action. No ground disturbance, construction, or alteration of natural stream courses would be required to carry out the Proposed Action. With the implementation of the provided avoidance measures, Reclamation has determined that the Proposed Action would result in *No Effect* to listed species or designated critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S. C. §1531 et. seq.) and *No Take* of birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. §703 et. seq.).

### **Cumulative Impacts**

Cumulative impacts result from incremental impacts of the Proposed Action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment.

***Water Resources***

Reclamation has reviewed existing or foreseeable projects in the same geographic area that could affect or could be affected by the Proposed Action since Reclamation and CVP contractors have been working on various drought-related projects, including this one, in order to manage limited water supplies due to current hydrologic conditions and regulatory requirements. This and similar projects would have a cumulative beneficial effect on water supply during this critically dry year.

As in the past, hydrological conditions and other factors are likely to result in fluctuating water supplies which drive requests for water service actions. Water districts provide water to their customers based on available water supplies and timing, while attempting to minimize costs. Farmers irrigate and grow crops based on these conditions and factors, and a myriad of water service actions are approved and executed each year to facilitate water needs. It is likely that over the course of the Proposed Action, districts will request various water service actions, such as transfers, exchanges, and Warren Act contracts (conveyance of non-CVP water in CVP facilities). Each water service transaction involving Reclamation undergoes environmental review prior to approval.

The Proposed Action and other similar projects would not hinder the normal operations of the CVP and Reclamation's obligation to deliver water to its contractors or to local fish and wildlife habitat. Since the Proposed Action would not involve construction or modification of facilities, there would be no cumulative impacts to existing facilities or other contractors.

***Biological Resources***

As the Proposed Action is not expected to result in any direct or indirect impacts to biological resources, there would be no cumulative impacts.

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Draft Environmental Assessment

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EA-15-015



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation

March 2015

## **Mission Statements**

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# Section 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors (Exchange Contractors), which include Central California Irrigation District, Firebaugh Canal Water District, San Luis Canal Company and Columbia Canal Company, hold historic senior water rights to water supplies in the San Joaquin River watershed. In exchange for the Central Valley Project's (CVP's) regulation and diversion of the San Joaquin River water at Millerton Lake/Friant Dam, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) agreed to provide water to the Exchange Contractors from the CVP's Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) supply.

Due to the current hydrologic and regulatory conditions, Reclamation informed the Exchange Contractors that only 75 percent of the Exchange Contractor's water supply can be delivered (650,000 acre-feet [AF] during a critical year) in 2015 pursuant to the 1967 Second Amended Exchange Contract (Contract No. Ilr-1144r). However, only a portion of this can be met from the CVP's Delta supplies. As a result, there is a need to provide San Joaquin River water from Millerton Lake pursuant to contract obligations.

In anticipation of San Joaquin river water being delivered to the Exchange Contractors, Kern-Tulare Water (Kern-Tulare) and Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District (Delano-Earlimart) have proposed to exchange some of their previously banked CVP water supplies for a portion of the San Joaquin River water that would be released by Reclamation from Millerton Lake into the San Joaquin River channel for delivery to the Exchange Contractors at Mendota Pool (see Figure 1).

## 1.2 Need for the Proposed Action

The State of California is currently experiencing unprecedented water management challenges due to severe drought in recent years. Both the State and Federal water projects are forecasting very low storage conditions in all major reservoirs. In addition, CVP contractors experienced reduced water supply allocations in recent years due to hydrologic conditions and regulatory requirements. Based on hydrologic conditions, Reclamation declared an allocation of 0 percent Class 1 and Class 2 supplies for Friant Division CVP contractors and a 0 percent allocation for South-of-Delta CVP contractors, for the 2014 and 2015 Contract Year (a Contract Year is from March 1 through the last day of February of the following year). As a result, CVP contractors, such as

Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart, have a need to find alternative sources of water to fulfill existing demands.

## **1.3 Scope**

This EA is being prepared to examine the possible impacts of facilitating an exchange between Kern-Tulare's and Delano-Earlimart's previously banked CVP water for San Joaquin River water that is anticipated to be released for delivery to the Exchange Contractors from Millerton Lake in 2015. This EA has also been prepared to examine the possible impacts of the No Action alternative.

Reclamation has previously analyzed and approved separate banking programs for Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart as described below.

### **Kern-Tulare Banking in Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District**

In 2005, Reclamation approved a 25-year banking and exchange program between Kern-Tulare and Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District (Rosedale-Rio Bravo). The banking program was analyzed in Environmental Assessment (EA)-05-01 and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on January 12, 2005 (Reclamation 2005). Both EA and FONSI are hereby incorporated by reference.

EA-05-01 analyzed the annual banking of Kern-Tulare's available CVP water supplies, including contract supplies, purchased CVP supplies, and surplus CVP supplies in Rosedale-Rio Bravo. Under the program, the amount of Kern-Tulare's banked CVP water cannot exceed a cumulative total of 40,000 AF. Other available non-CVP water supplies, such as State Water Project (SWP) water and Kern River water, are also banked by Kern-Tulare. The annual return of up to 9,000 AF of Kern-Tulare's previously banked CVP water would be done either through direct pumping from the bank or an exchange of Rosedale-Rio Bravo's Kern River or SWP water supplies. All banking and returns are through the use of existing facilities.

As the banking and return of Kern-Tulare's CVP water was covered in the environmental analysis described above, which is incorporated by reference, it is not repeated in this EA.

### **Kern-Tulare Banking in West Kern Water Storage District**

In 2013, Reclamation approved a 25-year banking and exchange program between Kern-Tulare and West Kern Water Storage District (West Kern). The banking program was analyzed in EA-11-071 and a FONSI was signed on May 16, 2013 (Reclamation 2013). Both EA and FONSI are hereby incorporated by reference.

EA-11-071 analyzed the annual banking of up to 40,000 AF of Kern-Tulare's available CVP water supplies, including contract supplies, purchased CVP

supplies, and surplus CVP supplies, as well as non-CVP water supplies in West Kern. Up to 3,000 AF of banked water would be returned to Kern-Tulare annually either via direct pumping from the bank or via exchange of West Kern's Kern River or SWP water supplies. All banking and returns are through the use of existing facilities.

As the banking and return of Kern-Tulare's CVP water was covered in the environmental analysis described above, which is incorporated by reference, it is not repeated in this EA.

### **Delano-Earlimart Banking in Rosedale-Rio Bravo**

In 2010, Reclamation approved a 25-year banking and exchange program between Delano-Earlimart and Rosedale-Rio Bravo. The banking program was analyzed in EA-09-092 and a FONSI was signed on March 31, 2010 (Reclamation 2010). Both EA and FONSI are hereby incorporated by reference.

EA-09-092 analyzed the annual banking of up to 80,000 AF of Delano-Earlimart's available CVP water supplies, including contract supplies and surplus CVP supplies in Rosedale Rio Bravo. Under the program, the amount of Delano-Earlimart's banked CVP water cannot exceed a cumulative total of 100,000 AF. The annual return of up to 10,000 AF of Delano-Earlimart's previously banked CVP water would be done either through direct pumping from the bank, exchange with other contractors, or an exchange of Rosedale-Rio Bravo's Kern River or SWP water supplies. All banking and returns are through the use of existing facilities.

As the banking and return of Delano-Earlimart's CVP water was covered in the environmental analysis described above, which is incorporated by reference, it is not repeated in this EA.

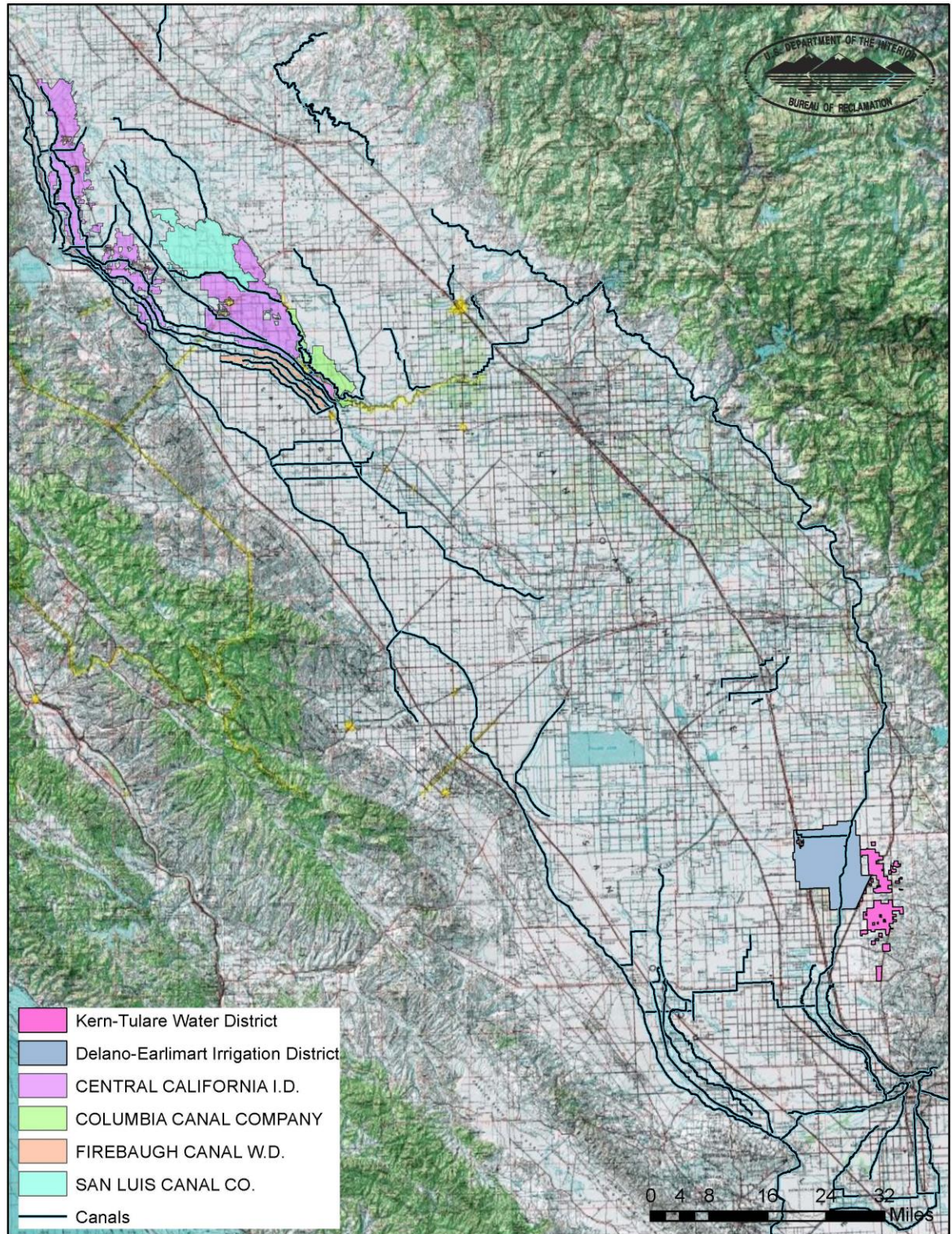


Figure 1 Proposed Action Area

## **Section 2 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action**

This Environmental Assessment considers two possible actions: the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action. The No Action Alternative reflects future conditions without the Proposed Action and serves as a basis of comparison for determining potential effects to the human environment.

### **2.1 No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not facilitate the exchange of water supplies between Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart and the Exchange Contractors. Previously banked CVP supplies would either remain within their respective banks or be returned to Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart as provided for under the existing banking and exchange agreements. Reclamation would deliver San Joaquin River water from Millerton Lake to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool via the San Joaquin River channel pursuant to contract obligations. Water delivered to the Exchange Contractors through the river channel would incur approximately 25 percent of conveyance losses.

### **2.2 Proposed Action**

Reclamation proposes to facilitate the exchanges between Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart and the Exchange Contractors as described below.

#### **2.2.1 Kern-Tulare Proposed Exchange**

Kern-Tulare proposes to exchange 9,000 AF of previously banked CVP water within Rosedale-Rio Bravo and 2,000 AF of previously banked CVP water within West Kern for a like amount of San Joaquin River water, plus an additional amount that would have been lost due to conveyance in the San Joaquin River channel (potentially up to 25 percent depending on flow rates and schedules). The San Joaquin River water would be released from Millerton Lake into the Friant-Kern Canal for delivery to Kern-Tulare through their existing turnouts. To make the banked water available to the Exchange Contractors, Kern-Tulare's previously banked CVP water would be exchanged with Rosedale-Rio Bravo and West Kern for a like amount of SWP water available in San Luis Reservoir per their approved banking and exchange agreements. The exchanged water would then be released from San Luis Reservoir and delivered to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool via the Delta-Mendota Canal.

#### **2.2.2 Delano-Earlimart Proposed Exchange**

Delano-Earlimart proposes to exchange up to 10,000 AF of previously banked CVP water within Rosedale-Rio Bravo for a like amount of San Joaquin River

water, plus an additional amount that would have been lost due to conveyance in the San Joaquin River channel (potentially up to 25 percent depending on flow rates and schedules). The San Joaquin River water would be released from Millerton Lake into the Friant-Kern Canal for delivery to Delano-Earlimart through their existing turnouts. To make the banked water available to the Exchange Contractors, Delano-Earlimart's previously banked CVP water would be exchanged with Rosedale-Rio Bravo for a like amount of SWP water available in San Luis Reservoir per their approved banking and exchange agreement. The exchanged water would then be released from San Luis Reservoir and delivered to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool via the Delta-Mendota Canal.

### 2.2.3 Environmental Commitments

Reclamation, Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart, and the Exchange Contractors would implement the following environmental protection measures to avoid and/or reduce environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action (Table 1). Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

Table 1 Environmental Protection Measures and Commitments

Resource	Protection Measure
Water Resources	The Proposed Action would not affect CVP or SWP operations; all supplies would be previously scheduled for delivery points south-of-Delta, and do not require additional Delta exports.
Water Resources	The water would only be used for beneficial purposes and in accordance with Federal Reclamation law and guidelines.
Water Resources	The water may only be served within areas that are within the CVP's Consolidated Place of Use.
Various Resources	The water would not be used to place untilled or new lands into production, or to convert undeveloped land to other uses.
Various Resources	No new construction or modification of existing facilities may occur in order to complete the Proposed Action.
Various Resources	The Proposed Action cannot alter the flow regime of natural waterways or natural watercourses such as rivers, streams, creeks, ponds, pools, wetlands, etc., so as to have a detrimental effect on fish or wildlife or their habitats.
Various Resources	The Proposed Action would not increase or decrease water supplies that would result in land development.

## Section 3 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

As described in Section 1.3, the banking and exchange agreements for Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart were previously analyzed and approved by Reclamation. As the affected environment and environmental impacts of these actions were previously covered in their respective EAs and incorporated by reference they are not repeated here. Therefore, this section focuses on the potential affected environment and the environmental consequences involved with the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative that have not previously been analyzed.

### 3.1 Resources Eliminated from Further Analysis

Reclamation analyzed the affected environment and determined that the Proposed Action did not have the potential to cause direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse effects to the resources listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Resources Eliminated from Further Analysis

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Reason Eliminated</b>
Air Quality	The Proposed Action would not require construction or modification of facilities to move the exchanged water to Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart, or the Exchange Contractors. Exchanged water would be moved via gravity which would not produce emissions that impact air quality. Therefore, no impacts to air quality would occur and a determination of general conformity under the Clean Air Act is not required.
Cultural Resources	The Proposed Action would facilitate the flow of water through existing facilities to existing users. As no construction or modification of facilities would be needed in order to complete the Proposed Action, Reclamation has determined that these activities have no potential to cause effects to historic properties pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800.3(a)(1). See Appendix A for Reclamation's determination.
Environmental Justice	The Proposed Action would not cause dislocation, changes in employment, or increase flood, drought, or disease nor would it disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged or minority populations.
Global Climate	The Proposed Action would not result in emissions of greenhouse gases as water would move in existing facilities via gravity. Global climate change is expected to have some effect on the snow pack of the Sierra Nevada and the runoff regime. Current data are not yet clear on the hydrologic changes and how they will affect the San Joaquin Valley. CVP water allocations are made dependent on hydrologic conditions and environmental requirements. Since Reclamation operations are flexible, any changes in hydrologic conditions due to global climate change would be addressed within Reclamation's operation flexibility.
Indian Sacred Sites	The Proposed Action would not limit access to or ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.
Indian Trust Assets	The Proposed Action would not impact Indian Trust Assets as there are none in the Proposed Action area. See Appendix B for Reclamation's

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Reason Eliminated</b>
	determination.
Land Use	The Proposed Action would not change historic land and water management practices. Exchanged water would move through existing facilities for delivery to lands within the Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart, and the Exchange Contractors for use on existing crops. The water would not be used to place untilled or new lands into production, or to convert undeveloped land to other uses.
Socioeconomics	The Proposed Action would have beneficial impacts on socioeconomic resources within Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart, and the Exchange Contractors as the exchanged water would be used to help sustain existing crops and maintain farming within the contractors' service areas.

## 3.2 Water Resources

### 3.2.1 Affected Environment

The Proposed Action area includes the CVP service areas of Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart, the Exchange Contractors service area, South-of-Delta CVP facilities (West San Joaquin Division and Friant Division as shown in Figure 2), and the Mendota Pool.

#### ***Kern-Tulare Water District***

Kern-Tulare, a Friant Division and Cross Valley CVP contractor, provides irrigation water to over 19,000 acres of high-value permanent crops in Kern and Tulare counties. A general description of the district is included in EA-11-071 and EA-05-01 which has been incorporated by reference into this EA.

#### ***Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District***

Delano-Earlimart, a Friant Division CVP contractor, provides irrigation water to over 56,000 acres of high-value permanent crops in Tulare and Kern Counties. A general description of the district is included in EA-09-092 which has been incorporated by reference into this EA.

#### ***San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors***

The Exchange Contractors service area is located on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley (see Figure 1). In exchange for those water rights (resulting in the CVP's regulation and diversion of San Joaquin River water at Millerton Lake/Friant Dam, etc.), Reclamation agreed to supply water to the Exchange Contractors from the CVP's Delta supply at the Mendota Pool. Reclamation's contract obligations include provisions for a call on San Joaquin River water under certain circumstances. This call occurred last year for the first time and is anticipated to occur again this year.

#### ***South-of-Delta Facilities***

A general diagram of South-of-Delta CVP facilities proposed for use under the Proposed Action is shown in Figure 2. Facilities include San Luis Reservoir, O'Neill Forebay and Pumping and Generating Plant, and the Delta-Mendota Canal in the West San Joaquin Division, as well as Millerton Lake and the Friant-

Kern Canal within the Friant Division. Non-Federal facilities include the Mendota Pool.

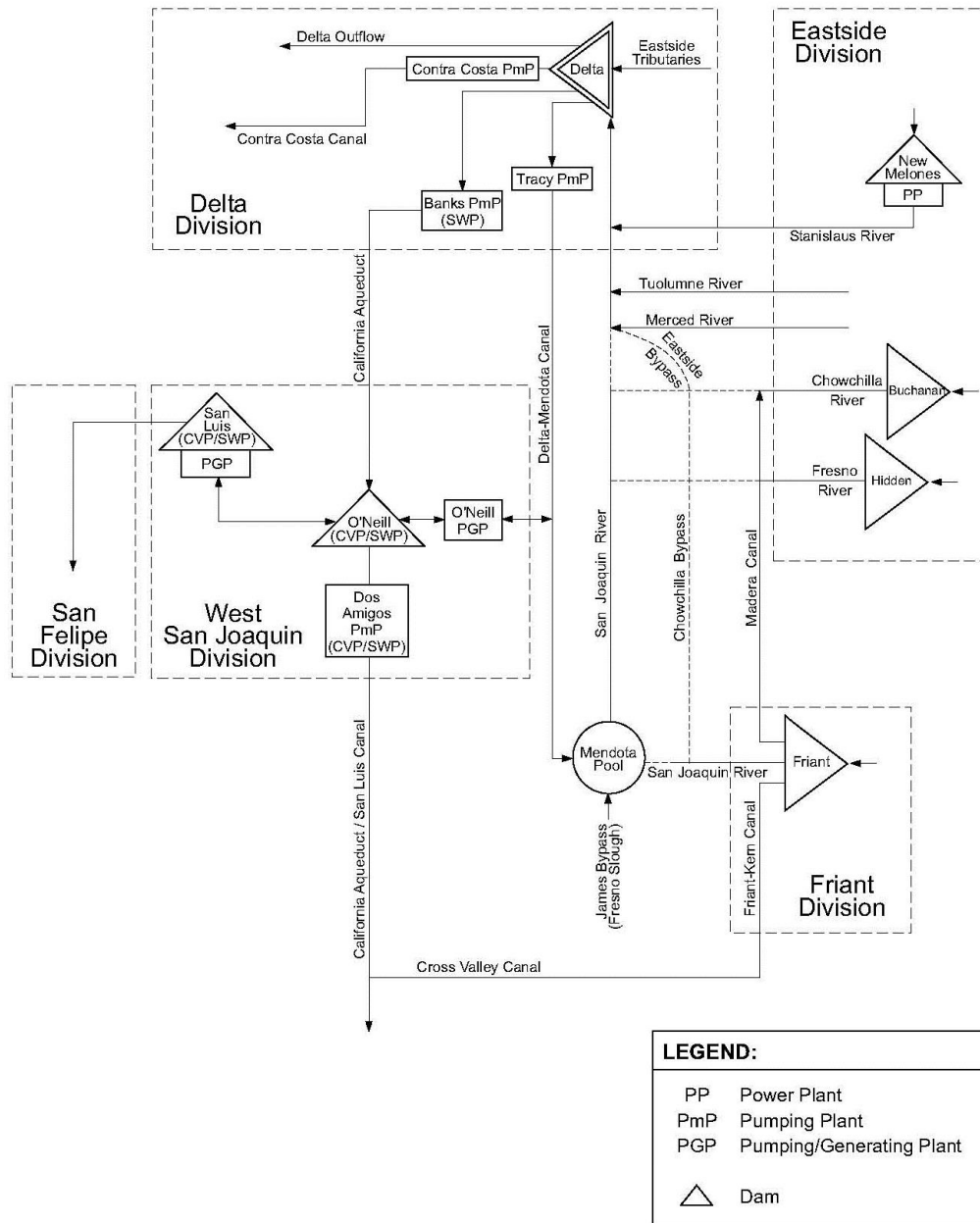


Figure 2 South-of-Delta CVP Facilities by Division  
(Source: Reclamation 1999, page III-19)

### **Mendota Pool**

The Mendota Pool is impounded by Mendota Dam, which is owned and operated by Central California Irrigation District. The Pool primarily serves as a conveyance facility but is also used as a short-term storage and re-regulation reservoir. The Pool is supplied with surface water from the Delta-Mendota Canal (its' primary source), the San Joaquin River (during restoration and flood releases

from Friant Dam), and the Kings River via Fresno Slough (during flood releases from Pine Flat Dam). In addition, local wells owned by the Mendota Pool Group, Tranquillity Irrigation District, and Fresno Slough Water District also pump groundwater into the Pool, and the Mendota Wildlife Area drains its waterfowl ponds into the Pool during the spring. Water is diverted from the Pool for agricultural and wildlife uses. Most of this water is used by the members of the Exchange Contractors to irrigate lands within their service areas, but there are other CVP contractors that divert water from the Pool for irrigation purposes.

### **3.2.2 Environmental Consequences**

#### ***No Action***

Under the No Action alternative, Reclamation would not facilitate the exchange between Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart, and the Exchange Contractors. The Exchange Contractors would continue to receive their allocated supplies from the Delta as well as the San Joaquin river water that they have called upon, including the portion proposed for exchange. The San Joaquin River water would be delivered to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool via the San Joaquin River channel with varying conveyance losses depending on flow rates and schedules. No additional water would be conveyed down the Friant-Kern Canal and Friant-Kern Canal operations would have less water supplies for conveyance which could negatively impact the ability to support other beneficial operations within the canal. This would be an adverse impact to water resources for all the Friant Division contractors. Kern-Tulare's and Delano-Earlimart's previously banked CVP water could still be withdrawn from the banks under their previously approved respective banking programs.

#### ***Proposed Action***

Under the Proposed Action, up to 11,000 AF of Kern-Tulare's and up to 10,000 AF of Delano-Earlimart's previously banked CVP water supplies would be exchanged for SWP water in San Luis Reservoir pursuant to their previously approved banking and exchange programs. The exchanged water would then be delivered to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool via the Delta-Mendota Canal, the preferred point of delivery for the Exchange Contractors. As this water is existing supplies held in San Luis Reservoir for Rosedale-Rio Bravo and West Kern, no additional Delta pumping would be needed to facilitate this exchange. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not affect CVP or SWP operations and would not change existing diversion points from the Delta under Reclamation's or the California Department of Water Resource's water rights permits. The Proposed Action would not interfere with Reclamation's obligations to deliver water to other contractors, wetland habitat areas, or for other environmental purposes.

In exchange for the previously banked CVP water delivered to the Exchange Contractors, a like amount of San Joaquin River water plus an additional amount that would have been lost due to conveyance in the San Joaquin River channel (potentially up to 25 percent depending on flow rates and schedules) would be

released from Millerton Lake and delivered to Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart via the Friant-Kern Canal.

As a result of the exchange, 2015 Friant-Kern Canal operations would have an increased water supply for conveyance all the way to Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart's turnouts. The increased flows would benefit other Friant contractors that are pursuing other operational exchange opportunities in the canal.

The exchanges would utilize existing facilities and not require new infrastructure, modifications of existing facilities, or ground disturbing activities. The water would be used for existing agricultural purposes. No native or untilled land (fallow for three years or more) would be cultivated with water involved with these actions.

### ***Cumulative Impacts***

Cumulative impacts result from incremental impacts of the Proposed Action or No Action alternative when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. To determine whether cumulatively significant impacts are anticipated from the Proposed Action or the No Action alternative, the incremental effect of both alternatives were examined together with impacts from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the same geographic area.

Reclamation has reviewed existing or foreseeable projects in the same geographic area that could affect or could be affected by the Proposed Action since Reclamation and CVP contractors have been working on various drought-related projects, including this one, in order to manage limited water supplies due to current hydrologic conditions and regulatory requirements. This and similar projects would have a cumulative beneficial effect on water supply during this critically dry year.

As in the past, hydrological conditions and other factors are likely to result in fluctuating water supplies which drive requests for water service actions. Water districts provide water to their customers based on available water supplies and timing, while attempting to minimize costs. Farmers irrigate and grow crops based on these conditions and factors, and a myriad of water service actions are approved and executed each year to facilitate water needs. It is likely that over the course of the Proposed Action, districts will request various water service actions, such as transfers, exchanges, and Warren Act contracts (conveyance of non-CVP water in CVP facilities). Each water service transaction involving Reclamation undergoes environmental review prior to approval.

The Proposed Action and other similar projects would not hinder the normal operations of the CVP and Reclamation's obligation to deliver water to its

contractors or to local fish and wildlife habitat. Since the Proposed Action would not involve construction or modification of facilities, there would be no cumulative impacts to existing facilities or other contractors.

### **3.3 Biological Resources**

#### **3.3.1 Affected Environment**

The affected environment includes all areas that may be directly or indirectly affected by the Proposed Action. The environmental impacts of the banking and exchange agreements for Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart were previously analyzed and approved by Reclamation; therefore, the Action areas and effects covered under those analyses are not included here. Portions of the Proposed Action area which may be affected by the Proposed Action in ways that were not previously analyzed include: Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart CVP service areas, the Exchange Contractors' service areas, the San Joaquin River between Friant Dam and Mendota Pool, and the Friant-Kern Cana; from Friant Dam to existing turn-outs in Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart.

The service areas within the Proposed Action area consist almost entirely of intensively farmed croplands and maintained farm roads which provide little to no habitat for special-status species. The portion of the San Joaquin River that is located in the Proposed Action area is bordered by narrow riparian corridors, dense stands of invasive vegetation, and agricultural lands. The portion of the Friant-Kern Canal that is located in the Proposed Action area is concrete-lined, bordered by heavily maintained access roads on both sides, and passes through natural areas, farmlands, and urbanized areas.

#### ***Special-Status Species***

Reclamation requested an official species list from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on March 18, 2015 via the Sacramento field office's website, [http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/spp\\_list.htm](http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/spp_list.htm) (Document number:150318112922). The list is for the 7 ½ minute U.S. Geological Survey quadrangles which overlap the Proposed Action area. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) was also queried for records of protected species near the Action area (CNDDB 2015). The information collected above, in addition to information within Reclamation's files, was combined to determine the likelihood of protected species occurrence within the Proposed Action area and are summarized, including an effects determination, in Table 3.

Table 3 Special Status Species with the Potential to Occur in the Proposed Action Area

Species	Status	Effects	Occurrence in the Study Area
INVERTEBRATES			
Conservancy fairy shrimp <i>Branchinecta conservatio</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> The Action area consists of agricultural lands and canals which do not provide suitable habitat for this species. There are no CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area, and no vernal pool habitat would be affected by the Proposed Action.
Critical Habitat Conservancy fairy shrimp <i>Branchinecta conservatio</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is no Designated Critical Habitat for this species within the Proposed Action area.
Longhorn fairy shrimp <i>Branchinecta longiantenna</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> The Action area consists of agricultural lands and canals which do not provide suitable habitat for this species. There are no CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area, and no vernal pool habitat would be affected by the Proposed Action.
Critical Habitat Longhorn fairy shrimp <i>Branchinecta longiantenna</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is no Designated Critical Habitat for this species within the Proposed Action area.
Vernal pool fairy shrimp <i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>	T	NE	<b>Absent.</b> The Action area consists of agricultural lands and canals which do not provide suitable habitat for this species. There are no CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area, and no vernal pool habitat would be affected by the Proposed Action.
Critical Habitat Vernal pool fairy shrimp <i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is no Designated Critical Habitat for this species within the Proposed Action area.
Valley elderberry longhorn beetle <i>Desmocerus californicus dimorphus</i>	T	NE	<b>Present.</b> There are CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area along the San Joaquin River. The Proposed Action would not involve any construction, ground-disturbance, or changes in land use patterns; therefore, this specie's host plant, the elderberry bush, would not be affected.
Vernal pool tadpole shrimp <i>Lepidurus packardii</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> The Action area consists of agricultural lands and canals which do not provide suitable habitat for this species. There are no CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area, and no vernal pool habitat would be affected by the Proposed Action.
Critical Habitat Vernal pool tadpole shrimp <i>Lepidurus packardii</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is no Designated Critical Habitat for this species within the Proposed Action area.
FISH			
Green sturgeon <i>Acipenser medirostris</i>	T, NMFS	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species is not known to occur within the San Joaquin River, or canals within the Action area.

Species	Status	Effects	Occurrence in the Study Area
Delta smelt <i>Hypomesus transpacificus</i>	T	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species occupies brackish waters and is not present within the Action area due to a lack of suitable habitat.
Central Valley steelhead <i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	T, NMFS	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species is not present in the San Joaquin River between Friant Dam and Mendota Pool, or in other waterways within the Action area.
Critical Habitat Central Valley steelhead <i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	X, NMFS	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is no Designated Critical Habitat for this species within the Proposed Action area.
Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon <i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	T, NMFS	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species is not present in the San Joaquin River between Friant Dam and Mendota. Although there are plans to reintroduce this species into the San Joaquin River, the re-introduced fish are not federally protected.
Winter-run Chinook salmon, Sacramento River <i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	E, NMFS	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species is not present within the Action area.
<b>AMPHIBIANS</b>			
California tiger salamander, Central population <i>Ambystoma californiense</i>	T	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There are no CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area. The Action area consists of agricultural lands and canals which do not provide suitable aquatic or upland habitat for this species. The Proposed Action would not result in the conversion of any potentially suitable habitat for this species.
Critical Habitat California tiger salamander, Central population <i>Ambystoma californiense</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is no Designated Critical Habitat for this species within the Proposed Action area.
California red-legged frog <i>Rana draytonii</i>	T	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There are no CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area. The Action area consists of agricultural lands and canals which do not provide suitable habitat for this species. The Proposed Action would not result in the conversion of any habitat that is potentially suitable for this species.
Critical Habitat California red-legged frog <i>Rana draytonii</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is no Designated Critical Habitat for this species within the Proposed Action Area.
<b>REPTILES</b>			
Blunt-nosed leopard lizard <i>Gambelia sila</i>	E	NE	<b>Possible.</b> There are CNDDDB records of this species within Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart, and Central California Irrigation District; however, these records are all over 40 years old and the suitable native habitat, in which these observations were made, have since been converted for agriculture. The Proposed Action would not involve any ground disturbing activities, construction, or changes in land use that could affect suitable habitat for this species, if any remains in the Action area.

Species	Status	Effects	Occurrence in the Study Area
Giant garter snake <i>Thamnophis gigas</i>	T	NE	<b>Present.</b> There are CNDDDB records of this species within Central California Irrigation District., San Luis Canal Company, and Columbia Canal Company. The Mendota Wildlife Area may also support this species, though giant garter snake presence in this area has declined substantially in recent years. The Proposed Action would not involve any ground disturbance or changes in land use and would not significantly alter the flow regimes of any natural waterways which may provide suitable habitat for giant garter snakes.
BIRDS			
Western yellow-billed cuckoo <i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>	T	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There are no CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area. The Action area consists of agricultural lands, canals, and a portion of the San Joaquin River which do not provide suitable riparian woodland habitat for this species.
California Condor <i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	E	NE	<b>Possible.</b> There are no CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area; however, because this species travels long distances to forage, it may occur intermittently in the Action Area. The Proposed Action would not involve any construction or changes in land use.
Swainson's hawk <i>Buteo swainsonii</i>	MBTA	NT	<b>Present.</b> There are several CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area. The Proposed Action would not involve any ground disturbance, construction, or alteration of natural or suitable habitat types.
Tri-colored blackbird <i>Agelaius tricolor</i>	MBTA	NT	<b>Present.</b> There are CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area. The Proposed Action would not involve any ground disturbance, construction, or alteration of suitable habitat types.
Burrowing owl <i>Athene Cunicularia</i>	MBTA	NT	<b>Present.</b> There are several CNDDDB records of this species near the Action area. The Proposed Action would not involve any ground disturbance, construction, or alteration of natural or suitable habitat types.
MAMMALS			
Giant kangaroo rat <i>Dipodomys ingens</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There are no CNDDDB records of this species within the Action area. The Action area consists of agricultural lands which do not provide suitable habitat for this species.
Fresno kangaroo rat <i>Dipodomys nigratoides exilis</i>	E	NE	<b>Possible.</b> There is one CNDDDB record of this species near the Columbia Canal Company; however, this record is over 50 years old and the species was likely extirpated from this area when the land was converted for agriculture. The Proposed Action would not involve any ground-disturbance, construction, or conversion of suitable habitat that may support this species.

Species	Status	Effects	Occurrence in the Study Area
Tipton kangaroo rat <i>Dipodomys nitratoide nitratoide</i>	E	NE	<b>Possible.</b> There are CNDDDB records of this species near Delano-Earlimart; however, the Action area consists of agricultural lands which do not provide suitable habitat for this species. The Proposed Action would not involve any ground-disturbance, construction, or conversion of suitable habitat.
San Joaquin kit fox <i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i>	E	NE	<b>Present.</b> There are several CNDDDB occurrences of this species within the Action area. Agricultural lands do not typically provide suitable habitat for this species, but kit foxes may still move through or forage within the Action area. The Proposed Action would not involve any ground-disturbance, construction, or conversion of suitable habitat.
PLANTS			
Succulent fleshy owl's clover <i>Castilleja campestris</i> ssp. <i>succulenta</i>	T	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action area.
Critical Habitat Succulent fleshy owl's clover <i>Castilleja campestris</i> ssp. <i>succulent</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is Designated Critical Habitat for this species along the Friant-Kern Canal and San Joaquin River, but none within the Action area.
California jewelflower <i>Caulanthus californicus</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There are CNDDDB occurrences of this species in Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart, but the species has since been extirpated from these areas.
Hoover's spurge <i>Chamaesyce hooveri</i>	T	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action Area.
Critical Habitat Hoover's spurge <i>Chamaesyce hooveri</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is Designated Critical Habitat for this species along the Friant-Kern Canal, but there is none within the Action area.
Springville Clarkia <i>Clarkia springvillensis</i>	T	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action area.
Palmate-bracted bird's beak <i>Cordylanthus palmatus</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action area.
Kern mallow <i>Eremalche kernensis</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action area.
Colusa grass <i>Neostapfia colusana</i>	T	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action area.
Critical Habitat Colusa grass <i>Neostapfia colusana</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is no Designated Critical Habitat for this species within the Proposed Action area.
Bakersfield cactus <i>Opuntia treleasei</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action Area.

Species	Status	Effects	Occurrence in the Study Area
San Joaquin Valley orcutt grass <i>Orcuttia inaequalis</i>	T	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action area.
Critical Habitat San Joaquin Valley Orcutt grass <i>Orcuttia inaequalis</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is no Designated critical Habitat for this species within the Proposed Action area.
Hairy Orcutt grass <i>Orcuttia pilosa</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action Area.
Critical Habitat Hairy Orcutt grass <i>Orcuttia pilosa</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is no Designated critical Habitat for this species within the Proposed Action area.
Hartweg's golden sunburst <i>Pseudobahia bahiifolia</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action Area.
San Joaquin adobe sunburst <i>Pseudobahia peirsonii</i>	T	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There are CNDDDB records of this species in and near Kern-Tulare, but these occurrences have since been extirpated.
Keck's checker-mallow <i>Sidalcea keckii</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action area.
Critical Habitat Keck's checker-mallow <i>Sidalcea keckii</i>	X	NE	<b>Absent.</b> There is no Designated critical Habitat for this species within the Proposed Action area.
Greene's tuctoria <i>Tuctoria greenei</i>	E	NE	<b>Absent.</b> This species does not occur within the Action area.
<p>1 Status= Listing of Federally special status species  <b>E:</b> Listed as Endangered  <b>MBTA:</b> Protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act  <b>T:</b> Listed as Threatened  <b>X:</b> Critical Habitat designated for this species</p> <p>2 Effects = Effect determination  <b>NE:</b> No Effect from the Proposed Action to federally listed species  <b>NT:</b> No Take would occur from the Proposed Action to migratory birds</p> <p>3 Definition Of Occurrence Indicators  <b>Absent:</b> Species not recorded in study area and/or habitat requirements not met  <b>Possible:</b> Species has the potential to occur in the action area  <b>Present:</b> Species recorded in or near action area and habitat present</p>			

### 3.3.2 Environmental Consequences

#### **No Action**

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not facilitate the exchange of water supplies between Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart and the Exchange Contractors. Previously banked CVP supplies would either remain within their respective banks or be returned to Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart as provided

for under the existing banking and exchange agreements. Reclamation would deliver San Joaquin River water from Millerton Lake to the Exchange Contractors at Mendota Pool, via the San Joaquin River channel, pursuant to contract obligations. If water demands cannot be met, some agricultural lands within Kern-Tulare and Delano-Earlimart may be fallowed. If crops are fallowed, there is a potential for some federally protected species to temporarily move through, or forage in, the fallowed areas. Newly fallowed fields may provide temporary low quality habitat, but it is unlikely that federally listed species would move into these areas.

### ***Proposed Action***

The Proposed Action would decrease the amount of water released into the San Joaquin River from Friant Dam. This amount of water would only represent a portion of the Exchange Contractor's contractual supply, and a large amount of water would still be released into the river for delivery to the Exchange Contractors at Mendota Pool. This slight change in the amount of water flowing down the San Joaquin River would have *No Effect* on federally protected fish species because none currently occur in this section of the river. This would also have *No Effect* on giant garter snakes because a substantial amount of water would still make it to Mendota Pool and the Mendota Wildlife Area would continue to be managed to provide habitat for special-status species.

The amount of water diverted into the Friant-Kern Canal from Friant Dam would increase under the Proposed Action. The Friant-Kern Canal is concrete-lined and has steep sides that are maintained and kept free of vegetation. The access roads that border the Friant-Kern Canal are maintained regularly to prevent intrusion by vegetation and small burrowing mammals. Although the Friant-Kern Canal passes through some natural areas that provide suitable habitat for special-status species, no special-status species are expected to occur within the canal itself. Because no special-status species occur within the Friant-Kern Canal, none would be affected by the Proposed Action.

The exchanged water would be used in Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart, and the Exchange Contractors' service areas. These service areas consist almost entirely of actively cultivated agricultural lands which no longer provide suitable habitat for federally listed species. Some remnant areas of natural land border the eastern edge of Kern-Tulare and portions of the Exchange Contractors' service areas are bordered by wildlife areas and refuges which are known to support special-status species (Volta Wildlife Area, Los Banos Wildlife Area, Grasslands Wildlife Management Area, and the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge); however, a majority of Kern-Tulare and the Exchange Contractors' service areas consist of intensively managed agricultural lands which do not provide suitable habitat for special-status species. No natural lands, or fallowed lands, that have been untilled for three or more consecutive years, would be converted as a result of the Proposed Action and the land use patterns of cultivated and fallowed fields which may provide suitable habitat for listed species or birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act would also not be changed as a result of the Proposed

Action. No ground disturbance, construction, or alteration of natural stream courses would be required to carry out the Proposed Action. With the implementation of the provided avoidance measures, Reclamation has determined that the Proposed Action would result in *No Effect* to listed species or designated critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S. C. §1531 et. seq.) and *No Take* of birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. §703 et. seq.).

***Cumulative Impacts***

As the Proposed Action is not expected to result in any direct or indirect impacts to biological resources, there would be no cumulative impacts.

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## **Section 4 Consultation and Coordination**

### **4.1 Public Review Period**

Reclamation intends to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft Finding of No Significant Impact and Draft Environmental Assessment during a 15-day public review period.

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## **Section 5 Preparers and Reviewers**

Rain L. Emerson, M.S., Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist, SCCAO

Lisa Carlson, Wildlife Biology Technician, SCCAO

Scott Williams, Archaeologist, MP-153

Scott Taylor, Repayment Specialist, SCCAO – reviewer

David E. Hyatt, Resources Management Division Chief, SCCAO – reviewer

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## Section 6 References

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). 2005. Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact. *Kern-Tulare Water District and Rag Gulch Water District Groundwater Banking Project in Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District* (FONSI/EA-05-01). Mid-Pacific Region South-Central California Area Office. Fresno, California.

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). 2010. Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact. *Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District and Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District Banking Program 2010-2026* (FONSI/EA-09-092). Mid-Pacific Region South-Central California Area Office. Fresno, California.

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). 2013. Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact. *Kern-Tulare Water District/West Kern Water District Groundwater Banking Project* (FONSI/EA-11-071). Mid-Pacific Region South-Central California Area Office. Fresno, California.

California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB). 2015. California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Natural Diversity Database, March, 2015.

# **Appendix A**

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## **Reclamation's Cultural Resources Determination**

**CULTURAL RESOURCE COMPLIANCE**  
**Mid-Pacific Region**  
**Division of Environmental Affairs**  
**Cultural Resources Branch**

MP-153 Tracking Number: 15-SCAO-103

Project Name: Exchange Agreement for Water in San Luis Reservoir and Millerton Lake Between Kern-Tulare Water District, Delano Earlimart Irrigation District, and the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors

NEPA Document: EA-15-015

MP 153 Cultural Resources Reviewer: Scott Williams



Date: March 18, 2015

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The proposed undertaking by Reclamation is to approve a 25-year banking and exchange program between Kern-Tulare, Delano-Earlimart and the Exchange Contractors. No new construction or modification of existing facilities may occur in order to complete the Proposed Action. This is the type of undertaking that does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties, should such properties be present, pursuant to the NHPA Section 106 regulations codified at 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1). Reclamation has no further obligations under NHPA Section 106, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1).

Kern-Tulare proposes to exchange 9,000 AF of previously banked CVP water within Rosedale-Rio Bravo and 2,000 AF of previously banked CVP water within West Kern for a like amount of San Joaquin River water, plus an additional 25 percent that would have been lost due to conveyance in the river channel, that would have been delivered via the San Joaquin River channel to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool. The San Joaquin River water would be released from Millerton Lake into the Friant-Kern Canal for delivery to Kern-Tulare through their existing turnouts. To make the banked water available to the Exchange Contractors, Kern-Tulare's previously banked CVP water would be exchanged with Rosedale-Rio Bravo and West Kern for a like amount of SWP water available in San Luis Reservoir per their approved banking and exchange agreements. The exchanged water would then be released from San Luis Reservoir and delivered to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool via the Delta-Mendota Canal.

Delano-Earlimart proposes to exchange 10,000 AF of previously banked CVP water within Rosedale-Rio Bravo for a like amount of San Joaquin River water, plus an additional 25 percent that would have been lost due to conveyance in the river channel, that would have been delivered via the San Joaquin River channel to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool. The San Joaquin River water would be released from Millerton Lake into the Friant-Kern Canal for delivery to Delano-Earlimart through their existing turnouts. To make the banked water available to the Exchange Contractors, Delano-Earlimart's previously banked CVP water would be exchanged with Rosedale-Rio Bravo for a like amount of SWP water available in San Luis Reservoir per their approved banking and exchange agreement. The exchanged water would then be released from San Luis Reservoir and delivered to the Exchange Contractors at the Mendota Pool via the Delta-Mendota Canal.

**CULTURAL RESOURCE COMPLIANCE**  
**Mid-Pacific Region**  
**Division of Environmental Affairs**  
**Cultural Resources Branch**

Reclamation proposes to authorize the exchange. After reviewing documentation provided within EA-15-015, Reclamation has concluded this action would not have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places.

This document is intended to convey the completion of the NHPA Section 106 process for this undertaking. Please retain a copy in the administrative record for this action. Should changes be made to this project, additional NHPA Section 106 review, possibly including consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, may be necessary. Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment.

## **Appendix B**

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### **Reclamation's Indian Trust Assets Determination**



Emerson, Rain &lt;remerson@usbr.gov&gt;

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**Re: RESEND - ITA Request for Drought Project (15-015)**

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**STEVENSON, RICHARD** <rstevenson@usbr.gov>

Mon, Mar 23, 2015 at 1:29 PM

To: "Emerson, Rain" &lt;remerson@usbr.gov&gt;

Rain,

I have examined the project description and locations for the proposed project and have determined that there is no likelihood that Indian Trust Assets will be impacted by these exchanges.

On Mon, Mar 23, 2015 at 12:47 PM, Emerson, Rain <remerson@usbr.gov> wrote:

Dick,

Attached is a project description for a drought-related project that needs to be expedited. Thank you!

Rain L. Emerson, M.S.  
*Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist*  
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