

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Zebra Mussel Eradication Project for San Justo Reservoir, Hollister Conduit, and San Benito County Water Distribution System

FONSI-09-010



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
South-Central California Area Office

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Mission Statements

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to conserve and manage the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people, provide scientific and other information about natural resources and natural hazards to address societal challenges and create opportunities for the American people, and honor the Nation's trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities to help them prosper.

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

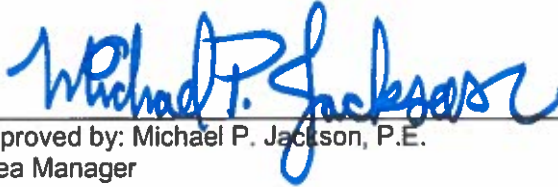
FONSI-09-010

**Zebra Mussel Eradication Project for San
Justo Reservoir, Hollister Conduit, and
San Benito County Water Distribution
System**



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9/30/2019
Date



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9/30/2019
Date

Introduction

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) prepared this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) which is supported by Reclamation's attached Environmental Assessment (EA)-09-010, *Zebra Mussel Eradication Project for San Justo Reservoir, Hollister Conduit, and San Benito County Water Distribution System*, hereby incorporated by reference.

Background

San Justo Reservoir, located southwest of Hollister, California, is used primarily for off-stream water storage as part of the San Felipe Division of the Central Valley Project (CVP). The reservoir was built and is owned, by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and is operated by the San Benito County Water District (San Benito). Water is primarily for irrigation and municipal uses and services 23,700 acres.

San Justo Reservoir receives CVP water out of San Luis Reservoir by way of the Pacheco Bifurcation structure and through the Hollister Conduit. Water can be diverted at various points along the Hollister Conduit to recipients by way of the San Benito distribution system and subsystems (distribution system). The conduit and distribution system are composed of more than 90 miles of total piping with various turnouts, flow control structures, and booster pumps. During high summer demand, water stored in San Justo Reservoir is delivered to recipients through pump-assisted flows through the Hollister Conduit and distribution system. Water from San Justo does not flow past the Pacheco Bifurcation and does not re-enter San Luis Reservoir; all flows out of San Justo terminate at various end-use locations.

The invasive exotic zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) was detected at San Justo Reservoir in 2008, and the reservoir has since been closed to recreational access to prevent potential spread. Adult zebra mussels were also found to infest the Hollister Conduit at multiple locations in 2009.

A multi-agency group, including members from Reclamation, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (formerly, Department of Fish and Game), California Department of Water Resources, San Benito County, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and San Benito County Water District have proposed and evaluated actions to eradicate zebra mussels from San Justo Reservoir, the Hollister Conduit and the distribution system.

Alternatives Considered

No Action

Reclamation and San Benito would not conduct a zebra mussel eradication project for San Justo Reservoir, the Hollister Conduit, and the San Benito subsystems. Zebra mussels would continue

to be present within these systems. Damage from zebra mussel infestation could lead to system failure and substantial repair costs as well as increasing the potential for spread. Further spread of zebra mussels would be environmentally and economically damaging.

Proposed Action

Reclamation and San Benito propose to conduct a zebra mussel eradication project for San Justo Reservoir, the Hollister Conduit, and the San Benito Distribution System by treating these systems with potash, a mined product that consists almost entirely of potassium chloride.

Environmental Commitments

San Benito shall implement the environmental protection measures listed in Table 3 of EA-09-010 to avoid environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action. Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

Comments on the EA

Reclamation provided the public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft FONSI and Draft EA between March 18, 2015 and April 16, 2015. Two comment letters were received. The comment letters and Reclamation's response to comments are included in Appendix I. Following close of the public comment period, the EA was placed on hold pending finalization of the eradication plan. The eradication plan was finalized in June 2019 (Appendix C). As the finalized eradication plan did not change the project description analyzed in the EA, or the determinations made therein, Reclamation is moving forward with completing the EA.

Reclamation has considered every comment in the comment letters. No additional information was provided that changed the analysis contained in EA-09-010.

Findings

In accordance with NEPA, Reclamation has determined that the approval of the Proposed Action is not a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment; consequently, an environmental impact statement is not required.

The following reasons are why the impacts from the proposed action are not significant:

- The proposed action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).
- The proposed action will not significantly affect natural resources and unique geographical characteristics such as proximity to historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order (EO) 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)).

- There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
- The proposed action will not have possible effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).
- The proposed action will neither establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).
- The proposed action will not have cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
- The proposed action will not significantly affect historic properties (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).
- The proposed action will not significantly affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species, or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).
- The proposed action will not threaten a violation of Federal, State, tribal or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).
- The proposed action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).
- Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898).
- The proposed action will not limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007 and 512 DM 3).