

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

San Felipe Pipeline Road/Levee and Culvert Repair between the Santa Clara Conduit CFI/CFO

FONSI-15-007



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

July 2016

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-15-007

**San Felipe Pipeline Road/Levee and
Culvert Repair between the Santa Clara
Conduit CFI/CFO**

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Introduction

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that the repair to the access road/levee for the Santa Clara Conduit's (Conduit) Calaveras Fault Inlet-Calaveras Fault Outlet (CFI-CFO) facilities is not a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an environmental impact statement is not required. This draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA)-15-007, *San Felipe Pipeline Road/Levee and Culvert Repair between the Santa Clara Conduit CFI/CFO*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

No final decision shall be made on the FONSI until public review has been completed and comments, if any, considered.

Background

Over the past few years, the CFI/CFO levee/access road has suffered from repeated slope failures due to culvert failures related to corrosion, erosion, and/or seismic activity. Santa Clara Valley Water District (Santa Clara), pursuant to their operating agreement with Reclamation, has repaired the CFI/CFO levee/access road in 2005, 2007, 2011, and 2013. Santa Clara has anticipated the failure of four additional culverts (Stations 86+80, 86+30, 85+30, and 84+80) along the portion of the access road near Tesquisquita Slough (see Figure 2 in EA-15-007) due to degrading and aged infrastructure. On February 9, 2016, Santa Clara discovered that the westernmost culvert (Station 86+80) had failed and that the culvert immediately to the east (Station 86+30) was damaged and likely to fail.

Proposed Action

Santa Clara, on Reclamation's behalf, proposes to replace four culverts and to repair eroded portions of the Conduit's CFI/CFO levee/access road as described in Section 2.2 in EA-15-007.

Environmental Commitments

Reclamation and Santa Clara shall implement the environmental protection measures included in the Biological Opinion (8-8-15-F-14) received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to avoid and/or reduce environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action (see Appendix A in EA-15-007). 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 1 of EA-15-007, 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: environmental justice, Indian Sacred Sites, Indian Trust Assets, or land use.

Air Quality

As shown in Table 2 of EA-15-007, the estimated criteria pollutant emissions from the Proposed Action are well below the Air District's thresholds of significance. Consequently, the Proposed Action would not result in a substantial adverse impact upon air quality and a conformity analysis pursuant to the Clean Air Act is not required.

Biological Resources

The total area of disturbance for the Proposed Action, including a 50-foot buffer around the area of ground disturbance, is 108,750 square feet (or 2.5 acres). Most of this area is located in an existing gravel roadbed (upland habitat) with a small area that is located in wetland habitat.

Construction activities may have direct effects on California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander if they are present within the Action Area. Injury and/or mortality could occur from trenching and grading in upland habitat, if frogs are temporarily using these areas. These activities could also impede and alter the movement of adult salamanders between upland habitat and breeding sites, and the dispersal of juvenile salamanders from breeding ponds to upland habitat. Construction activities that occur during the rainy season (October 15 through April 15), including fencing and excavation of linear trenches could entrap frogs and salamanders and interfere with their movement. Conservation measures have been incorporated into the project description (see Appendix A) in order to avoid and/or minimize these effects. In addition, all temporarily affected areas would be returned to pre-project conditions, eventually providing habitat quality similar to current conditions.

As this area is located within the East Bay Unit 12 California tiger salamander habitat, 2.5 acres of critical habitat would be temporarily affected. The portion of the Unit that would be affected is very small and represents mostly upland refugial habitat, with a small amount of breeding habitat also affected. All temporarily affected areas would be returned to their previous state, eventually providing habitat quality similar to preconstruction conditions.

Least Bell's vireos could be disturbed by the presence of workers and equipment, and the noise generated by the equipment, if present in the Action Area. Although breeding habitat (approximately two acres) would not be impacted, the presence of workers and equipment could deter birds from using immediately adjacent upland areas for foraging.

Approximately 2.38 acres of San Joaquin kit fox and Western Burrowing Owl habitat (out of the total 2.5 acres for the Proposed Action) would be temporarily affected during construction

activities. This area includes the 50-foot buffer around the area of ground disturbance but excludes the wetland portion that is not kit fox or owl habitat. The Action Area is on the very edge of the San Joaquin kit fox's range, and the likelihood of any denning is low. However, if any kit foxes were denning in the Action Area, they could be forced to leave their dens and the Action Area. The implementation of avoidance measures included in Appendix A would avoid these potential impacts and prevent any other adverse effects.

Cultural Resources

Reclamation determined that the Proposed Action would result in no effect to any historic properties. As such, there would be no adverse impacts to cultural resources from implementation of the Proposed Action.

Global Climate Change

As shown in Table 2 of EA-15-007, annual construction and operational emissions of carbon dioxide equivalents are estimated to be 104.08 metric tons, well less than the Environmental Protection Agency's 25,000 metric tons per year threshold for annually reporting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Accordingly, the Proposed Action would result in below *de minimis* impacts to global climate change.

Water Resources

Replacement of the four culverts and repair of the levee/access road would not require shutting down the Conduit; therefore, no interruption in CVP water service would occur to Santa Clara's customers. As described in Section 2.2 of EA-15-007, course-grained base and geofabric will be used in the construction area to control erosion on the excavated slopes and to prevent any potential impacts to local waterways. In addition, Santa Clara will acquire all permits required for working in waterways and implement all necessary best management practices to avoid and/or minimize potential water quality impacts. As a result, there would be no adverse impacts to water resources from the Proposed Action.

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.

Air Quality

The entirety of the installation and operation emissions for the Proposed Action is well below the *de minimis* thresholds established by the Air District. As a result, the Proposed Action would not contribute to cumulative adverse air quality impacts.

Biological Resources

Past impacts include the construction of the road itself and introductions of invasive species into San Felipe Lake, such as bullfrogs. Current and future activities on the private lands adjoining the right-of-way could impact all five protected species, including harassment from the disturbance of routine farming activities. Rodent control could impact kit foxes, burrowing owls, and both amphibians, by reducing burrow availability, as well as result in secondary poisoning of

kit foxes or burrowing owls. Non-native bullfrogs and fish in San Felipe Lake are expected to continue to have an adverse cumulative impact to the California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander.

The project description contains measures that would avoid and minimize the adverse impacts and reduce their cumulative contribution. Furthermore, the direct impacts would be temporary in nature, as the Proposed Action is replacing existing, aged infrastructure, which also results in a smaller cumulative contribution.

Cultural Resources

The proposed project will have no effect on historic properties, therefore, there will be no cumulative impacts to historic properties.

Global Climate Change

GHG emissions generated by the Proposed Action are expected to be extremely small, as seen in Table 2. While any increase in GHG emissions would add to the global inventory of gases that would contribute to global climate change, the Proposed Action would result in potentially minimal to no increases in GHG emissions and a net increase in GHG emissions among the pool of GHG would not be detectable.

Water Resources

Santa Clara would implement all necessary best management practices and avoidance measures included in permits acquired for working in the waterways during replacement of the four culverts. In addition, construction activities would be temporary and the Action Area would be returned to preconstruction conditions once construction is complete. There would be no cumulative adverse effects from the Proposed Action.