

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT, 16-19-MP

Merced Irrigation District Drought Protection Water Management Model Project

Mid-Pacific Regional Office, Sacramento, California

Prepared by:



Date: October 24, 2016

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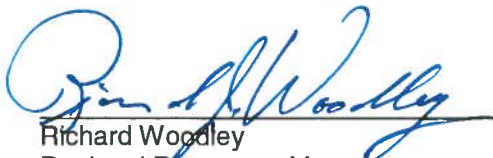
Reviewed by:



Date: 25 Oct 16

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Date: October 25, 2016

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Mission Statements

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes and our commitments to 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.

Background

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) proposes to provide a \$297,977 grant through the WaterSMART: Drought Resiliency Project Grant Program to the Merced Irrigation District (MID) for its Drought Protection Water Management Model Project (Project). Reclamation prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA Number 16-19-MP) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior regulations (43 CFR Part 46) to consider potential impacts of providing grant funding to MID. This Finding of No Significant Impact is supported by EA Number 16-19-MP, which is attached and incorporated by reference. Project actions were available online for public review and comment prior to consideration from June 3 through July 5, 2016. No comments were received.

Alternatives Including Proposed Action

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not contribute financial funding to the Merced Irrigation District for the project.

Proposed Action

Reclamation would contribute \$297,977 to the MID's Project through the WaterSMART Drought Resiliency Grant Program. The MID would provide the remaining funding to implement the Project. The Project entails the installment of two weather and river gauge stations along the Merced River: one below the State Highway 59 Bridge by river mile 42.1; and the second station at the privately-owned Gallo Bridge by river mile 39.4. The installment of the weather and river gauge stations will allow real-time data to be collected and incorporated into Drought Protection Water Management Model (Model). The Model will be used by MID to balance water management objectives with existing conditions in a more timely and efficient manner.

Findings

In accordance with NEPA, Reclamation determined that providing grant funding to MID to implement 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:

1. The proposed action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).

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) and 43 CFR 46.215(b)).
3. There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
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)).
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)).
6. The proposed action will not have cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
7. The proposed action will not significantly affect historic properties (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).
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)).
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)).
10. The proposed action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).
11. Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898).
12. 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).