

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

California State Parks Accessibility Improvements Project at Millerton Lake State Recreation Area

FONSI-15-019



Mission Statements

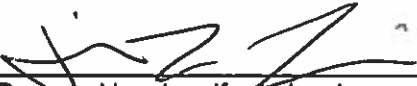
The Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities.

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-15-019

**California State Parks Accessibility
Improvements Project at Millerton Lake
State Recreation Area**


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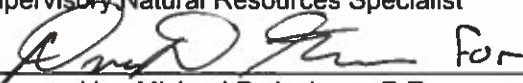
March 7, 2017
Date


Concurred by: Lisa Carlson
Wildlife Biologist

03/08/2017
Date


Concurred by: Rain L. Emerson
Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist

3/15/2017
Date


Approved by: Michael P. Jackson, P.E.
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3/16/17
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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 an environmental impact statement is not required for the California Department of Parks and Recreation's (State Parks) proposed Accessibility Improvements Project at Millerton Lake State Recreation Area (Millerton Lake SRA). This draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA)-15-019, *California State Parks Accessibility Improvements Project at Millerton Lake State Recreation Area*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

Reclamation provided the public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft FONSI and Draft EA) between February 03, 2017 and March 6, 2017. One comment letter was received. The comment letter and Reclamation's response to comments are included in Appendix A of EA-15-019.

Background

An inspection of the Millerton Lake SRA by State Parks determined that upgrades to existing recreational facilities within the North Shore of the Millerton Lake SRA are needed in order to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.

Proposed Action

Reclamation proposes to provide funding and approval to State Parks to complete minor modifications to the following existing infrastructure within the Millerton Lake SRA: (1) eight campsites (# 3, 5, 16, 43, 120, 132, 133, and 144), (2) one comfort station (combination centers for Restrooms and Showers), (3) a horse camp, and (4) the campfire center. Specific Project details are included in Section 2.2 of EA-15-019.

Environmental Commitments

State Parks shall implement the environmental protection measures listed in Table 1 of EA-15-019 to 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-15-019, 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, land use, or water resources.

Recreation

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, these improvements would enhance Millerton Lake SRA public services and public safety. The Proposed Action would upgrade existing facilities in order to comply with ADA accessibility requirements.

The Proposed Action is consistent with the Millerton Lake Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement for the enhancement of current recreational uses and facilities. The Plan includes management actions to enhance, replace, or upgrade existing recreational uses and facilities and installation of new facilities to expand or complement existing uses and facilities. During construction of these improvements, some existing recreational opportunities may be temporarily unavailable for use resulting in short-term minor adverse recreation impacts. However, these recreational improvements would result in long-term beneficial impacts on recreation by providing recreational opportunities to visitors with disabilities, which could result in greater visitor use.

Biological Resources

A total area of approximately 0.77 acres of existing campground and recreational facilities would be temporarily affected during construction of the Proposed Action. A majority of the Proposed Action area consists of gravel surfaces, concrete pads and walkways, and areas of bare compacted dirt. There are multiple California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*) burrows located within the Proposed Action area that may be used by California tiger salamanders (*Ambystoma californiense*) which cannot be avoided during construction. In order to avoid injuring or killing any California tiger salamanders that may be present in these burrows during construction, the burrows would be carefully excavated under the supervision of a qualified biologist and any California tiger salamanders found in the burrows would be relocated to suitable habitat outside of the Action Area.

The Proposed Action area does not contain any vernal pools, or other potentially suitable breeding habitat for California tiger salamanders, so no breeding habitat for this species would be affected. The Proposed Action would occur within existing campground areas, and would not result in the development or loss of undisturbed natural habitat. Furthermore, the Proposed Action would not prevent California ground squirrels and other small mammals from creating burrows on the site after construction is complete, as is evidenced by the multiple burrows currently on the site which pass directly underneath existing campground infrastructure.

The Proposed Action may result in the harassment or capture of California tiger salamanders during construction, but conditions on the site are expected to return to current baseline levels of disturbance once construction is complete. Potential impacts to California tiger salamanders would be avoided and/or minimized by the Environmental Commitments incorporated into the Proposed Action (Table 1 of EA 15-019). Reclamation determined that the Proposed Action *may adversely affect* the California tiger salamander and sent a request for formal consultation to

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on November 20, 2015. The Service issued a Biological Opinion for the Proposed Action on August 30, 2016 with an incidental take permit exempting incidental take of California tiger salamanders in the form of harassment or capture associated with the Proposed Project (Appendix B of EA-15-019).

Several portions of the Proposed Action area contain trees, or are located in close proximity to trees, which may provide suitable nesting habitat for Swainson's hawks (*Buteo swainsonii*) or other migratory birds. Migratory birds nesting in or near the Proposed Action area are likely somewhat more tolerant of human disturbance than birds that nest in undeveloped areas; however, increased noise levels from construction associated with the Proposed Action may still disturb birds if any are nesting in the Proposed Action area during construction. Potential impacts to nesting birds would be avoided with the implementation of the Environmental Commitments incorporated into the Proposed Action (Table 1 of EA 15-019).

No critical habitat would be impacted, because there is no critical habitat present within the Proposed Action area.

Cultural Resources

The Proposed Action involves the type of activity that has the potential to cause effects to historic properties pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1). Reclamation determined the Millerton Lake SRA as possibly representative of a California reservoir recreation tradition that began with the Central Valley Project at the Millerton Reservoir location.

Pursuant to the regulations at 36 CFR § 800.3(f)(2), Reclamation identified the Big Sandy Rancheria, the Cold Springs Rancheria of Mono Indians, and the North Fork Mono Tribe as Indian tribes who might attach religious and cultural significance to historic properties within the project areas. No responses from the aforementioned tribes were received.

Reclamation applied the criteria of adverse effect of the undertaking to the campgrounds, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.5, and found there would be no adverse effects. The undertaking involves modifications consistent with the current existing conditions, continual upgrades, and uses of the campgrounds. The impact will not affect any of the characteristics which potentially make the campgrounds and SRA eligible for listing on the National Register.

Reclamation initiated consultation with State Historic Preservation Officer on September 2, 2016 with a notification of a determination of no adverse effects to historic properties for the proposed project. State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the determination on October 30, 2016 (Appendix C of EA-15-019).

Implementation of the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places.

Air Quality

During construction, ozone precursors and criteria pollutants would be emitted by operation of construction equipment, and these emissions would incrementally add to the regional atmospheric loading of ozone precursors during project development.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (Air District) has established screening thresholds to determine whether a proposed project has a potential to exceed their air quality standards. Construction activities would cause temporary impacts to air quality due to dust and exhaust emissions. Construction under the Proposed Action would result in the temporary generation of reactive organic gases, nitrogen oxides, inhalable particulate matter between 2.5 and 10 microns in diameter and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter, and carbon monoxide emissions, but are well below threshold levels.

The Proposed Action would not impact the Air District's plans to achieve or maintain attainment for various air quality pollutants. As such, the Proposed Action would not obstruct implementation of applicable air quality plans.

Global Climate Change

There would be temporary and minor increase in greenhouse gases emissions as a result of the Proposed Action. Annual construction emissions of carbon dioxide equivalents are estimated to be 69.8 metric tons per year, and are well below the 25,000 metric tons or more per year thresholds.

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.

Recreation

New or improved Millerton Lake recreational facilities that would be built under this Proposed Action, and any future projects, would have long-term beneficial impacts on recreation. Visitation could be expected to increase due to improvements to access trails and facilities that make the reservoir and shoreline more accessible to a wider range of pedestrian and bicycle traffic, including disabled visitors and other recreationists who may have trouble negotiating unpaved surfaces.

Biological Resources

Cumulative impacts from projects within the Millerton Lake SRA were addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Millerton Lake Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement. This project, and other similar improvements for compliance with the ADA, were analyzed in the Environmental Impact Statement and it was determined that there would be no additional cumulative impacts resulting from this project.

Cultural Resources

The Proposed Action would not contribute to any cumulative impacts to Cultural Resources.

Air Quality

The Proposed Action would not contribute to an exceedance of applicable air quality standards and thresholds via emissions. The emissions would be temporary, and would not substantially contribute to a cumulative impact within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin.

Global Climate Change

While any increase in greenhouse gases 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 greenhouse gases emissions and a net increase in greenhouse gases emissions among the pool of greenhouse gases would not be detectable.