

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Finding Of No Significant Impact

The City of Fresno School District Water Conservation Project

FONSI 17-07-MP

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Background

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is providing Water and Energy Efficiency Grant (WaterSMART) funding to the City of Fresno (City) for their School District Water Conservation Project (project). The project would make funding available to three school districts for the installation of high efficient irrigation systems in order to be more efficient in watering turf at school campuses. The project would take place within the city of Fresno, located in Fresno County, California.

Large irrigated turf makes up the primary demand for water in Fresno's school districts. Current irrigation systems are hand operated flood irrigation systems or programmed systems on timers which operate regardless of weather conditions. Hand operated irrigation systems are turned on in the evening before school staff leaves and is then shut off in the morning when school staff arrives. This method is inefficient and over-irrigates the turf. In addition, many irrigation systems at school sites are over fifty years old and in need of repairs. Implementation of the project would provide new automated high efficiency sprinkler systems with smart controllers that will reduce water usage in Fresno's school districts.

Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not award grant funds to the City to install high efficiency irrigation systems at seven schools. The City would need to raise additional money from other public or private sources to continue with the project as described. However, if funding cannot be secured, the high efficiency irrigation systems would not be installed and over inefficient-irrigation of turf at the schools would continue.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, Reclamation would provide a \$300,000 WaterSMART Grant to Fresno towards the installation of high efficiency irrigation systems at seven schools. Fresno would provide the remaining funds to complete the project.

A contractor would install the sprinkler system and smart controllers, and preform startup testing to ensure the system is operational. Construction activities would include trenching and installation of new PVC irrigation piping. Minimal ground disturbing activities would occur from trenching the sprinkler pipeline. High efficiency sprinkler heads, irrigation controllers, and irrigation booster pumps would be installed to track water use and apply the correct amount of water needed based on current weather patterns.

As part of the Proposed Action, the following environmental commitments and best management practices would be implemented to avoid and minimize potential effects to the environment:

- There will be no construction work during night time hours.
- Access routes will be along established roads and driveways.
- Ground disturbing work will be limited to dry conditions

Findings

Based on the attached environmental assessment (EA), Reclamation finds that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The attached EA describes the existing environmental resources in the Proposed Action area and evaluates the effects of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives on the resources. This EA was prepared in accordance with NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior Regulations (43 CFR Part 46). Effects on several environmental resources were examined and found to be absent or minor. That analysis is provided in the attached EA, and the analysis in the EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

Following are the reasons why the impacts of 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 impact natural resources and unique geographical characteristics such as 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. 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)).
4. 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)).
5. There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
6. The proposed action will not have significant cumulative impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).

7. The proposed action will not adversely affect any districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)). Pursuant to 54 USC § 306108, commonly known as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800, Reclamation determined the undertaking has no potential to cause effects on historic properties and therefore, will result in no significant impacts to cultural resources.
8. The proposed action will not significantly affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).
9. The proposed action will not violate 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 significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007 and 512 DM 3).