

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Categorical Exclusion Checklist

Westlands Water District Canal Integration Program Pump-in Facility Conversion

CEC-16-052

Prepared by:

Kate Connor

Kate Connor
Natural Resources Specialist
South-Central California Area Office

Date: 7/25/18

Concurred by:

See Attachment A

Amy Barnes
Archaeologist
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date: See Attachment A

Regional Archeologist concurred with Item 8. Their determination has been placed within the project file.

Concurred by:

Shauna McDonald

Shauna McDonald
Wildlife Biologist
South-Central California Area Office

Date: July 24, 2018

Concurred by:

R. Emerson

Rain L. Emerson
Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist
South-Central California Area Office

Date: 07/25/2018

ITA Designee concurred with Item 11. Their determination has been placed within the project file.

Approved by:

Michael P. Jackson

Michael P. Jackson, P.E.
Area Manager
South-Central California Area Office

Date: 7/25/2018



Background

Westlands Water District (Westlands) is composed of approximately 950 square miles of farmland in western Fresno and Kings Counties. Westlands receives Central Valley Project (CVP) water from the Delta by way of the San Luis Canal and the Delta-Mendota Canal.

In 2015, Westlands requested approval from the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to annually introduce, convey, and/or store up to 30,000 acre-feet of groundwater in the San Luis Canal when Westlands CVP allocation was 20 percent or less (referred to by Westlands as the Canal Integration Program or CIP). Reclamation evaluated the annual introduction, conveyance, and/or storage of up to 30,000 acre-feet of groundwater in the San Luis Canal through temporary and permanent discharge facilities in Environmental Assessment 15-001 and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact on June 5, 2015.

Westlands has requested approval from Reclamation to convert four of the temporary pump-in facilities to permanent facilities and to install three new permanent facilities.

Nature of the Action

Reclamation proposes to issue a 25-year land use authorization to Westlands for the following:

- Conversion of four temporary pump-in facilities located along the San Luis Canal to permanent facilities. The facilities are located at approximate milepost (MP) 141.07R (temporary was located at 141.02R), 157.98L, 166.70R (temporary was at 166.90R), and 169.48L. (Figure 1).
- Installation, operation, and maintenance of three new permanent pump-in facilities within Reclamation's right-of-way at approximate MP 155.63L, 159.90L, and 161.49L along the San Luis Canal (Figure 1).

The above facilities would include installation of a 12-inch diameter water pipeline, installed in an underground trench, at each of the locations described above. Trenches would cross the entire width of Reclamation right of way for the San Luis Canal and be approximately 90 feet in length by 2 feet in width and 4 feet in depth.

Following placement of the pipe, the pipe will be encased in concrete with a minimum of 6" cover from the outside of the pipe in order to reach maximum compaction under the haunches. The remainder of the trench will be backfilled and compacted with the excavated material.

The pipelines would be above ground on the canal side of the berm and would rest on a concrete saddle measuring approximately 1-foot in width, 1-foot in length, and 1.5-feet in height (1-foot of which would be buried). On the Canal side of the access road berm, the pipe would extend aboveground and rest on two wood support blocks, one located above the water line and one just below and shall be attached using stainless steel straps. The discharge point would be

approximately 10-feet under the surface of the water measured parallel to the canal liner (Figure2).

Equipment needed for construction would consist of a backhoe, a 1-ton utility truck and hand tools. Asphalt removed would be hauled offsite. The staging area would be approximately 200 feet in width by 200 feet in length near MP 166.70R on adjacent private property. The access road would be restored to its original condition.

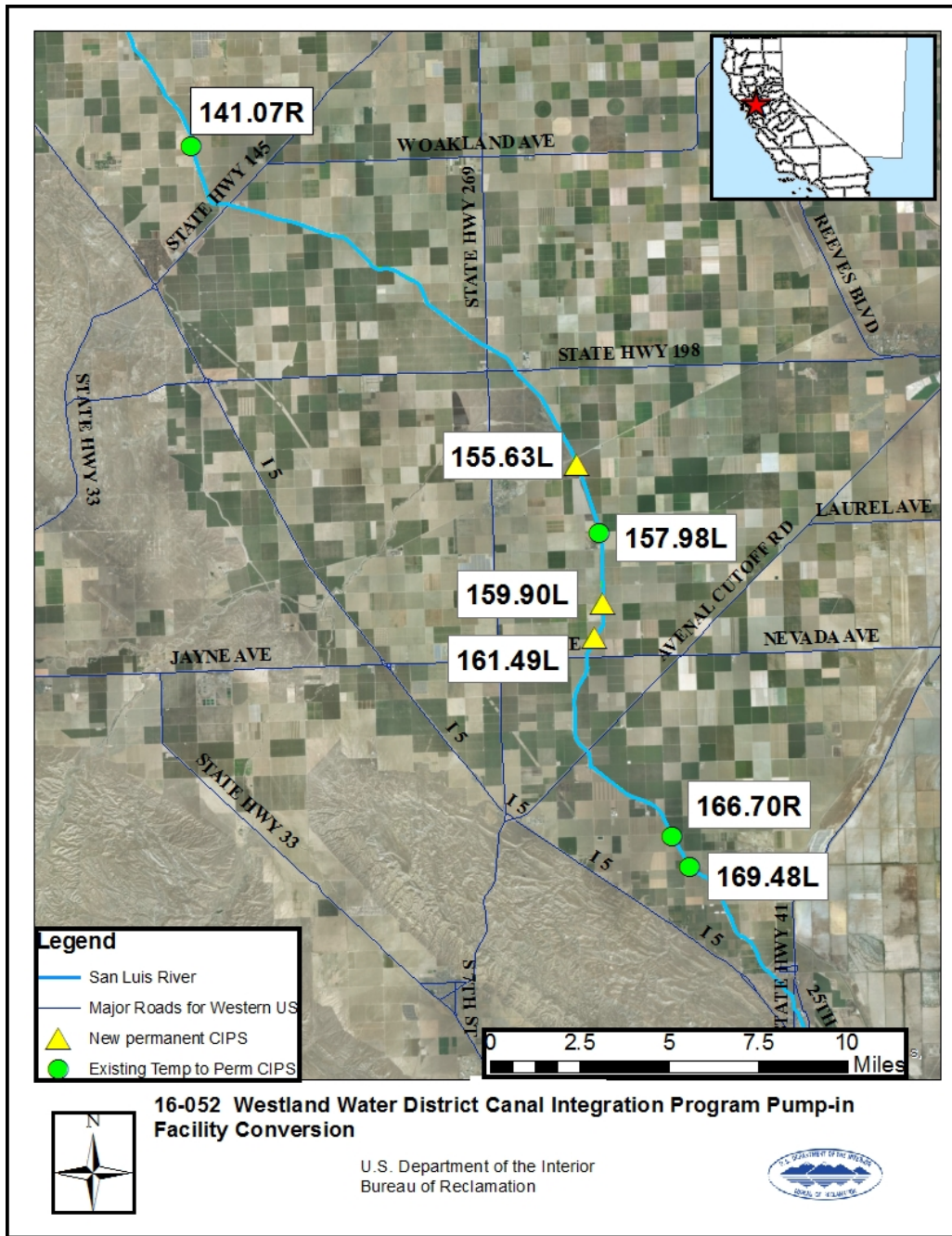


Figure 1 Project area

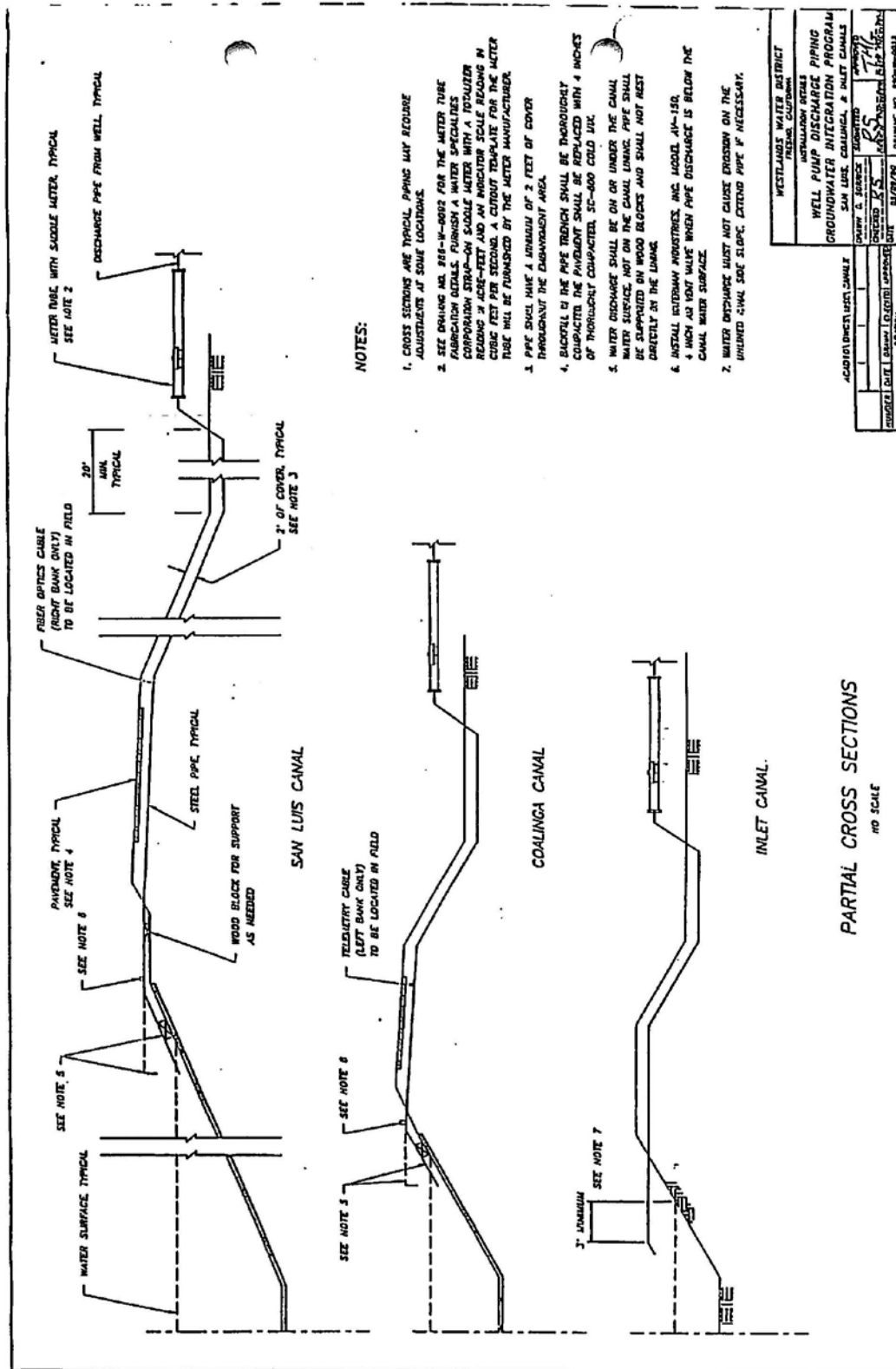


Figure 2 Facility profile

Environmental Commitments

Westlands shall implement the following environmental protection measures to avoid effects on the San Joaquin kit fox and take off the Western Burrowing Owls and Swainson's Hawks associated with the Proposed Action:

1. A qualified biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys for the San Joaquin kit fox, its sign and burrows in the Action Area and within a 200-foot area outside of the project footprint. The survey shall be conducted no less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the initiation of any construction activities for the Proposed Action. A letter report documenting survey methods and findings shall be submitted to Reclamation at least 5 days before construction. If kit foxes, kit fox sign or kit fox burrows are found during the survey, construction on the Proposed Action shall not begin until Reclamation has been contacted and appropriate consultation has been completed.
2. To prevent inadvertent entrapment of listed species and other wildlife during construction, all excavated steep-walled holes or trenches more than one foot deep shall be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials, or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks. Before such trenches or holes are filled, they must be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals. If federally protected species are found in any of the holes or trenches, work shall stop and Reclamation shall be contacted immediately for further guidance. The proponent shall also contact Reclamation no more than two weeks after the project is completed to report which animals, if any, were trapped during the project.
3. Before the start of any ground-disturbing activities associated with the proposed Action, a qualified biologist shall conduct focused surveys for burrowing owls in areas of suitable habitat on and within 250 feet of the project footprint. A letter report documenting survey methods and findings shall be submitted to Reclamation at least five days before construction on the proposed project.
4. If occupied burrowing owl burrows are found, Reclamation shall be notified and work on the proposed action shall not begin until a qualified biologist has established a non-disturbance buffer of 160 feet during the non-breeding season (September 1 through January 31) or 250 feet during the breeding season (February 1 through August 31). The biologist shall remain on-site during construction to monitor the burrow, and may stop construction at any time to avoid impacts to the owls. The buffer shall remain in place until the biologist determines the nest is no longer active.

5. If a burrowing owl is observed at the construction site at any time during construction, a temporary non-disturbance buffer of approximately 160 feet shall be observed to establish a safe area for the animal until it leaves the construction area at its own volition.

Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

Exclusion Category

516 DM 14.5 D (10). *Issuance of permits, licenses, easements, and crossing agreements which provide right-of-way over Bureau lands where action does not allow for or lead to a major public or private action.*

Evaluation of Criteria for Categorical Exclusion

- | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. This action would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (40 CFR 1502.3). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. This action would have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA Section 102(2)(E) and 43 CFR 46.215(c)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. This action would have significant impacts on public health or safety (43 CFR 46.215(a)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. This action would have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographical characteristics 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 (EO 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (43 CFR 46.215 (b)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. This action would have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks (43 CFR 46.215(d)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. This action would establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects (43 CFR 46.215 (e)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 7. This action would have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects (43 CFR 46.215 (f)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. This action would have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by Reclamation (LND 02-01) (43 CFR 46.215 (g)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. This action would have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated critical habitat for these species (43 CFR 46.215 (h)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. This action would violate a Federal, tribal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for protection of the environment (43 CFR 46.215 (i)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. This action would affect ITAs (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. This action would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898) (43 CFR 46.215 (j)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. This action would 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, 43 CFR 46.215 (k), and 512 DM 3)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. This action would contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act, EO 13112, and 43 CFR 46.215 (l)). | No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Uncertain
<input type="checkbox"/> | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> |

NEPA Action: Categorical Exclusion

The Proposed Action is covered by the exclusion category and no extraordinary circumstances exist. The Action is excluded from further documentation in an EA or EIS.