



United States Department of the Interior



MP-153 REFER TO:
ENV-3.00

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Mid-Pacific Regional Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, California 95825-1898

CERTIFIED – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

DEC 10 2009

Mr. Milford Wayne Donaldson
State Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Historic Preservation
1416 9th Street, Room 1442-7
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 Consultation for Improvements to the Pond Poso Spreading and Recovery Facility of the Semitropic Water Storage District, Kern County, California (Project No. 09-SCAO-338) – American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Project

Dear Mr. Donaldson:

The Bureau of Reclamation is initiating the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 process and is seeking your concurrence with a finding of no historic properties affected for a proposed enhancement of an existing spreading and recovery facility managed by the Semitropic Water Storage District of Kern County, California. This project is being funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The use of Federal appropriations constitutes an undertaking pursuant to Section 301(7) of the NHPA (16 U.S.C. 470), as amended. Reclamation is consulting with you in accordance with the regulations at 36 CFR Part 800 implementing Section 106 of the NHPA.

The proposed improvements will take place in an existing spreading basin that encompasses five quarter sections approximately 763 acres in size. The project entails the construction of inter-basin structures, 20 pond over-pours, three emergency spillways, four county road siphon crossings, completion of seven production wells, eight casing path wells and five shallow wells, and construction of a collector system. Heavy equipment such as excavators will be used to install and construct the necessary enhancements. Excavated soils will either be disposed of commercially or by spreading them over the existing spreading basin. The proposed improvements are being constructed in an existing spreading basin that was originally constructed in 2006 as a private endeavor by the Semitropic Water Storage District. The purpose of the spreading basin was to provide groundwater recharge that could be extracted in dry years or supplement reduced deliveries during irrigation seasons.

The current spreading basin, although it has not been excavated and levees have been constructed, is not a working facility. Appropriations under the ARRA program will allow the Semitropic irrigation district to complete the final components of the spreading basin project. Once the final components have been implemented, the existing spreading basin will be functional and provide for a more reliable irrigation water supply.

Reclamation has determined that the area of potential effects (APE) constitutes the five quarter sections where the project action will take place (Figure 1 of Pruett [2009:2]). A detailed description of the APE is included in the enclosed cultural resource inventory report by Pruett (2009:1). The APE lies within agricultural lands northwest of the City of Wasco in Kern County, California. The five quarter sections were developed into spreading ponds and levees in 2006. The APE is a highly modified environment. In 2006 much of the APE was excavated to depths of approximately 30 feet during the construction of the spreading basin area. The legal description for the APE is E ½, sec. 17; W ½, sec. 16; and the SW ¼, sec 9, T. 26 S., R. 24 E., Mount Diablo Meridian, as depicted on the Wasco 7.5-minute USGS topographic quadrangle.

In an effort to identify historic properties, Semitropic Water Storage District's engineering consultant, GEI Consultant, subcontracted with Three Girls and a Shovel, LLC, to conduct a cultural resource inventory of the APE. The results of this inventory are detailed in the enclosed cultural resource inventory report by Pruett (2009). In summary of Pruett (2009), a records search did not reveal any previously recorded cultural resources nor any previous cultural resource identification efforts within or immediately adjacent the APE. Because the area has been significantly modified during construction of the spreading basin in 2006 without any previous cultural resource considerations, Pruett conducted a pedestrian inspection of the APE. No cultural resources were identified during the survey. Pruett's effort to consult with Indian Tribes and Native American organizations and individuals also failed to identify any known cultural resources. Pruett (2009) concludes that any cultural resources that may have been present prior to the construction of the spreading basin in 2006 are now removed.

Based on the above information and enclosed report by Pruett (2009), Reclamation concludes that the proposed undertaking will have no effect on historic properties pursuant to the regulations at 36 CFR Part 800.4(d)(1). In an effort to identify sites of religious and cultural significance, Reclamation is consulting with the Tule River Tribe and the Santa Rosa Rancheria pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800.4(a)(4). If Reclamation is made aware of any resources, we will contact your office immediately.

Reclamation invites your comments on our delineation of the APE and the appropriateness of our identification efforts. We also request your concurrence on our finding that the proposed undertaking will result in no effect to historic properties. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact Mr. Adam Nickels at 916-978-5053 or anickels@usbr.gov. We look forward to you response.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL A. CHOTKOWSKI

Michael A. Chotkowski
Regional Environmental Officer

Enclosure

Reference:

Pruett, C.L.

2009 *A Cultural Resources Assessment for the Semitropic Water Storage District, Northwest of Wasco, Kern County California*. Unpublished report prepared for Semitropic Water Storage District, on Behalf of the Bureau of Reclamation. On file with the Bureau of Reclamation, Sacramento California, Project No. 09-SCAO-338

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**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
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December 22, 2009

In Reply Refer To: BUR091214A

Michael A. Chotkowski
Regional Environmental Officer
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Regional Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825-1898

Re: Improvements to the Pond Poso Spreading and Recovery Facility of the Semitropic Water Storage District, Kern County, California (Project No. 09-SCAO-338).

Dear Mr. Chotkowski:

Thank you for seeking my consultation regarding the above noted undertaking. Pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800 (as amended 8-05-04) regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Bureau of Reclamation (BUR) is seeking my comments regarding the effects that the subject project will have on historic properties. The BUR is providing American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding to the Semitropic Water Storage District to implement this project, an action which the BUR has determined, constitutes an undertaking subject to review under Section 106 regulations.

The proposed project will occur in an existing spreading basin that encompasses an area of approximately 763 acres. The BUR has determined that the entirety of this 763-acre basin is the project Area of Potential Effects (APE). Project elements will consist of the construction, with excavators and other heavy equipment, of various inter-basin structures including pond over-pours, emergency spillways, county road siphon crossings, and various types of wells with a collection system. The project is designed to complete construction of the spreading basin, which was intended to provide groundwater recharge for extraction during dry years, but is not currently a working facility. In addition to your letter of December 10, 2009, you have submitted the following document in support of your efforts to identify and evaluate historic properties in the project APE:

- A Cultural Resources Assessment for the Semitropic Water Storage District, Northwest of Wasco, Kern County, California (Catherine Lewis Pruett, Three Girls and A Shovel, LLC: October 2009).

Classification	ENV 500
Project	2M
Contract No.	09084548
Folder I.D.	1070503-1
Date Input & Initials	12-24-09 KJ

After reviewing your letter and supporting documentation, I have no objection to your finding of No Historic Properties Affected. Be advised that under certain circumstances, such as unanticipated discovery or a change in project description, the BUR may have additional future responsibilities for this undertaking under 36 CFR Part 800. Thank you for seeking my comments and for considering historic properties in planning your project. If you require further information, please contact William Soule, Associate State Archeologist, at phone 916-654-4614 or email wsoule@parks.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Susan K Shattler for

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA
State Historic Preservation Officer