



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Finding of No Significant Impact
**2022 – 2024 Sites Reservoir Geologic,
Geophysical, and Geotechnical
Investigations**

California Great Basin - Interior Region 10

FONSI CGB-EA-2022-012

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Background

The Sites Project Authority (Authority) and the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) are proposing to conduct geologic, geophysical, and geotechnical investigations (“investigations”) in Glenn, Colusa, and Yolo Counties. These investigations are intended to provide technical information to assist in the ongoing efforts to formulate and refine the engineering design and to assist in the preparation of permit applications for the proposed Sites Reservoir and its associated facilities in western Sacramento Valley.

The Authority and Reclamation jointly prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA)/Initial Study (IS) to satisfy requirements of both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EA/IS was released for a 30-day public review on May 23, 2022. A total of four comment letters were received and resolved in the attached EA/IS. The four letters were from US Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Toxic Substances Control, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The comments received were mostly advisory in nature or required minor clarifications to the Draft EA/IS. Minor changes to mitigation measures were made in response to California Department of Fish and Wildlife comments. These changes result in equivalent or more effective mitigation when compared to the originally proposed measures.

Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

No Action: Under the No Action, Reclamation and the Authority would not conduct field investigations and surveys to obtain the necessary data to evaluate engineering and design plans and support the preparation of permit applications for the proposed Sites Reservoir.

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action includes conducting geologic, geotechnical, and geophysical investigations, focusing on the areas proposed for the Sites Reservoir and associated facilities.

Findings

Reclamation originally consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under Section 7 of Endangered Species Act for the Sites Reservoir Geotechnical Investigations. On September 30, 2019, the USFWS issued a Biological Opinion for giant garter snake and a concurrence letter for California red- legged frog, Keck's checkermallow, conservancy fairy shrimp, vernal pool tadpole shrimp, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, vernal pool fairy shrimp, California tiger salamander, and western yellow-billed cuckoo.

On February 15, 2022, Reclamation initiated consultation with USFWS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for the Proposed Action. On June 17, 2022, USFWS issued an amended Biological Opinion. The Biological Opinion determined that the Proposed Action would have no adverse effect to critical habitat and would not jeopardize any ESA-listed species.

Reclamation initiated consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act via a letter dated April 11, 2022. Reclamation determined that no historic properties will be affected by the Proposed Action pursuant to 36 CFR Section 800.5(b). The SHPO concurred with Reclamation's findings in a letter dated May 6, 2022.

Based on the analysis in the attached EA/IS, Reclamation finds that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The EA/IS are hereby incorporated by reference. Reclamation considered potential short-term and long-term effects of the Proposed Action, both beneficial and adverse. Following are the reasons why the impacts of the Proposed Action are not significant, with respect to the affected environment and degree of effects of the action (40 CFR 1501.3(b)).

1. The Proposed Action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1501.3(b)(2)(iii)).
2. The Proposed Action will not violate federal, state, tribal, or local law protecting the environment (40 CFR 1501.3(b)(2)(iv)).
3. The Proposed Action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum – July 2, 1993).
4. Implementing the Proposed Action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (Executive Order 12898 – February 11, 1994).
5. 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 (Executive Order 13007 – May 24, 1996, and 512 DM 3 – June 5, 1998).