



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Environmental Assessment

Long-Term Transfer of Central Valley Project Water from Stony Creek Water District to Colusa County Service Area Number 1-Century Ranch

Colusa County, California
Interior Region 10 California Great Basin
CGB-ED-2024-048

Mission Statements

The U.S. 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.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

APE	Area of potential effects
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
Company	Century Ranch Water Company
CVP	Central Valley Project
CWA	Clean Water Act
EA	Environmental Assessment
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impacts
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
ITA	Indian Trust Asset
National Register	National Register of Historic
Places NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
Ouwua	Orland Unit Water Users' Association
Project	Long-Term Transfer of Central Valley Project Water from Stony Creek Water District to Colusa County Service Area Number 1- Century Ranch Project
Reclamation	Bureau of Reclamation
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
USC	United States Code
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Section 1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to examine the potential impacts to the affected environment resulting from implementation of the long-term transfer of up to 91 acre-feet of Central Valley Project (CVP) water per year, during the period of March 1-November 30 of each year for 20 years, beginning with the 2025 water year.

This EA has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 United States Code (USC) §4321 et seq.) and the Department of the Interior regulations for implementation of the NEPA (43 CFR Part 46).¹ If there are no significant environmental impacts identified as a result of the analysis, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) can be signed to complete the NEPA compliance process.

1.2 Location and Background

The Project area includes the diversion point from Little Stony Creek to the Colusa County Service Area Number 1-Century Ranch (Figure A-1, Appendix A) in Colusa County, California.

The legal location of the Project consists of Sections 3, 10, 11, 14-15, 21-23, 26-28, 34-35 of Township 19N, Range 6W and Sections 1-3, 9, 14, 23, 26-27 of Township 18, Range 6W (Stony Creek Water District) as well as Sections 22-23, 26-27, Township 17N, Range 6W (Colusa County Service Area Number 1-Century Ranch) of the Mount Diablo Base and Meridian.

Century Ranch Water Company (Company) has been in existence since the late 1960s and provides water service to approximately 92 homes in the community of Century Ranch utilizing surface water diversions from Little Stony Creek and one unreliable well.

Since the late 1960s, the Company has attempted to secure a water supply from a number of

¹ Executive Order 14154, Unleashing American Energy (Jan. 20, 2025), and a Presidential Memorandum, Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity (Jan. 21, 2025), require the Department to strictly adhere to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq. Further, such Order and Memorandum repeal Executive Orders 12898 (Feb. 11, 1994) and 14096 (Apr. 21, 2023). Because Executive Orders 12898 and 14096 have been repealed, complying with such Orders is a legal impossibility. Reclamation verifies that it has complied with the requirements of NEPA, including the Department's regulations and procedures implementing NEPA at 43 C.F.R. Part 46 and Part 516 of the Departmental Manual, consistent with the President's January 2025 Order and Memorandum. The U.S Bureau of Reclamation has also voluntarily considered the Council on Environmental Quality's rescinded regulations implementing NEPA, previously found at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500-1508, as guidance to the extent appropriate and consistent with the requirements of NEPA and Executive Order 14154.

sources, including contracting with the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for a water supply and securing surface water through collection galleries on Little Stony Creek, a tributary of Stony Creek. Reclamation had been unable to enter into a water service contract with the Company due to contracting moratoriums and the collection galleries utilized by the Company infringing on senior water right holders in the area. Reclamation, in the past, has made CVP water available to the Company on a temporary basis. In 1995, Reclamation approved a one-year transfer of 50 acre-feet from the District to the Company. Since 1996, the Company relied on groundwater as the source of water, however, this source of water has proved to be inadequate.

In calendar year 2005 Reclamation approved a long-term transfer of 91 acre-feet of CVP water per calendar year, during the period March 1 through November 30 for a period of 20 years from the District to the Company.

The proposed project would be an additional 20-year approval, consisting of the same conditions and in accordance with Reclamation's current water transfer guidelines (TITLE XXXIV OF PUBLIC LAW 102-575).

1.3 Purpose and Need for the Proposal

There is an underlying need for a water supply for County Service Area Number 1 – Century Ranch during the period March 1 through November 30 of each calendar year to meet the municipal and industrial needs of existing homes in the development.

Section 2 Alternatives

This EA considers two alternatives including the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative reflects conditions without the Proposed Action Alternative and serves as a basis of comparison for determining potential effects to the human environment from implementing the Proposed Action.

2.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not approve a long-term transfer of up to 91 acre-feet of CVP water per year, during the period of March 1-November 30 of each year for 20 years, beginning with the 2025 water year from the District to the Company. In order to meet the Health and Human Safety requirements, Colusa County Service Area Number 1-Century Ranch would utilize groundwater to the extent available.

2.2 Proposed Action Alternative

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, Reclamation would approve, without further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, a long-term transfer of up to 91 acre-feet of CVP water per year, during the period of March 1-November 30 of each year for 20 years, beginning with the 2025 water year from the Stony Creek Water District to Colusa County Service Area Number 1-Century Ranch.

The transfer would be in accordance with Reclamation’s current water transfer guidelines (TITLE XXXIV OF PUBLIC LAW 102-575). CVP water would be made available from Black Butte Reservoir to replace water diverted from Little Stony Creek, which would otherwise flow into East Park Reservoir, a feature of the Orland Project. The transferred water would be diverted from sub-surface stream flow from an existing infiltration gallery, approximately 200 feet west of Little Stony Creek, a short distance upstream of East Park Reservoir. A meter installed on the pump drawing water from the infiltration gallery and the diversions would be limited to 75 gallons per minute per day or 0.167 cubic feet per second. Over a 24-hour period, this yields 0.331 acre-feet or 108,000 gallons. No increase in the total volume of water diverted is anticipated. No new facilities or changes in land use would be involved and no further growth in the Community would occur because of the transfer.

Section 3 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

This chapter describes the affected environment and evaluates the environmental consequences that could result from the Proposed Action as compared to the No Action alternative. The No Action Alternative describes the conditions most likely to occur if the Proposed Action Alternative was not implemented.

3.1 Resources Not Analyzed in Detail

Impacts to the following resources were considered and found to be negligible, and as a result were eliminated from environmental analysis. Brief explanations for their elimination from further consideration are provided below (Table 1).

Table 1. Resources Not Analyzed in Detail

Resource	Explanations
Indian Trust Assets	Indian Trust Assets (ITAs) are legal interests in assets that are held in trust by the United States for federally recognized Indian tribes or individuals. There are no Indian reservations, Rancherias, or allotments in the Project area. As shown in Appendix B the nearest ITA to the proposed Project is the 50F SF17 about 3.65 miles to the Northwest of the Project site (Native American Lands, n.d.). On December 2, 2024, Reclamation’s ITA coordinator stated: “Based on the nature of the planned work, it does not appear to be in an area that will impact Indian

	<p>hunting or fishing resources or water rights nor is the proposed activity on actual Indian lands. [Therefore,] it is reasonable to assume that the Proposed Action will not have any impact on ITAs.”</p>
Indian Sacred Sites	<p>Sacred sites are defined in Executive Order 13007 (May 24, 1996) as “any specific, discrete, narrowly delineated location on federal land that is identified by an Indian tribe, or Indian individual determined to be an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of its established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion; provided that the tribe or appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion has informed the agency of the existence of such a site. No Indian sacred sites have been identified within the footprint of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action Alternative would not affect nor prohibit access to or ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites.</p>
Cultural Resources	<p>The Section 106 process is in the federal regulations at 36 CFR Part 800. These regulations describe the process that the federal agency (Reclamation) takes to identify cultural resources and the level of effect that the proposed undertaking would have on historic properties.</p> <p>The Project is the type of action that does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties pursuant to 36 CFR §800.3 of the Section 106 implementing regulations (Appendix C). Furthermore, it was determined that the Proposed Action would also not 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)). As a result of these determinations, Reclamation has no further obligations under NHPA Section 106, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1).</p>
Socioeconomics	<p>The Proposed Action is not expected to have any significant or prolonged impact (beneficial or adverse) to local or regional economies. The approval of the long-term transfer would maintain the socioeconomic standard established during the current long-term transfer agreement (2005 – 2025). Reclamation has not identified disproportionate or adverse human health or environmental effects on any population as a result of implementing the Proposed Action Alternative.</p>
Air Quality	<p>Section 176 (c) of the Clean Air Act (42 USC 7506 (c)) requires that any entity of the federal government that engages in, supports, or in any way provides financial support for, licenses or permits, or approves any activity, to demonstrate that the action conforms to the applicable State Implementation Plan required under Section 110 (a) of the Clean Air Act (42 USC 7401 (a)) before the action is otherwise approved.</p> <p>The Project area and surrounds are in attainment for all of the air quality pollutants reported on the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s NEPAassist planning tool (<i>NEPAassist</i>, n.d.). This includes Ozone 1- hr, Ozone 8-hr, Lead, Sulfur dioxide (SO₂) 1-hr, Particulate Matter 2.5, Particulate Matter 10, Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂).</p> <p>No heavy equipment use or commercial vehicular traffic associated with the action is anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action Alternative.</p>
Land Use & Recreation	<p>There would be no adverse land use or recreational impacts from the proposed Project as there is no land use associated with the action and the amount of water involved is less than 0.15% of the average annual inflow to East Park</p>

	Reservoir so the reductions in streamflow would be minor and well within the normal annual variation and the amount that has been involved during the current long-term transfer agreement (2005 – 2025).
Soils	There is no ground disturbance associated with the Proposed Action Alternative.

3.2 Resources Analyzed in Detail

This EA analyzes the affected environment of the Proposed Action as compared to the No Action Alternative in order to determine the potential impacts and the effects of reasonably foreseeable future actions to the following environmental resources.

3.2.1 Water Resources

3.2.1.1 Affected Environment

Water resources potentially affected by the proposed Project include sub-surface stream flow approximately 200 feet West of Little Stony Creek, a short distance upstream of East Park Reservoir.

East Park Reservoir was created by the construction of East Park Dam as part of the Orland Project, which supplies water to approximately 21,000 acres of irrigable land under the operational control of the Orland Unit Water Users' Association (OUWUA). The reservoir receives and stores Orland Project water from the Little Stony Creek, Lolsel Creek, and Little Indian Creek. Water may be exchanged among East Park, Stony Gorge, and Black Butte Reservoirs to maximize the conservation utilization of the stored water.

The average annual runoff or inflow of Little Stony Creek into East Park Reservoir is 63,900 acre-feet (AF) and is driven more by rainfall than snowmelt (Tetra Tech 2004). Snowmelt does not greatly affect runoff. The Stony Creek basin experiences low flows from June through October.

The USFWS National Wetland Inventory (NWI) identifies areas of potential wetlands in the proposed Project footprint (Figure A-2, Appendix A), utilizing high quality ortho imagery to delineate boundaries, though the polygons of the NWI are not completely accurate in their location and extent. Five wetland types, Lake, Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland, Riverine, Freshwater Emergent Wetland, and Freshwater Pond are identified in the Project footprint (*National Wetlands Inventory*, n.d).

3.2.1.2 Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not approve a long-term transfer of up to 91 acre-feet of CVP water per year, during the period of March 1-November 30 of each year for 20 years, beginning with the 2025 water year. The 91-acre feet of CVP water that has been transferred annually for the last 20 years (less than 0.15% of average annual inflow) would not be diverted from sub-surface stream flow from Little Stony Creek. As a result, the Project would not occur, and the Project's purpose and need would not be met. No effects or changes to current patterns of water quality in the Project area would occur under the No Action Alternative.

Proposed Action Alternative

No impacts associated with water delivery are anticipated because of this transfer. Under the proposed transfer, water would be removed from Little Stony Creek using existing collection galleries. No streambed alterations would be required. The transfer would not adversely affect unique geological features such as wetlands, wild or scenic rivers, refuges, floodplains, rivers placed on the nationwide river inventory, or prime or unique farmlands. As discussed further in 3.2.2.2 *Environmental Consequences*, the total amount of diverted flow would remain within normal variation limits and would not impact supporting species or features associated with water resources. The only effects would be very slight reductions in flow in a short reach of Little Stony Creek.

3.2.2 Biological Resources

The following publicly available databases were reviewed and referenced:

- The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB)
- USFWS National Wetland Inventory
- USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website (<https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac>)

3.2.2.1 Affected Environment

Special Status Species

Federally listed threatened, endangered, and candidate species under both the ESA of 1973 (16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq.) as well as the California ESA that may occur in or near the Project area are listed below in Table 2. This list was generated by accessing and querying the USFWS IPaC database on January 6, 2025, and CDFW's CNDDDB on November 26, 2024. An Official Species List was obtained from IPaC on May 2, 2025 (Project Code: 2025-0091276). Specifically, the lists were generated from the USFWS database by querying for special status species within Colusa County and the Project area and from the CNDDDB by querying for species observations within the quads the Project area encompasses (Lodoga, Gilmore Peak, Stonyford, Elk Creek). The query results suggest that a total of seven (7) federally listed species have the potential to inhabit the Project area. There is no proposed or designated critical habitat in the project area.

Table 2. Special Status Species Potentially in the Area

Special Status Species	ESA Status	California Status
California Condor (<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>)	Proposed experimental population, /Non-essential	Fully Protected
Northern Spotted Owl (<i>Strix occidentalis caurina</i>)	Threatened	Threatened
Northwestern Pond Turtle (<i>Actinemys marmorata</i>)	Proposed Threatened	N/A
Monarch Butterfly (<i>Danaus plexippus</i>)	Proposed Threatened	Candidate for listing

Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp (<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>)	Threatened	N/A
Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp (<i>Lepidurus packardii</i>)	Endangered	N/A
Keck's Checker-mallow (<i>Sidalcea keckii</i>)	Endangered	None

3.2.2.2 Environmental Consequences

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not approve a long-term transfer of up to 91 acre-feet of CVP water per year, during the period of March 1-November 30 of each year for 20 years, beginning with the 2025 water year. As a result, the Project would not occur, and the Project's purpose and need would not be met. No effects to biological resources, included federally listed, proposed, or candidate species would occur in the Project area under the No Action Alternative.

Proposed Action Alternative

Special Status Species

Northwestern pond turtle and Keck's checkerbloom are reported within 1.5 mile of the Project. However, the reported occurrences are outside of the Project footprint. Although the project area is located below its typical elevation range (USFWS, 2019) and the species was not identified by IPaC (USFWS, 2019), potential habitat for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle may still be locally present. However, no impacts are expected because the transferred water would be removed from the underflow of Little Stony Creek, a seasonal stream, using existing collection facilities, precluding entrainment of fish and sedimentation impacts. Additionally, because the anticipated amount of diverted water would be less than 0.15% of the average annual inflow to East Park Reservoir from Little Stony Creek, the reductions in streamflow would be minor and well within the normal annual variation. Therefore, no affect is anticipated on riparian species, such as elderberries which provide potential habitat for valley elderberry longhorn beetle.

Furthermore, there would be no impacts to monarch butterflies, vernal pool fairy shrimp, vernal pool tadpole shrimp, or Northern spotted owl because of the Project. According to Western Monarch Milkweed Mapper, there are no occurrences of monarchs, milkweed, or monarch breeding sites (Western Monarch Milkweed Mapper, n.d.) in the Project area. There are also no monarch butterfly observations reported within a 1.5 mile buffer of the project area. Vernal pools are a habitat requirement for species such as vernal pool fairy shrimp and vernal pool tadpole shrimp. According to California Aquatic Resources Inventory Data (CARI) Landscape Profile tool, as mapped in EcoAtlas (CWMW, n.d), there are no vernal pools in the Project area. Suitable habitat for Northern spotted owls, such as forest lands, is also not located in the Project area.

An experimental population (non-essential) of the California condor also has the potential to be present in the Project area. These designations are made when a population has been proposed for establishment within its historical range under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to aid recovery of the species. The Service has determined a non-essential population is not necessary for the continued existence of the species. Once finalized, for the purposes of consultation, non-essential experimental populations are treated as threatened species on National Wildlife Refuge and National Park land (require consultation under 7(a)(2) of the ESA)

and as a proposed species on private land (no section 7(a)(2) requirements, but Federal agencies must not jeopardize their existence (section 7(a)(4))) (IPaC: Information for planning and consultation, n.d). The transfer of water would not impact any potential nesting, roosting, or foraging habitat. No nesting sites are in the project vicinity and no occurrences have been reported.

Vegetative Communities

Because the anticipated amount of diverted water would be less than 0.15% of the average annual inflow to East Park Reservoir, the reductions in streamflow would be minor and well within the normal annual variation. Considering the limited, anticipated diversion amount, no affect is anticipated on riparian species.

Fish Communities

East Park Reservoir is kept as full as feasible at all times and the effects on reservoir levels, small though they would be, would occur at Stony Gorge or Black Butte Reservoirs rather than East Park. The storage of Stony Gorge and Black Butte Reservoirs are managed to maximize fishery benefits such that drawdowns due to use of CVP water may physically occur in either Reservoir. Hence, the only effects would be very slight reductions in flow in a short reach of Little Stony Creek. Thus, no effects are anticipated on fisheries.

3.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

Reasonably foreseeable future actions include federal and non-federal activities not yet undertaken but are sufficiently likely to occur due to existing agency decisions, funding, or proposals (43 CFR 46.30). There are no reasonably foreseeable future Reclamation actions planned within the Project area that would affect the long-term transfer of CVP water from Stony Creek Water District to Colusa County Service Area Number 1- Century Ranch.

No appreciable or significant individual adverse effects on any resources were identified when evaluating the Proposed Action Alternative, and it has been determined that this Project, as proposed, would not incrementally contribute to additive effects on the human environment.

Section 4 Consultation and Coordination

In accordance with 43 CFR § 46.310(a)(5), the following including the list of agencies and persons consulted:

Table 3. Agencies and persons consulted

Name	Title	Agency/Organization
Jacob Berens	Supervisory Repayment Specialist	Reclamation – Northern California Area Office

Section 5 Public Comment Period

In accordance with 43 CFR §46.305(b) Reclamation sought public comments on the draft EA during a 7-day review period beginning on January 28, 2025. An electronic version of the EA was made available at: https://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_project_details.php?Project_ID=55781

Comments and questions related to the Project, or the EA were requested to be submitted to Keely Watland-Bakos at kwatlandbakos@usbr.gov. Barring any significant comments received, Reclamation intended to sign a Finding of No Significant Impact for this Project after the conclusion of the comment period. No comments were received.

Section 6 Environmental Commitments

The following environmental commitments and permitting conditions would be implemented before, during, and after construction to prevent and reduce impacts of the Proposed Action (Table 3).

Table 4. Environmental Protection Measures and Commitments

Resource	Protection Measure
Environmental Permitting	The project proponent would be responsible for obtaining and complying with all environmental requirements associated with applicable Federal, State, and local permits or approvals related to the Proposed Action.

Section 7 References

42 U.S.C. §§ 7401 et seq

TITLE XXXIV OF PUBLIC LAW 102-575

California Department of Fish and Wildlife. (n.d.). *bios6app*. <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/bios6/>

California Wetlands Monitoring Workgroup (CWMW). EcoAtlas. <https://www.ecoatlas.org>.

IPaC: Information for planning and consultation. (n.d.). <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/>

National Wetlands Inventory. (n.d.). <https://fwsprimary.wim.usgs.gov/wetlands/apps/wetlands-mapper/>

Native American Lands. (n.d.). Tessel.

<https://ibr2mprgis005.bor.doi.net/NativeAmericanLands/?page=Page>

NEPAssist. (n.d.). <https://nepassisttool.epa.gov/nepassist/nepamap.aspx>

Tetra Tech (2004). Final East Park Reservoir Resource Management Plan and Environmental Assessment.

USFWS 2019. Revised Recovery Plan for Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*). Region 8, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento, California. October 2019. 22pp. Revised Recovery Plan for Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (fws.gov).

Western Monarch Milkweed Mapper. (n.d.).

<https://www.monarchmilkweedmapper.org/app/#/combined/map>