

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

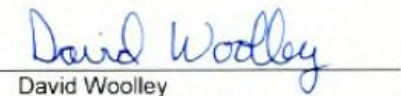
Arvin-Edison Water Storage District and Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District Exchange (2011-2012)

FONSI-11-017

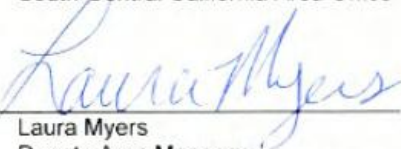
Recommended by:

 Date 3/30/11
Chuck Siek
Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist
South-Central California Area Office

Concurred by:

 Date 3/30/11
David Woolley
Acting Chief, Resources Management Division
South-Central California Area Office

Approved by:

 Date 3/31/11
Laura Myers
Deputy Area Manager
South-Central California Area Office



Introduction

Background

The State of California has historically experienced periods of drought and flooding. Water agencies continually strive to prepare for varying water supply conditions so that agricultural or urban water supply needs can be met every year regardless of the water availability conditions.

Arvin-Edison Water Storage District (AEWSD) desires to maximize the beneficial use of its varied water supplies by regulating available supplies, including but not limited to transfers, exchanges, and groundwater banking to provide AEWSD with operational flexibility and to facilitate better management of its Central Valley Project (CVP) water supply.

Environmental Assessment (EA) 11-017 has been prepared to examine the potential environmental impacts resulting from an exchange with Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District (RRBWSD).

The proposed exchange between AEWSD and RRBWSD would begin in 2011 and be in effect through the end of February 29, 2012 or 100,000 acre-feet (af), whichever comes first; therefore, the temporal scope of this EA would be for up to 1-year.

AEWSD and RRBWSD have a long history of water management actions including seven exchanges approved by Reclamation between 1996 and 2007. This proposed action is consistent with prior Reclamation approvals. Because these exchanges have not resulted in significant adverse impacts or comments from the public or public agencies in the past, Reclamation will not be circulating the EA or this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for public review and comment.

Reclamation's finding that implementation of the Proposed Action will result in no significant impact to the quality of the human environment is supported by the following findings:

Findings

Water Resources

There would not be any depletion of groundwater supplies and lowering of the local groundwater table level with the Proposed Action. The exchange could result in a net increase in the Kern County Groundwater Sub-basin levels underlying AEWSD; therefore, the Proposed Action could have a beneficial impact on groundwater resources.

There will be no water introduced into the Friant-Kern Canal (FKC) with the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would not interfere with the normal operations of any district involved with the exchange, nor would it impede any State Water Project (SWP) or CVP obligations to deliver water to other contractors or to local fish and wildlife habitat.

These findings indicate that implementation of this exchange between AEWSD and RRBWSD would not result in adverse impacts to water resources.

Land Use

AEWSD's water would be regulated through RRBWSD's in-district demands and/or existing groundwater recharge facilities and would not require the modification or construction of new conveyance facilities. The Proposed Action would not induce the construction of any new homes or businesses, or road extensions or other new infrastructure. The Proposed Action would not result in increased or decreased water supplies in AEWSD or RRBWSD that would induce growth or land use changes as both districts are fully built out and supply no water to customers other than agricultural users. There would be no adverse impacts from the Proposed Action as land use would remain the same as described in the Affected Environment Section of the EA.

Biological Resources

Most of the habitat types required by species protected by the Endangered Species Act do not occur in the exchange area. The Proposed Action would not involve the conversion of any land fallowed and untilled for three or more years. The Proposed Action would not change the land use patterns of the cultivated or fallowed fields that have value to listed species or birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. No critical habitat occurs within the area affected by the Proposed Action and so none of the primary constituent elements of any critical habitat would be affected. As the Proposed Action would occur within existing conveyance facilities and no construction is associated with the Proposed Action, there would be no adverse effect to any biological species.

Cultural Resources

The Proposed Action would not result in change of land use within or outside service area boundaries. The implementation of the proposed action has no potential to cause effects to historic properties pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800.3(a)(1). Because the proposed action has no potential to cause effect to historic properties and the proposed action will result in no change of land use, no new construction, or require new or modification of water conveyance facilities, the proposed action would have no adverse impact on cultural resources.

Indian Trust Assets

There are no tribes possessing legal property interests held in trust by the United States in the water involved with this action, nor is there such a property interest in the lands designated to receive the water proposed in this action.

The nearest Indian Trust Asset (ITA) is a Public Domain Allotment located 20-miles northeast of the Proposed Action. Because there are no ITAs, Indian Reservations, or public domain allotments found within the water districts involved the Proposed Action would have no adverse impact to ITAs.

Environmental Justice

The Proposed Action could positively affect low income and minority populations because these populations include farm workers. Therefore the proposed exchange would not disproportionately impact minority and disadvantaged populations.

Socioeconomic Resources

The Proposed Action would provide AEWSD water supply reliability by maximizing its CVP water supply contract with Reclamation and thus provide reliability to the farming industry and its attendant economics.

Air Quality

Under the Proposed Action, movement of water between AEWSD and RRBWSD would be done via gravity flow and/or pumped using electric motors which have no emissions. The Proposed Action would not involve any construction or land disturbing activities that could lead to fugitive dust emissions and/or exhaust emissions associated with the operations of heavy machinery. These findings indicate there would be no adverse impacts to air quality from the Proposed Action.

Global Climate Change

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated by the proposed exchange are expected to be extremely small compared to sources contributing to potential climate change since the exchange of water would be conveyed mostly via gravity and little, if any, additional pumping from electric motors would be required. The Proposed Action would result in potentially minimal to no increases in GHG emissions and a net increase in GHG emissions among the pool of GHG would not be detectable.

Cumulative Impacts

The Proposed Action was found to have no significant impact to water resources, land use, biological resources, cultural resources, Indian Trust Assets, environmental justice, socioeconomics, air quality and/or global climate change. Therefore the Proposed Action, when added to other actions, would not result in cumulative impacts to resources associated with the Proposed Action.