

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Cline Irrigation District
Water Conservation Project
Water 2025 Program
Reclamation
Pacific Northwest Regional Office
Boise, Id
PN FONSI 08-01**

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is proposing to partially fund a conservation project for the Cline Irrigation District (CID) under the Water 2025 program. CID, along with the Clallam Ditch Company, are proposing to replace their two independent main canals with a single pipeline. In addition, the project will replace the remainder of the CID's main canal and enclose open laterals with pipelines. In total, approximately 13 miles of open irrigation canals and laterals will be replaced with 13 miles of pipeline. The project is expected to result in an estimated water savings of 1,892 acre feet (6 cfs) per year.

CID has identified specific activities within the total Clallam-Cline Combo Pipeline Project that will be funded directly with Water 2025 grant funds to facilitate accounting for the expenditure of Federal funds and to document the cost share.

ALTERNATIVES

One action alternative was considered and evaluated in the Environmental Assessment (EA). The No Action Alternative was also evaluated as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. Following are brief descriptions of the alternatives considered in the EA.

Alternative A – No Action

Under this alternative, Reclamation would not fund the proposed piping project. The districts would continue to operate under current methods and conditions.

Alternative B - Proposed Action

Reclamation proposes to contribute \$300,000 towards the piping project identified in the application submitted by the CID. The project proposal requests funding for the related activity:

- Funds will be used by CID for completing the cultural resources compliance review and converting the open ditch (1200 feet) of the Skyridge lateral to pipe. The remaining assisted activities are appurtenances to the recently installed pipelines. The appurtenances include the installation of flow measuring stations

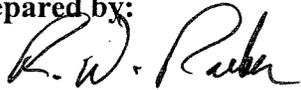
at 4 sites and flow and pressure regulating equipment at the other sites along the previously piped system.

FINDING

This Finding of No Significant Impact is based upon the EA which identified no negative impacts to wetlands, fish and wildlife, recreation, environmental justice, Indian Trust Assets, or sacred sites. The EA also identified no negative impacts to ground water, vegetation, Historic Properties, or threatened and endangered species.

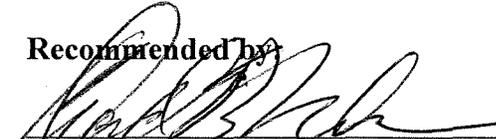
Based on a review of the analysis of the environmental impacts as presented in the final EA, Reclamation has concluded that implementation of the preferred alternative (B) would have no significant impacts on the quality of the human environment or the natural resources of the area. This Finding of No Significant Impact has therefore been prepared and is submitted to document environmental review and evaluation in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Prepared by:


Richard Rieber, Fishery Biologist

1/7/08
Date

Recommended by:


Tanya Sommer, Natural Resource Specialist
David Nelson

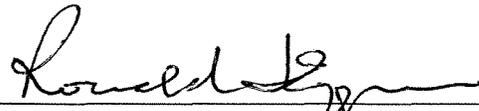
1-8-08

Concurrence:


for Karen Blakney, ESA Program Manager

1-8-08
Date

APPROVED


Ronald J. Eggers, Lower Columbia Area Manager

Jan 9, 2008
Date

**CLINE IRRIGATION DISTRICT
WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
WATER 2025 PROJECT
Environmental Assessment
Bureau of Reclamation
Pacific Northwest Regional Office
Boise, ID**

Background Information

Why is Reclamation Involved?

The Water 2025 grant program is intended to focus attention on the explosive growth in western urban areas, the emerging need for water for environmental and recreational uses, and the national importance of the domestic production of food and fiber from western farms and ranches. All of these factors are driving major conflicts between these competing uses of water. Water 2025 also recognizes that state and local governments should have a leading role in meeting these challenges, and that the Department of the Interior should focus its attention and existing resources on areas where scarce federal dollars can provide the greatest benefits to the West and the nation. Each year the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) selects projects for funding under the Water 2025 program that support cooperation and reduce conflict over water supply and scarcity. This Environmental Assessment (EA) concerns one of the projects selected for funding in fiscal year 2008.

Who Else is Involved?

Cline Irrigation District (CID) is the grant applicant and will be the recipient of the funds. CID is a special district government with water delivery authority formed under the laws of the State of Washington. The Board of Directors of CID passed a resolution dated August 19, 2007, indicating its intent to accept the Water 2025 Challenge Cost Share grant as recipient and authorizing Clallam Conservation District to administer the grant. The Board further directed that all grant reimbursements be made directly to Clallam Conservation District.

Purpose and Need for Action

The CID shares an outtake on the Dungeness River with the Clallam Ditch Company (Company) and the Dungeness Irrigation Group. Because the CID is situated downstream of the Company service area, water must be conveyed through the Clallam service area. The two entities constructed and maintain independent main canals that cross one another two times over a distance of approximately 15,000 feet. Ever since the

two systems were installed in the early part of the last century, there have been conflicts over the management of the water. Efforts have been made throughout the years to improve the efficiency of water delivery by trading water; however, this had led to allegations by both organization of water stealing.

When the Clallam Ditch Company completed the piping of all their laterals in 2005, they were left with the piping of their main canal. Rather than pipe their canal over or under CID's canal, they approached CID with a final solution to the two organizations' long-running water feud – combining their two canals into a single pipeline.

The primary objective of this project is to conserve water currently lost through seepage, evapotranspiration, and tailwater spills. The total estimated water savings anticipated from the overall project is 1,820 acre feet of water per year. The Cline Irrigation District and the Clallam Ditch Company replaced their two independent main canals with a single pipeline. In addition, the District replaced the remainder of their main canal (approximately 12 miles) and open laterals with pipelines. In total, approximately 13 miles of open irrigation canals and laterals utilized by the CID and Clallam Ditch Company have been replaced with approximately 13 miles of pipelines. Water 2025 funds will be used to pipe 1200 feet of the Skyridge Lateral. 2025 funds will also be used for the installation of flow measuring stations at four sites and flow and pressure regulating equipment at the other sites along the previously piped system.

The conserved water will be placed in trust with the Washington State Department of Ecology to augment instream flows in the Dungeness River. This project will also result in water quality improvements, reduced maintenance by both organizations, and energy savings for irrigators.

General Location of the Affected Area

The location of the project area is shown on the attached maps. The project area is located in the eastern portion of Clallam County, Washington, in approximately 50 square miles of the coastal plain surrounding Sequim, Washington.

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Alternative A – No Action

Under this alternative, Reclamation would not fund the proposed piping project and cultural resources compliance review. The irrigation districts would continue to operate under current methods and conditions.

Alternative B - Proposed Action

Reclamation proposes to contribute \$300,000 towards the piping project identified in the application submitted by the CID. The project proposal requests funding for the related activity:

- Funds will be used by CID for completing the cultural resources compliance review and converting the 1800 feet of open ditch of the Skyridge lateral to pipe. The remaining assisted activities are appurtenances to the recently installed pipelines. The appurtenances include the installation of flow measuring stations at 4 sites and flow and pressure regulating equipment at the other sites along the previously piped system (see map).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Unaffected resources include wetlands, fish and wildlife, and recreation. No wetlands will be drained or filled by the replacement of the 1800 feet of the Skyridge Lateral; fish and wildlife will not be negatively affected because no additional water will be diverted, and no habitat will be altered or destroyed; additionally, the canals are not legally used for recreation.

Neither alternative will impact environmental justice, Indian Trust Assets, or Indian Sacred Sites. This action does not discriminate against low-income or minority communities; the alternatives obstruct no mineral, land, fishing, hunting, gathering, or water rights held in trust by the federal government; neither alternative will impact access to, or the integrity of, any identified Indian sacred sites.

The proposed alternative will have no effect on threatened or endangered species. Reclamation determines that neither alternative will affect listed species since the project area does not include or have the potential to disturb suitable habitat for any listed species.

Groundwater

Alternative A – No Action

No change will occur to groundwater hydrology under this alternative.

Alternative B – Proposed Action

No change will occur to groundwater hydrology under this alternative.

Vegetation

Vegetation concerns resulting from this alternative consist mainly of post-construction proliferation of invasive noxious weeds. Noxious weeds tend to proliferate in areas of soil disturbance. Areas of disturbance will occur mainly in the areas of lateral piping and turnout improvements which, concurrently, will result in ground disturbance.

Alternative A – No Action

Under this alternative, vegetation will remain unaltered by any new activity. CID currently has a program to control noxious weeds and vegetation in and around its canal system.

Alternative B – Proposed Action

Under this alternative, there will be no significant impact to vegetation in and around the proposed project areas for telemetry stations. Weeds will most likely invade areas with ground disturbance. However, regular weed control will prevent the spread of noxious weeds. The district currently has a weed control program, and will continue the program after project completion.

Historic Properties and Coordination with Indian Tribes

The proposed action has no potential to affect historic properties. In 2007, in advance of construction, the proponent contracted for an archeological survey of potential impact areas and found no archeological sites or isolated artifacts. The areas had been extensively disturbed by past construction. The contractor also assessed the historic significance of the Skyridge lateral, and recommended that it was not eligible to the National Register of Historic Places since the entire remainder of the irrigation system had been previously converted to pipe. Potentially interested Indian tribes were notified of the project and provided a copy of the archeologist's report. No response was received from those tribes, and so there is no indication that they are aware of resources of traditional or cultural importance in the area of potential effect of the undertaking. In a letter dated December 24, 2007, the Washington State Historic Preservation Office (Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation- OAHP) concurred with Reclamation's determination that the Skyridge lateral project will have no effect upon National Register eligible properties. Therefore, the proposed actions can proceed with no further clearance requirements under the National Historic Preservation Act. However, in the unlikely event that archeological materials or human remains should be encountered during the course of construction, then all work must immediately halt in the area of the find, and the district shall immediately notify Reclamation and the OAHP of the discovery and take precautions to protect the discovery. They shall not proceed with any further actions in the area of the find until written notice to proceed is provided by Reclamation.

Indian Trust Assets: ITA's are legal interests in property held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes or individuals. Examples of ITA's include lands, minerals, hunting and fishing rights, and water rights. ITA's can be found both on-reservation and off-reservation. The United States has an Indian trust responsibility to protect and maintain rights reserved by or granted to Indian tribes or individuals by treaties, statutes and executive orders.

The project area was traditionally occupied by the S’Klallam people. In 1855, the S’Klallam signed the Treaty of Point No Point stipulating that they move to a small reservation on Hood Canal to live with their traditional enemies, the Skokomish. In the treaty, the S’Klallam retained the right to take fish at all usual and accustomed places, in common with all citizens of the United States, as well as the privilege of hunting and gathering roots and berries on open and unclaimed lands. These treaty rights are considered trust assets.

Few S’Klallam members chose to move to the Skokomish reservation and instead settled in areas where the Port Gamble S’Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam and Jamestown S’Klallam reservations were eventually established. The Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe has actively participated in project planning, provided funds for the project, and prepared a letter of support for the grant proposal. As part of the archaeological investigations, the Jamestown S’Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam and Point No Point Treaty Council were contacted. The Point No Point Treaty Council is a natural resource management organization formed in 1974 to serve the Port Gamble S’Klallam, Jamestown S’Klallam, and Lower Elwha Klallam Tribes in implementing goals set by the member Tribes for resource conservation, fisheries management and the protection of treaty rights. No responses were received from the Tribes or Treaty Council.

Alternative A – No Action

The no action alternative will have no significant impact on historic properties as no ground disturbance or construction activities will occur. Under this alternative, many of the conservation activities will still occur. These activities will have a positive effect on salmonid habitat thus protecting the Tribes’ treaty rights to take fish at usual and accustomed places.

Alternative B – Proposed Action

Reclamation has determined that the action alternative will have no effect to cultural resources as the cultural resources survey failed to identify any significant cultural evidence, both prehistoric and historic. The generally disturbed nature of the locales along the 1800 feet of the Skyridge Lateral has been caused by the initial canal construction, maintenance and other mechanical disturbances. The action alternative will have a positive effect on salmonid habitat thus protecting the Tribes’ treaty rights to take fish at usual and accustomed places.

Cumulative Impacts

Alternative A – No Action

The No Action alternative does not change the rate or effect of cumulative impacts to the human environment.

Alternative B – Implementation of the Water 2025 COID Conservation Project

No cumulative impacts associated with implementation of alternative B are expected. The future benefit through the accumulation of many water conservation projects and activities is intended to improve the human environment through reduced conflict over scarce water resources. The Proposed Action specifically intended to demonstrate this benefit over time.

AGENCIES AND PERSONS CONSULTED

Clallam Conservation District – Joe E. Holtrop

LIST OF PREPARERS

Rick Rieber, Fishery Biologist
Lynne MacDonald, Regional Archeologist

DISTRIBUTION LIST

Clallam Conservation District

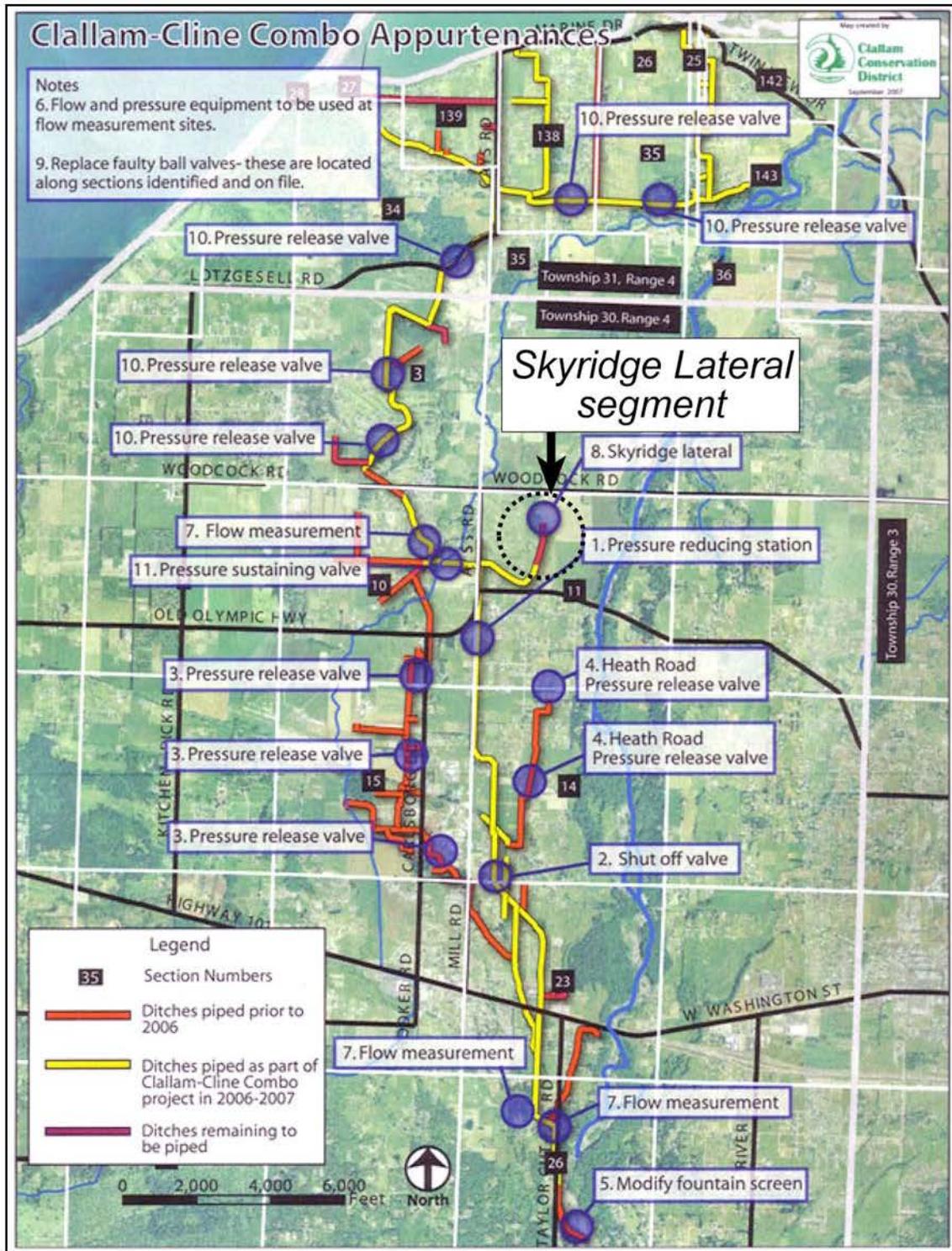


Figure 2. Plan map showing the proposed Skyridge Lateral project segment and pressure relief valve locations within the larger irrigation system.