

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## **Tumalo Feed Canal Piping Project**

### **Finding of No Significant Impact and Final Environmental Assessment**

**Tumalo Irrigation District  
Bend, Oregon**



**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Pacific Northwest Region**

**March 2010**

## **Mission Statements**

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes and our commitments to 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.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**Tumalo Feed Canal Piping Project**  
**PN-FONSI-10-06**

**Introduction**

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a water conservation project within the Deschutes Project to be administered by the Tumalo Irrigation District (District).

The purpose of the conservation project is to: 1) reduce risks to public safety from the existing open canal, 2) eliminate seepage and evaporation losses in order to improve efficiency of water delivery and increase flows in Tumalo Creek and the Deschutes River, and 3) minimize operation and maintenance costs.

The need for the project is to reduce water loss through seepage and evaporation in order to provide more water instream for fish benefits. The conserved water will be allocated to an instream water right to be held in trust by the Oregon Water Resources Department. The project involves piping of approximately six miles of the Tumalo Feed Canal, located in Deschutes County, Oregon.

**Alternatives Considered**

Two alternatives were developed and evaluated in the EA, the No Action Alternative as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Action Alternative involving the District project. Under the Action Alternative, approximately six miles of canal will be piped and buried within the existing open channel or within the District right-of-way. The project will be constructed over five years, in five phases, depending upon the level of annual appropriation.

**The Recommended Alternative**

Reclamation has selected the Action Alternative as the recommended alternative for implementation.

**Proposal**

Reclamation proposes to implement the conservation project which will provide additional water for conservation, maintenance and enhancement of aquatic and fish life. The instream water rights that are being created shall provide for the protection of flows in two reaches, 1) from the District's diversion on Tumalo Creek to the Deschutes River and eventually Lake Billy Chinook, and 2) from the District's diversion at Crescent Lake Reservoir to Lake Billy Chinook, by way of Crescent Creek, the Little Deschutes and Deschutes Rivers. The total amount of conserved water is approximately 20cfs.

This project consists of the following quantities of conserved water:

<b>Instream Reaches</b>	<b>Conserved Water Rate/Duty</b>	<b>Instream Water Right Rate/Duty</b>
District Diversion at Tumalo Creek to Lake Billy Chinook	11.8 cfs	11.8 cfs
District Diversion at Crescent Lake Reservoir to Lake Billy Chinook	2,732 AF (8.2 cfs)	2,732 AF (8.2 cfs)

### **Consultation, Coordination, and Public Involvement**

The Tumalo Feed Canal supports no game fish, salmonids, or threatened and endangered aquatic species. A natural barrier located 25 miles downstream from the project site, Big Falls, prohibits species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) from traveling upstream. No effects are anticipated to species under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

### **Summary of Review Comments and Reclamation’s Responses**

Public comments were received from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and from nearby landowners. Many of these comments have been incorporated into the EA. Other comments, primarily from nearby landowners, can be generally summarized by concerns regarding changes to vegetation and habitat, impact on property values and project cost. Experience with the Bend Feed Canal piping project has demonstrated that some trees dependent upon the canal seepage for water will be lost but that the majority of well established trees will survive. This is acknowledged in the EA. Landowners along the canal may lose some of their existing vegetation, including trees, if the canal is piped, but these losses, based on previous experience, are not expected to be significant.

The purpose of the EA is to address, identify and evaluate affects to the environment from the proposed project. Comments related to the cost of the project did not identify any environmental impacts specifically related to the concerns about costs and so are not addressed here.

The comments from BLM dealt with a variety of issues including potential impacts to flows in the Wild and Scenic River, safety and public access to construction areas, and resource management concerns where the canal right-of-way is on BLM managed lands. The first two concerns have been addressed through modifications of the EA. The resource management issues identified included the cutting of trees and snags on the right-of-way, protecting trees just off the right-of-way, conserving down logs and disposing of slash. TID commits to coordinate activities associated with the piping project on its right-of-way where it crosses BLM managed lands. Where ever practicable and determined desirable TID would work with BLM to address their natural resource management concerns while still allowing them to reasonably enjoy their right-of-way and implement the proposed project.

## Findings

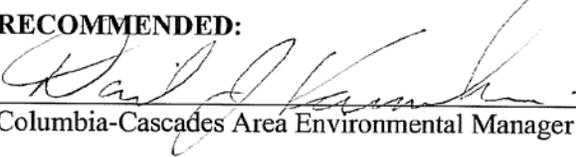
This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based upon the following:

- There will be no impacts to ESA-listed fish
- No negative impacts to terrestrial species, wetlands, or other ESA-listed species were identified.

Based on the environmental analysis as presented in the final EA, Reclamation concludes that implementation of the preferred action and associated environmental commitments would have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment or the natural resources in the affected area.

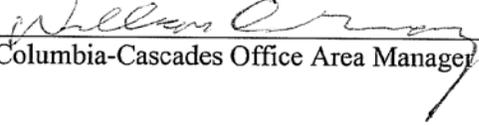
This FONSI has therefore been prepared and submitted to document review and evaluation in compliance with NEPA requirements.

### RECOMMENDED:

  
Columbia-Cascades Area Environmental Manager

7-19-2010  
Date

### APPROVED:

  
Columbia-Cascades Office Area Manager

7/20/10  
Date