



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Draft Environmental Assessment Mancos Watershed Resiliency Project

WaterSMART Program

Upper Colorado Basin: Interior Region 7

Western Colorado Area Office



August 2026

Mission Statements

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and manage the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provide scientific and other information about those resources; and honor 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.

Draft Environmental Assessment Mancos Watershed Resiliency Project

WaterSMART Program
Upper Colorado Basin: Interior Region 7
Western Colorado Area Office

Prepared for Reclamation by SGM, Inc., Durango Office

Cover Photo: Mancos River (SGM, May 2025).

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to disclose and evaluate the potential environmental effects of the Mancos Conservation District's (MCD) Watershed Resiliency Project (Project) located in Montezuma County, Colorado, and assesses its compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The project would upgrade agricultural diversion structures, replace aging flumes and headgates, install remote metering and telemetry equipment, and complete fire mitigation work on 650 upland acres.

The Federal action to be evaluated in this EA is whether Reclamation would authorize the use of Federal funds, under their WaterSMART Program, to implement the Project.

Two of MCD's project locations are located on USDA Forest Service (USFS) lands. The USFS has determined that the proposed activities on the San Juan National Forest qualify as maintenance activities and no additional coordination between the Reclamation and the USFS is necessary (**Appendix A**).

Throughout this document, the components of the Proposed Action that consist of water measuring, control, and diversion infrastructure are referred to as the "irrigation infrastructure projects", and the component of the Proposed Action that consist of reducing wildfire hazards by reducing forest fuels is referred to as the "forest fuels management projects".

1.1 – Project Location and Legal Description

The Proposed Action would occur at 17 different locations in eastern Montezuma County, Colorado (**Figure 1**). The proposed activity and legal descriptions for each location are as follows:

- Crystal Creek Inlet Canal – Telemetry equipment installation. Located in the Southwest ¼ of the Northwest ¼ of Section 2, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 211732 E 4145126 N
- Crystal Creek Outlet Canal – Telemetry equipment installation. Located in the Northwest ¼ of the Northeast ¼ of Section 15, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 210611 E 4142421 N
- East Mancos Highline Ditch – Telemetry equipment installation. Located in the Southwest ¼ of the Southwest ¼ of Section 20, Township 36 North, Range 12 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 216039 E 4139676 N
- Field Ditch – Replace Parshall flume. Located in the Southeast ¼ of the Southwest ¼ of Section 14, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 211658 E 4141249 N
- Frank Ditch – Rebuild water diversion. Located in the Southeast ¼ of the Southwest ¼ of Section 28, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 208443 E 4138117 N

- Giles Ditch – Replace Parshall flume. Located in the Northeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Northwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 24, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 213329 E 4140853 N
- Lee and Burke Ditch – Replace Parshall flume and install telemetry. Located in the Southwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Northwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 14, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 211555 E 4141849 N
- Lee Ditch – Replace headgate and Parshall flume. Located in the Southwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Northeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 27, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 210450 E 4138893 N
- Long Park Ditch – Replace headgate, Relocate Parshall flume, install telemetry, rebuild diversion. Located in the Northeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Northwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 08, Township 36 North, Range 12 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 216367 E 4143800 N. The Long Park Diversion and associated infrastructure is located on USFS land.
- No. 6 (Sheek) Ditch – Rebuild the diversion. Located in the Northwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Northwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 32, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 206429 E 4137795 N
- Rush Ditch - Chicken Cr Split – Install Two Ramp Flumes with one upstream and the other downstream of existing diversion structure. Located in the Northeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Northwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 08, Township 37 North, Range 12 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 216477 E 4153685 N. The Rush Ditch diversion is located on USFS land.
- Weber Reservoir – Install telemetry equipment and new staff gauge. Located in the Southeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Southeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 01, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 214038 E 4144313 N
- Willis Ditch – Replace existing Parshall flume and rebuild the diversion. Located in the Southwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Southwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 28, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 208169 E 4138017 N
- Brown/Reddert Ranch – Forest fuels thinning. Located in the Northeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Southwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 04, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 208679 E 4144900 N
- RSL Ranch - Forest fuels thinning. Located in the Northeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Northeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 28, Township 37 North, Range 14 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 199994 E 4149184 N

- Colyer Property - Forest fuels thinning. Located in the Northwest ¼ of the Southeast ¼ of Section 02, Township 36 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 212298 E 4144774 N
- G5 Ranch - Forest fuels thinning. Located in the Southeast ¼ of the Southeast ¼ of Section 33, Township 37 North, Range 13 West of the N.M.P.M., Montezuma County, Colorado, with UTM (Zone 13N) coordinates of 209043E 4146236 N

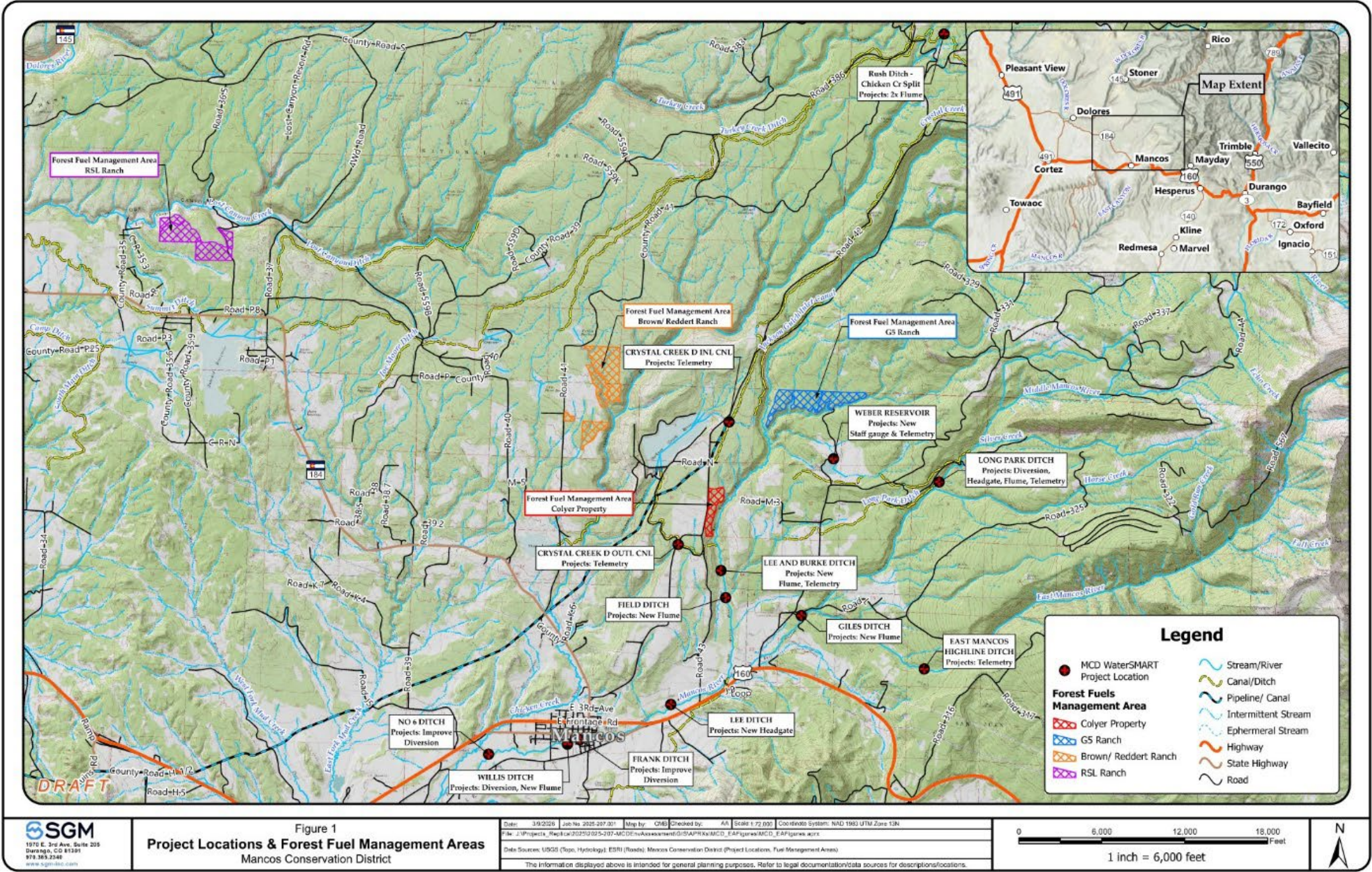
Project components fall within the Mancos River and Lost Canyon Creek Watersheds, which are tributaries to the San Juan and Colorado Rivers (**Figure 1**).

1.2 – Need for and Purpose of the Proposed Action

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to contribute to the WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Projects objective of providing “benefits to ecological values or watershed health... as part of a collaborative process to... increase the reliability of water resources”.

The need for the Proposed Action is to reduce potential wildfire hazards on 650 upland acres, improve water quality and temperature by reducing erosion and sedimentation, and allow irrigation waters to be used more efficiently. This grant would support the ability of local agriculture to remain resilient to increasingly varied fluctuations in water supply.

Figure 1. Proposed Action



1.3 – Decision to be Made

Reclamation will decide whether to authorize the use of Federal funds for the MCD to implement the Proposed Action as outlined above. This EA has been prepared to evaluate adverse and beneficial effects of the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives, and to provide a basis for decisions by Reclamation on whether to fund the Proposed Action. If Reclamation decides not to authorize the use of federal funds to fund the proposed Project, MCD would not fund the Proposed Action as outlined above.

1.4 – Background

Reclamation's WaterSMART Program is a primary source of funding for the Proposed Action. Through WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grants (formerly Challenge Grants), Reclamation provides 50/50 cost share funding to irrigation and water districts, tribes, states and other entities with water or power delivery authority. Projects conserve and use water more efficiently; increase the production of hydropower; mitigate conflict risk in areas at a high risk of future water conflict; and accomplish other benefits that contribute to water supply reliability in the western United States. Projects are selected through a competitive process and the focus is on projects that can be completed within two or three years.

Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of the State of Colorado, with their authorities, powers and structure articulated in Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 35, Article 70. MCD was organized under the authority of the Colorado Soil Conservation District law and was established on August 31, 1948. MCD's mission is to promote the long-term sustainable use and protection of natural resources in the Mancos River Watershed through educational, technical, and financial assistance for residents and landowners. Since 1948, the MCD has taken a leading role in multi-benefit natural resource planning and project development, working with landowners, community partners, federal, state, and local agencies, and nonprofits. Current MCD programs advance projects to improve water infrastructure and watershed health, soil health, and forest health, as well as associated educational programs.

The proposed improvements within the Mancos River and Lost Canyon watersheds would help meet the goals of the Colorado Water Plan (2023), which supports a vibrant agricultural economy by improving the efficiency of water delivery infrastructure, and ultimately improving water quality in the Colorado River Watershed.

1.5 – Relationship to Other Projects

The following projects are currently in progress or are currently complete within the Mancos River Watershed:

- The Depot (in progress) – forest fuels management on 35 acres of Ponderosa Pine Forest (37° 27.1956'N 108° 20.8885'W)
- Adam's Ranch (in progress) – forest fuels management on 52 acres of Pinyon Juniper Forest (37° 26.0271'N 108° 22.2667'W)
- Via Colorado (in progress) – forest fuels management on 178 acres of Ponderosa Pine Forest (37° 23.6718'N 108° 19.241'W)
- Sullwold (completed 2025) – forest fuels management on 54 acres of Ponderosa/Pinyon Juniper Forest (37° 23.2458'N 108° 17.162'W)

- Goodman (completed 2025) – forest fuels management on 34 acres Ponderosa Pine Forest (37° 24.1504'N 108° 20.4706'W)
- Truman (completed in 2025) – forest fuels management on 26 acres of Ponderosa Pine Forest (37° 24.3148'N 108° 20.4586'W)
- Big Toe Ranch (completed in 2025) – forest fuels management on 30 acres of Ponderosa/Pinyon Juniper Forest (37° 24.0908'N 108° 20.2246'W)
- Doyle (completed in 2025) – forest fuels management on 64 acres of Ponderosa/Pinyon Juniper Forest (37° 24.079'N 108° 14.057'W)
- Sheek Diversion Upgrade (completed in 2025) – ditch diversion improved for fish passage (37°20'07.9"N 108°19'27.1"W)

1.6 – Agency Coordination & Public Comment

Agency coordination for this EA was completed by Reclamation, in consultation with the following agencies and organizations, during the planning stages of the Proposed Action to identify the potential environmental and human environment issues and concerns associated with implementation of the Proposed Action and No Action Alternatives:

- U.S. Forest Service (USFS), San Juan National Forest, Delores Public Lands Office.
- Colorado State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Denver, CO
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Durango, CO
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Ecological Services, Grand Junction, CO
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Durango, CO
- Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Fort Belknap Indian Community of the Fort Belknap Reservation of Montana, Navajo Nation, Southern Ute Tribe, and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

In compliance with NEPA, this Draft EA will be available for public comment. Any public comments received within the 30-day comment period will be included as an Appendix to the Final EA.

CHAPTER 2 – PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives evaluated in this EA include No Action and the Proposed Action Alternatives.

2.1 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not provide funding for the proposed action. MCD would continue to seek other funding sources to implement the proposed action, and the ditch companies would continue to operate their facilities as they exist today.

2.2 – Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would occur at 17 different locations in eastern Montezuma County Colorado involving one or more of the following components/treatments:

- Upgrade four agricultural diversion structures to allow for efficient irrigation diversions and fish passage.
- Replacement of two leaking headgates.
- Installation of telemetry equipment on 10 agricultural ditches and one reservoir.
- Replace 6 Parshall flumes and install two new ramp flumes.
- Complete forest fuels management utilizing mechanical treatments for wildfire mitigation on 4 private ranches totaling 650 acres of private property.

The locations of the specific components of the Proposed Action for irrigation infrastructure improvements and forest fuels management are discussed in **Chapter 1** and illustrated in **Figure 1**. Two of the 13 irrigation ditches that are part of the Proposed Action are located on USFS land, which are the Rush and Long Park Ditches. For these two ditches, irrigation infrastructure improvements would take place within the existing ditch easement. The USFS has determined that the installation of flumes, telemetry, relocated headgates, and improved diversions are maintenance activities, and no additional coordination or special use authorizations are necessary (therefore, they do not have a connected federal action requiring NEPA compliance). A letter from the Dolores District Ranger explaining the USFS evaluation of the Rush and Long Park Ditch improvements is in **Appendix A**. The remaining eleven irrigation ditch project areas are on private land and are where the proposed irrigation infrastructure improvements would occur.

Forest fuels management components of the Proposed Action would occur on 4 private ranches which are the Brown/Reddert Ranch, RSL Ranch, Colyer Property, and G5 Ranch on 650 acres (**Figure 1**). Individual forest management plans were prepared for each ranch by professional foresters and are available under separate cover:

- Brown/Reddert Ranch Forest Stewardship Plan (Short, Bruce F. 2024)
- Colyer Property Forest Stewardship Plan (Short, Bruce F. 2024)
- G5 Ranch Forest Management Plan (Harris, Tara, R. Henke. 2025)
- RSL Forest Management Plan (Ramirez, Jesse. 2024)

Forest fuels treatment prescriptions correspond to the average size of the timber, quantity/quality of timber, and operability of each treatment area. Treatments also include a combination of light crown thinning, understory and ladder fuel thinning, and surface fuel reduction strategies based on best management practices for the region. The management and removal of snags and severely diseased and insect-infested trees are also included in the prescriptions for each of the four private ranches.

2.3.1 – Installation of Irrigation Infrastructure and Reconstruction of Existing Diversions

Under the irrigation infrastructure projects component of the Proposed Action, 10 of the locations proposed for new or replacement flumes, headgates, and telemetry equipment would be transported via pick-up truck or mini excavator to the specific location where the equipment would be installed. Those locations include the Crystal Creek Inlet Canal, Crystal Creek Outlet Canal, East Mancos Highline Canal, Field Diversion Ditch, Giles Ditch, Lee & Burke Ditch, Lee Ditch, Rush Ditch, and Weber Reservoir. No site-specific staging areas are necessary given the small footprint of the equipment to be installed.

Parshall or ramp Flumes (**Photos 1 and 2**) would be constructed of appropriate material (galvanized steel, stainless steel, mild steel (painted), or concrete), and typically installed on prepared subgrade, depending on soil type and conditions during installation. Flumes would be installed level front-to-back and side-to-side. Once leveled, flumes would be anchored in place for their anticipated lifespan, either through bedding / encasing in concrete, or with the use of an anchoring or leveling stand. Approach and exit side wing walls from the flume would tie-in to the ditch banks to direct all ditch flows through the flume and to prevent ditch bank erosion. Cutoff walls as well as a scour pad (typically concrete or grouted cobbles) would be installed to prevent head cutting. Upon installation, site cleanup and erosion control measures and revegetation would be implemented.

Photo 1. Typical Parshall flume installation



Photo 2. Typical ramp flume installation



Telemetry equipment stations (**Photo 3**) are self-contained systems that typically include electronic measuring equipment, cellular tower transmitter antenna, a solar panel, and a lockable steel or polycarbonate enclosure. The steel mast is typically anchored into the ground by a concrete footer. It is anticipated that the footer to support the telemetry equipment would be completed by hand. Telemetry stations may need to be installed in a location with sufficient solar exposure away from the measurement device, in which case shallow trenching (typically by hand) may be required between the measurement device and telemetry station. Temporary surface disturbance associated with the installation of this equipment would typically be less than 25 square feet.

Photo 3. Typical Telemetry Installation



A headgate is a control structure that regulates the rate of diversions into an irrigation ditch. Headgates are typically anchored to the opening of a concrete or steel headwall and should create a watertight seal when fully closed. Headgates allow for accurate adjustment of diversion rate and should include a means to secure the position, or amount open, to prevent unauthorized diversions or adjustment. Typical installation methods include setting concrete anchors or mounting bolts through the mounting holes on the headgate frame and sealing around the frame with non-shrink grout or other sealant materials.

Photo 4. Typical Headgate Installation



The estimated temporary surface disturbance for the irrigation infrastructure projects portion of the Proposed Action is summarized below (**Table 1**). Most of the earthwork for the installation of flumes, headgates, and telemetry projects would be completed with mini excavators and/or by hand.

Water diversion improvements at Long Park, No.6, Frank, and Willis ditches would be completed using tracked equipment. Construction staging would occur adjacent to the diversion structures, as well as along the two-tracks and roads that access the diversions. Environmental commitments would be followed to minimize effects on the natural and human environment during construction discussed in **Chapter 4**.

Proposed improvements associated with the Long Park Ditch infrastructure (located on USFS land) include reconstruction of the diversion, replacing the headgate, relocating the Parshall flume, and adding telemetry. All the Long Park Ditch proposed infrastructure improvements would occur within the USFS ditch easement.

Table 1. Irrigation Infrastructure Projects

Project Component	Proposed Activity	Estimated Surface Disturbance
Crystal Creek Inlet Canal	Add telemetry to existing flume	25 ft ²
Crystal Creek Outlet Canal	Add telemetry to existing flume	25 ft ²
East Mancos Highline Ditch	Add telemetry to existing flume	25 ft ²
Field Diversion Ditch	Replace Parshall flume	200 ft ²
Giles Ditch	Replace Parshall flume	200 ft ²
Lee & Burke Ditch	Replace Parshall & add telemetry	200 ft ²
Lee Ditch	Replace Parshall flume Replace headgate	400 ft ²
Long Park Ditch	Rebuild Diversion, replace headgate, relocate flume, & add telemetry	9,756 ft ²
Rush Ditch (Chicken Creek Split upstream of diversion)	Install ramp flume	1,500 ft ²
Rush Ditch (Chicken Creek Split downstream of diversion)	Install ramp flume	1,500 ft ²
Willis Ditch	Rebuild Diversion Replace Parshall flume	6,300 ft ²
Frank Ditch Diversion	Rebuild diversion	3,920 ft ²
Number 6 Ditch Diversion	Rebuild diversion	3,485 ft ²
Weber Reservoir	Add telemetry to determine reservoir level and new staff gauge	100 ft ²

Notes: No new access is necessary or proposed for this project. The existing access roads and two tracks may require maintenance (grading and vegetation trimming), but no new roads or two tracks are proposed. The proposed structures (flumes, headgates, and telemetry equipment) are located within the existing disturbance footprint of the ditches and would be maintained free of weeds and vegetation for ongoing inspection and maintenance needs.

2.3.2 – Forest Fuels Management Implementation

Forest fuels management treatments would include a combination of light crown thinning, understory and ladder fuel thinning, and surface fuel reduction strategies based on best management practices for the region. Forest fuels treatment prescriptions correspond to the average size of the timber, quantity/quality of timber, and operability of each treatment area.

Where crowns are connected, a light crown thinning would prevent fire propagation and transmission through the canopy. The crown thinning would target basal area retention metrics provided in the prescriptions with the goal of keeping the largest and healthiest fire-adapted overstory trees. The forest management plans and associated prescriptions for each ranch have specified the conditions for each site to determine removing trees that exhibit mortality, insect/disease, overtopped growth conditions, or other limiting factors.

Understory and ladder fuel thinning would prevent fire from climbing into the crowns, thereby allowing fire to move naturally on the forest floor. This typically encompasses removal of trees in the smaller size classes. These trees are defined by growth under the codominant and dominant tree canopy. Additionally, the understory species on these sites are mostly populated with shade-tolerant non-fire-adapted species, which pose increased fire intensity issues. For each ranch property the forest management prescriptions' retention species are identified to ensure that multi-age site forest types are created in the future with fire-adapted seed stock. Understory and ladder fuel removals are also accounted for in the overall basal area retention metrics called out in each prescription.

Ground and surface fuel mastication would redistribute the fuel loading on the ground to allow for faster decomposition over time, greater water retention in the soil, and decreased fire intensity. These actions in fuel reduction would allow for defensible fuel breaks and prevention of soil sterilization, post-fire debris flows, and other outcomes that affect the reliability of water transmission. The intended outcomes would be accomplished through mastication and lop and pile. Mastication would be utilized in areas where the overly dense wood is non-merchantable. Lop and scatter/pile would be utilized in areas where slope and terrain are unsuitable for operating tracked or tired equipment. Hand crews would be employed to thin overly dense forested areas. Forest fuels would be either piled or scattered, depending on the nature of the forest stand.

Additional mitigation measures associated with forest fuels management include minimizing surface disturbance, halting tree thinning activities when soils within the project area are too wet and would result in significant ruts, surface damage, and increased rates of soil erosion. All project components are readily accessible from existing roads, two-tracks, or the Long Park Ditch platform. No temporary roads would be necessary to complete the projects associated with the proposed action. All disturbed areas would be restored to original contours and revegetated following construction. For all aspects of the Proposed Action, Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used to minimize impacts of the project on the human and ecological environments.

As outlined in the Proposed Action, the four ranches have specific forest management prescriptions which would reduce the risk of wildfire, thereby helping to protect water quality in the following watersheds:

- Lost Canyon Creek Watershed
- West Fork of the Mancos River Watershed

- Middle Fork of the Mancos River Watershed
- East Fork of the Mancos River Watershed
- Chicken Creek watershed.

Table 2. Forest Fuels Management Proposed Action Components

Project Location	Forest Type(s)	Proposed Activity	Treatment Type
Brown/Reddert Ranch	Ponderosa Pine, Gambel oak, Pinyon/Juniper	Forest fuels management on 241 acres. Reduce average stand density by 25%, remove 50% of oak, pinyon, and juniper. Pile slash to burn. Merchantable timber to be removed from acreage.	Hand crew/mechanized.
RSL Ranch	Ponderosa Pine, Gambel oak, Pinyon/Juniper	Forest fuels management on 187 acres. Reduce average stand density by 19%. All oaks, pinyon, and juniper under ponderosa pine overstory to be masticated under ponderosa dripline or within 20' of the forest crown. Pile slash to burn. Logs would be cut, skidded, and decked for landowner utilization	Hand crew/mechanized.
Colyer Property	Ponderosa Pine, Gambel oak, Pinyon/Juniper	Forest fuels management on 54 acres. Reduce average stand density by 45%, remove 50% of oak, pinyon, and juniper. Mastication and pile slash to burn. Logs would be cut, skid, and decked for landowner utilization	Hand crew/mechanized.
G5 Ranch	Ponderosa Pine, Gambel oak, Pinyon/Juniper	Forest fuels management on 168 acres. Reduce average stand density between 37% and 43%. Remove all oaks under 3 feet in height. Pile slash to burn. Logs would be cut, skid, and decked for landowner utilization	Hand crew/mechanized.

2.4 – Right-of-Way and Land Ownership

Lands associated with the irrigation infrastructure components of the proposed action are privately owned except for the Long Park Ditch and Rush Ditch infrastructure project locations, which are located on the San Juan National Forest and managed by the Dolores Ranger District. The portions of the Long Park and Rush ditches located on the National Forest operate within a 60-foot-wide ditch easement and proposed infrastructure improvements would occur within that easement. The Forest Fuels Management portions of the proposed action are located entirely on private land.

2.5 – Manpower and Equipment

For the irrigation infrastructure projects that involve Parshall flume, telemetry, and headgate installation, crew size would vary from 3 to 4 people. Specialized equipment would include pick-up trucks, ATVs, mini-excavators, or small backhoes. For the water diversion improvements, a 3 to 5 person crew is anticipated, and equipment would include a tracked excavator, dump trucks, and pick-up trucks. For the forest fuels management component of the Proposed Action, crew size would range from 4 to 5 people. Specialized equipment would include a feller buncher, wood processor, log skidder, log loader, and bulldozer.

2.6 – Access

During installation of the irrigation infrastructure components including diversion improvements, access would be via existing county roads, forest service roads, farm lanes, and two-tracks. For some locations, final access to existing flumes or headgates would occur by crossing pastures which may result in crushed or damaged herbaceous vegetation. No temporary roads would be required except for the Long Park Ditch diversion improvements. Access for the forest fuels management component would utilize existing access to the forested areas proposed for treatment. In areas where native soils have been disturbed during logging operations, the selected contractor would scarify and sow weed-free seed mixtures specified by MCD.

2.7 – Staging Areas

Staging areas would only be necessary for the four diversion improvement projects at Frank, Willis, No. 6, and Long Park Ditches. Staging would occur on existing two tracks and adjacent to the diversion work. Anticipated surface disturbance area, including staging equipment and construction material, is included in **Table 1**.

2.8 – Construction Timeframe

The irrigation infrastructure components of the Proposed Action would take place after September 1st, 2026. The forest fuels management component of the Proposed Action follows MBTA timing restrictions outlined in the San Juan National Forest Salter Vegetation Management Project Environmental Assessment (USFS, 2021). Understory forest fuels timing restrictions precludes the removal of Gambel oak and associated brush from April 1st through July 31st. Overstory tree clearing and crown thinning would follow USFWS raptor timing restrictions for Osprey and Coopers hawk requiring a ¼ mile buffer around the nest locations from March 1st through August 31st.

2.9 – Permits and Authorizations

2.9.1 – Agreements & Authorizations

The following interagency agreements are currently in place for the Proposed Action:

- USACE – Project components fall under the Clean Water Act Agricultural Exemption. USACE coordination letter is included in **Appendix A**.
- USFS – activities at Rush and Long Park Ditches would be completed within the existing ditch easements and have been determined to be exempt under maintenance. USFS coordination letter is included in **Appendix A**.

2.9.2 – Construction Permits & Plans

Implementation of the Proposed Action would require a Montezuma County Floodplain Development Permit for all the agricultural infrastructure projects including the reconstruction of diversions, replacement of headgates, and the replacement or installation of flumes.

2.9.3 – Natural Resource Protection Laws

Compliance with all laws and Executive Orders (E.O.) are required prior to and during project implementation, including but not limited to:

Clean Air Act of 1963 (42 U.S.C. § 7401)

Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544, 87 Stat. 884)

Clean Water Act of 1972 as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)

Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 U.S.C. 703-712)

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (16 U.S.C. 668- 668c)

2.9.4 – Cultural Resource Laws

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (16 U.S.C. 470aa-470mm et seq.)

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.)

American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (42 U.S.C. Public Law 95-341)

Archaeology and Historic Preservation: Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines (48 FR 44716)

CHAPTER 3 – AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 - Introduction

This chapter discusses resources that may be affected by the Proposed Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative. For each resource, the potentially affected area and/or interests are identified, existing conditions described, and potential impacts predicted under the No Action and Proposed Action Alternatives. This section is concluded with a summary of impacts.

3.2 – Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

3.2.1 – Environmental Resources Considered but Excluded from Analysis

Issues determined to be of potential significance, and therefore appropriate for further impact analysis under this EA, are discussed in more detail in this Chapter.

The following issues were identified as not present or not affected, and are not analyzed further in this EA¹:

Recreation. The majority of the project locations are on private land that is utilized for agricultural activities and little to no recreational use occurs in those locations. The Long Park and Rush Ditch project components located on USFS and are also outside of areas that would be utilized for recreational purposes. The Proposed Action is not expected to have a discernible effect on recreation and, therefore, this resource is not carried forward for further analysis.

Indian Trust Assets and Native American Religious and Cultural Heritage Concerns. No Indian trust assets have been identified within the Proposed Action Area. No Native American sacred sites are known within the Proposed Action Area. Neither the No Action Alternative, nor the Proposed Action, would have an effect on Indian trust assets, Native American sacred sites, or Native American ways of life or cultural heritage and practices, including traditional land and water use and practices. To confirm this finding, Reclamation is in the process of consulting with the tribes with historic presence in the region. Reclamation provided the tribes with a description of the Proposed Action and a written request for comments regarding any potential effects on Indian

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. 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.

trust assets or Native American sacred sites because of the Proposed Action. Results of this consultation will be included in the Final EA.

Wild & Scenic Rivers, Land with Wilderness Characteristics, or Wilderness Study Areas. No Wild and Scenic Rivers, land with wilderness characteristics, or Wilderness Study Areas exist in the Project Area. Therefore, neither the No Action Alternative nor the Action Alternatives, would have an effect on these resources.

Products produced or extracted from Federal lands or the Outer Continental Shelf. No products are produced in the Project areas on USFS (Federal) lands, and no lands in the Outer Continental Shelf are involved with the Project. Therefore, neither the No Action Alternative, nor the Action Alternatives, would affect access to products produced or extracted there.

All other resources considered and analyzed are presented in the remainder of this chapter. Environmental commitments necessary to mitigate the effects of the project on the human and natural environment are discussed in **Chapter 4**.

3.2.2 – Agricultural Resources and Soils

It is the policy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to “maintain and keep current an inventory of the prime farmland and unique farmland of the Nation... the objective of the inventory is to identify the extent and location of important rural lands needed to produce food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops” (7 CFR 657.2). NRCS identifies categories of farmlands of national and statewide importance in the region, based on soil types and irrigation status. Tables 3 and 4 list soil types as provided by the NRCS soil survey.

Table 3. NRCS mapped soils in irrigation infrastructure treatment areas.

Project Component	Soil Type	Prime Farmland
Crystal Creek Inlet Canal	Granath-Fughes complex, 0 to 15 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
Crystal Creek Outlet Canal	Granath loam, 3 to 6 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Prime farmland if irrigated
East Mancos Highline Ditch	Dalmatian-Apmay-Schrader complex, 0 to 5 percent slopes, Partially Hydic	Not prime farmland
Field Diversion Ditch	Dalmatian-Apmay-Schrader complex, 0 to 5 percent slopes, Partially Hydic	Not prime farmland
Giles Ditch	Purcella loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, Predominantly Nonydic	Not prime farmland

Project Component	Soil Type	Prime Farmland
Lee & Burke Ditch	Dalmatian-Apmay-Schrader complex, 0 to 5 percent slopes, Partially Hydric	Not prime farmland
Lee Ditch	Fluvents-Fluvaquents complex, 0 to 3 percent slopes, Partially Hydric	Not prime farmland
Lee Ditch	Umbarg-Winner-Tesajo complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded, Partially Hydric	Not prime farmland
Long Park Ditch	Sheek-Archuleta-Rock outcrop complex, 25 to 80 percent slopes, Nonhydric	Not prime farmland
Rush Ditch (Chicken Creek Split upstream of diversion)	Flygare-Foidel complex, 15 to 30 percent slopes, Predominantly Nonydric	Not prime farmland
Rush Ditch	NRCS Soil Survey Information is not available on USFS land.	-
Willis Ditch	Umbarg-Winner-Tesajo complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded, Partially Hydric	Not prime farmland
Willis Ditch	Fluvents-Fluvaquents complex, 0 to 3 percent slopes, Partially Hydric	Not prime farmland
Frank Ditch Diversion	Purcella loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, Predominantly Nonydric	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Frank Ditch Diversion	Umbarg-Winner-Tesajo complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded, Partially Hydric	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Number 6 Ditch Diversion	Purcella loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, Predominantly Nonydric	Not prime farmland
Number 6 Ditch Diversion	Fluvents-Fluvaquents complex, 0 to 3 percent slopes, Partially Hydric	Not prime farmland
Weber Reservoir	Fivepine-Nortez complex, 0 to 15 percent slopes, Nonhydric	Not prime farmland

Table 4. NRCS mapped soils in forest fuel management areas

Project Location	Soil Type	Prime Farmland
Brown/Reddert Ranch	Argiustolls-Haplustalfs complex, 30 to 80 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
Brown/Reddert Ranch	Fughes-Sheek complex, 15 to 30 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
Brown/Reddert Ranch	Argiustolls-Haplustalfs-Rock outcrop complex, 30 to 80 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
Brown/Reddert Ranch	Burnson loam, 1 to 15 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
Brown/Reddert Ranch	Granath-Fughes complex, 0 to 15 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
Brown/Reddert Ranch	Argiustolls-Haplustalfs-Rock outcrop complex, 30 to 80 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
Brown/Reddert Ranch	Fortlewis stony fine sandy loam, 3 to 12 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
Brown/Reddert Ranch	Burnson loam, 1 to 15 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
RSL Ranch	Ilex loam, 3 to 12 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
RSL Ranch	Sheek-Archuleta-Rock outcrop complex, 25 to 80 percent slopes, north aspect, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
RSL Ranch	Sheek-Archuleta complex, 6 to 25 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
RSL Ranch	Ilex-Pramiss-Falconry complex, 3 to 20 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
RSL Ranch	Ilex loam, 3 to 12 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
Colyer Property	Fughes-Herm complex, 1 to 35 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
Colyer Property	Granath loam, 3 to 6 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
Colyer Property	Falconry gravelly fine sandy loam, 3 to 25 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Partially in prime farmland if irrigated

Project Location	Soil Type	Prime Farmland
Colyer Property	Ricot loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Partially in prime farmland if irrigated
Colyer Property	Herm very cobbly loam, 15 to 40 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Partially in prime farmland if irrigated
Colyer Property	Sheek-Archuleta-Rock outcrop complex, 25 to 80 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Partially in prime farmland if irrigated
Colyer Property	Dalmatian-Apmay-Schrader complex, 0 to 5 percent slopes, Partially Hydric	Partially in prime farmland if irrigated
G5 Ranch	Argiustolls-Haplustalfs complex, 30 to 80 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
G5 Ranch	Fughes-Sheek complex, 15 to 30 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
G5 Ranch	Argiustolls-Haplustalfs-Rock outcrop complex, 30 to 80 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
G5 Ranch	Burnson loam, 1 to 15 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
G5 Ranch	Granath-Fughes complex, 0 to 15 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
G5 Ranch	Argiustolls-Haplustalfs-Rock outcrop complex, 30 to 80 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland
G5 Ranch	Fortlewis stony fine sandy loam, 3 to 12 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
G5 Ranch	Burnson loam, 1 to 15 percent slopes, Nonhydic	Not prime farmland

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would have no effect on Prime Farmlands, Unique Farmlands, or Farmlands of Statewide Importance. Farmlands in the Project Area would continue to produce as in the past.

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action no farmland would be permanently removed from production because of the Proposed Action. No change in the configuration of irrigated lands currently served by the existing irrigation infrastructure would occur as a result of the Proposed Action and no interruption to agricultural production would occur. No part of the irrigation season is expected to be lost during implementation of the Proposed Action. Therefore, there would be

no significant adverse effects on agricultural resources and soils due to implementing the Proposed Action.

3.2.3 – Air Quality

According to National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Montezuma County meets the requirements for an attainment area, meaning all criteria pollutants are at safe levels. Regulated air pollutants in the County, including carbon monoxide, particulate matter (PM 10 and 2.5), ozone, sulfur dioxide, lead, and nitrogen, are below specific limits set for criteria air pollutants under the Clean Air Act (EPA 2021). Montezuma County is consistently in attainment although regional air quality is increasingly degraded on a discrete and seasonal basis due to wildfire activity.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no change in the existing level of air quality for the irrigation infrastructure or forest fuels management components of the project.

Proposed Action: During the construction phase of the Project, dirt work would result in particulate emissions and diesel emissions; however, releases would be temporary and minor (two to four pieces of construction equipment operating at the same time, at most, during the implementation phase). This is not significantly different from occasional local air quality impacts associated with ranching activities that require heavy equipment. Once construction is complete, there are no emissions associated with the Proposed Action and air quality at the specific project locations would return to pre-construction levels. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not have a significant adverse effect on air quality.

3.2.4 – Noise

Even though all the project components are located in rural agricultural settings, anthropogenic noise is present at detectable levels due to normal farm activity and traffic on the adjacent county roads. Current noise levels are relatively consistent year-to-year.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no change in the existing level of anthropogenic noise at the different project locations.

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action, there would be additional noise introduced at each individual project location, due to the operation of construction equipment and associated activities. The noise associated with the construction equipment/activities would be temporary (limited to the construction phase) and would be largely attenuated and mitigated by the presence of heavy vegetation surrounding all the project locations. After construction and installation of the project components are complete, noise levels would return to pre-construction levels. The Proposed Action would not have a significant adverse effect on noise.

3.2.5 – Noxious Weeds

The Colorado Noxious Weed Act designates undesirable plants that are considered a threat to Colorado's natural resources. Impacts from weed infestations include the loss of forage for wildlife and livestock, decreased availability of habitat for wildlife, and a loss of biodiversity relative to

undisturbed areas. The individual ditch companies and ranches are responsible for complying with the Colorado Noxious Weed Act. Noxious weed surveys were conducted in the vicinity of all the proposed action components and no noxious weed infestations were noted. However, background concentrations of common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) were identified along the Long Park Ditch in the vicinity of the headgate and diversion. Common mullein is a List C species which are widespread and are not currently subject to requirements for eradication.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action alternative, background concentrations of weeds would continue to exist at current levels throughout the agricultural and ranch lands included in the proposed action.

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action, any existing weeds currently in the Project areas may be spread to different project locations during the construction phase from pick-up trucks and other construction equipment, and existing weeds may be spread within the disturbed construction corridor. No imported fill is proposed, so new weed species currently absent in the surrounding area would not become established. The individual ditch companies would continue to be responsible for complying with the Colorado Noxious Weed Act, including obtaining appropriate pesticide use permits and managing listed weed species within the ditch easement.

Risk of expanded weed presence because of the Proposed Action would be mitigated by power-washing construction equipment to be sure it is free of soil and debris prior to entering the construction site, by timely weed treatment, and by re-establishing drought-tolerant, non-invasive vegetation within the portion of the disturbed corridor. The Proposed Action would not contribute to an increase in noxious weeds, due to the implementation of weed management measures as outlined in **Chapter 4**. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse effect to noxious weeds as a result of implementing the Proposed Action.

3.2.6 – Transportation and Public Safety

The major transportation resource in the vicinity of the Proposed Action is US Highway 160, Colorado State Highway 184, and the following Montezuma County Roads J, P8, 40, 41, 43, and 325. Private roads and county roads generally provide access and mobility for residents traveling in and out of the Proposed Action area locations. Wildfire within the forest fuels management area pose a safety risk for communities and landowners in the vicinity of the project area. The Montezuma County Sheriff, Southwest Health System ambulances in Mancos, and the Mancos Fire Protection District service the project area. For the last five years, the project area has been growing in population at a rate of approximately 1% per year, resulting in minor increases in traffic volumes on local and county roads.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no effect on transportation. Wildfire within the forest fuels management area would continue to pose a safety risk for communities and landowners in the vicinity of the project area.

Proposed Action: The proposed irrigation infrastructure project components are generally small and limited in nature and may involve small, short term local increases in truck traffic. Execution of the forest fuels management components would have similar impacts to county road traffic. However, once the proposed irrigation infrastructure and forest management activities are

completed, traffic volumes would return to pre-existing conditions. The Proposed Action would not increase traffic levels and would not have a significant adverse effect to transportation.

The Montezuma County Sheriff, Southwest Health System ambulances in Mancos, and the Mancos Fire Protection District would continue to cover the Project area for emergency response and would not be hindered in their response. Implementation of the forest fuels management component of the Proposed Action would likely increase public safety by reducing the risk of wildfires for communities and landowners in the vicinity of the project area. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse effect to safety as a result of implementing the Proposed Action.

3.2.7 – Vegetation

The various irrigation infrastructure and forest fuels management projects occur in several vegetation community types including aspen groves, ponderosa pine, and lowland riparian ecosystems. The plant communities at proposed irrigation infrastructure and forest fuels management locations are summarized as follows:

- Crystal Creek Inlet Canal – Historically ponderosa pine forests, which is now mostly replaced with irrigated pastures and cottonwood trees growing along the irrigation ditch.
- Crystal Creek Outlet Canal – Historically Gambel oak shrublands, which is currently replaced with irrigated pastures and cottonwood trees growing along the irrigation ditch.
- East Mancos Highline Ditch – The diversion is located within a southwest facing aspen forest
- Field Ditch – The diversion and existing flume occur within the riparian plant community of the Mancos River.
- Frank Ditch – The diversion occurs within the riparian plant community of the Mancos River.
- Giles Ditch – The existing Parshall flume is located within the riparian plant community of the Mancos River.
- Lee and Burke Ditch – The existing diversion and Parshall flume occur within the riparian plant community of the Mancos River.
- Lee Ditch – The existing diversion and Parshall flume occur within the riparian plant community of the Mancos River.
- Long Park Ditch – The existing diversion and headgate occurs in a spruce/fir forest riparian corridor on USFS land.
- No. 6 (Sheek) Ditch – The existing diversion and headgate occur within the riparian plant community of the Mancos River.
- Rush Ditch - Chicken Creek Split – The existing diversion occurs on the edge of an aspen grove.
- Weber Reservoir – Vegetation surrounding the reservoir consists of a combination of ponderosa pine and Gambel oaks along with pasture that has been heavily grazed by cattle.
- Willis Ditch – The diversion occurs within the riparian plant community of the Mancos River.

- Brown/Reddert Ranch – The portions of the ranch proposed for forest fuel treatments consist of a ponderosa pine forest with Gambel oak and Rocky Mountain juniper shrub layer.
- RSL Ranch - Portions of the ranch proposed for forest fuel treatments consist of a ponderosa pine forest with Gambel oak and Rocky Mountain juniper shrub layer.
- Colyer Property - Portions of the ranch proposed for forest fuel treatments consist of a ponderosa pine forest with Gambel oak and Rocky Mountain juniper shrub layer.
- G5 Ranch - Portions of the ranch proposed for forest fuel treatments consist of a ponderosa pine forest with Gambel oak and Rocky Mountain juniper shrub layer.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impact to existing plant communities. Minor ongoing maintenance, vegetation clearing, and weed treatment would continue along the existing irrigation infrastructure and ranchland.

Proposed Action: Impacts resulting from the irrigation infrastructure projects would be confined to the ditch easements. There would be no permanent loss of vegetation due to the use of existing access roads and the confinement of construction activity to the ditch alignment itself. For forest fuels management components of the Proposed Action would result in forest and associated understory clearing and are designed to improve ponderosa pine forest health by reducing understory ladder fuels and removing diseased vegetation, restoring the ponderosa forest's ability to withstand natural wildfire conditions. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse effect to vegetation due to implementing the Proposed Action.

3.2.8 – Visual Resources

The viewshed for the proposed action consists of a variety of native plant communities including cottonwood tree dominated riparian vegetation along the Mancos River, Gambel oak-mixed montane shrublands, ponderosa pine woodlands, aspen woodlands, and irrigated pastures that are interspersed throughout the greater project area. The irrigation infrastructure improvements and forest fuel management treatment areas are primarily located on private lands and there is no trend or reasonably foreseeable future action that would significantly change the level of visual impact in the area.

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would have no effect on visual resources on private or USFS lands. Visual resources would remain unchanged.

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action, the level of change around the proposed irrigation infrastructure components and forest fuel management areas would result in no change to visual resources. Construction equipment and construction traffic would utilize the local road network over the short term and construction operations would be completely hidden from public view by surrounding vegetation and topography. The level of change after project implementation would be imperceptible. The Proposed Action would not result in visual resource impacts, due to the dispersed nature of the proposed action and the absence of long-term effects. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse effect on visual resources due to implementing the Proposed Action.

3.2.9 – Water Rights & Use

The use of irrigation water has been part of the history of the Mancos River Valley since the area was homesteaded during the 19th century.

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would result in no changes in existing water rights and use.

Proposed Action: Implementation of the Proposed Action for the irrigation infrastructure projects would result in better water management of the existing water rights and would not result in a change of water rights in the geographic area served by MCD.

3.2.10 – Water Quality

One of the goals of the proposed action is to protect existing water quality within the Lost Canyon, Chicken Creek, and Mancos River watersheds by reducing the risks of severe wildfires by implementing the forest fuel management recommendations as outlined in **Chapter 2**. Overall water quality in the Mancos watershed has been sufficient to support a variety of agricultural activities since the 19th century. In addition, the aging irrigation infrastructure is inefficient at measuring and controlling irrigation water resulting in increases in erosion and sedimentation.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, potential water quality impacts due to wildfire in the Mancos and Lost Canyon drainages would remain unchanged. Inefficient irrigation practices would continue for the 13 irrigation ditches that are included in the proposed action.

Proposed Action: Implementing the forest fuels management component of the proposed action would reduce the impacts of wildfires in the Mancos and Lost Canyon watersheds reducing the potential for high levels of erosion and sedimentation from entering the associated streams that flow through the ranch properties. The proposed irrigation infrastructure improvements would improve water quality by allowing more efficient control and measurement of water diverted for agricultural purposes reducing erosion and potential sedimentation.

3.2.11 – Surface Water

Within the project area, water for irrigation infrastructure components is obtained within the Mancos River and Chicken Creek Watersheds and then spread onto farms and fields (Table 5). Surface water features in the Project Area include irrigation ditches managed by private companies, including the Crystal Creek Inlet Canal, Crystal Creek Outlet Canal, East Mancos Highline Canal, Field Diversion Ditch, Giles Ditch, Lee & Burke Ditch, Lee Ditch, Long Park Ditch, Rush Ditch, Willis Ditch, and Frank Ditch. Current irrigation control structures associated with the Proposed Action have reached the end of their design life and are not capable of accurately measuring or controlling irrigation water. Water from Reclamation's Jackson Reservoir also contributes in varying proportions to the irrigation water supplied to the ditches listed above. Table 5 summarizes the streams, wetlands and reservoirs associated with the irrigation infrastructure and forest fuels management project components.

Under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), impacts to the Mancos River are regulated by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). In order to discuss the various project components of

the Proposed Action, a pre-application conference was held with the USACE in November of 2025. The USACE determined that the project components qualify for the CWA agricultural exemption and provided a letter to MCD confirming that the proposed irrigation infrastructure improvements fall under the CWA agricultural exemption and no Section 404 permits would be necessary. This letter is included in **Appendix A**.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action alternative, irrigation water delivery would continue for the 12 irrigation ditches that are part of the proposed action, and there would be no changes to surface waters associated with forest fuel management component of the proposed action.

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action, the irrigation infrastructure improvements would be installed allowing more precise measurement and distribution of existing irrigation water rights. Per the USACE consultation letter, no CWA permits would be necessary to implement the project. The Proposed Action would not decrease the quantity or quality of surface waters or wetlands.

Table 5. Wetlands and Waters of the US within Proposed Action

Watershed ⁽¹⁾	Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC)	Perennial Stream ⁽²⁾ (Miles)	Wetlands - NWI ⁽³⁾ (Acres)	Lakes/Reservoirs ⁽⁴⁾ (Acres)
Chicken Creek	HUC12-140801070103	20	472	322
East Mancos River	HUC12-14080107014	12	16	2
Jackson Reservoir		2	209	223
Lost Canyon Creek	HUC12-140300020305	43	625	414
Middle Mancos River	HUC12-140801070101	15	39	7
Weber Reservoir		0	37	39
West Mancos River	HUC12-140801070102	33	200	62

Notes:

- 1) Basins delineated from USGS Stream Stats
- 2) Perennial streams sourced from USGS national hydrographic dataset
- 3) Wetlands sourced from US Fish & Wildlife national wetland inventory
- 4) Lakes/Reservoirs streams sourced from USGS national hydrographic dataset

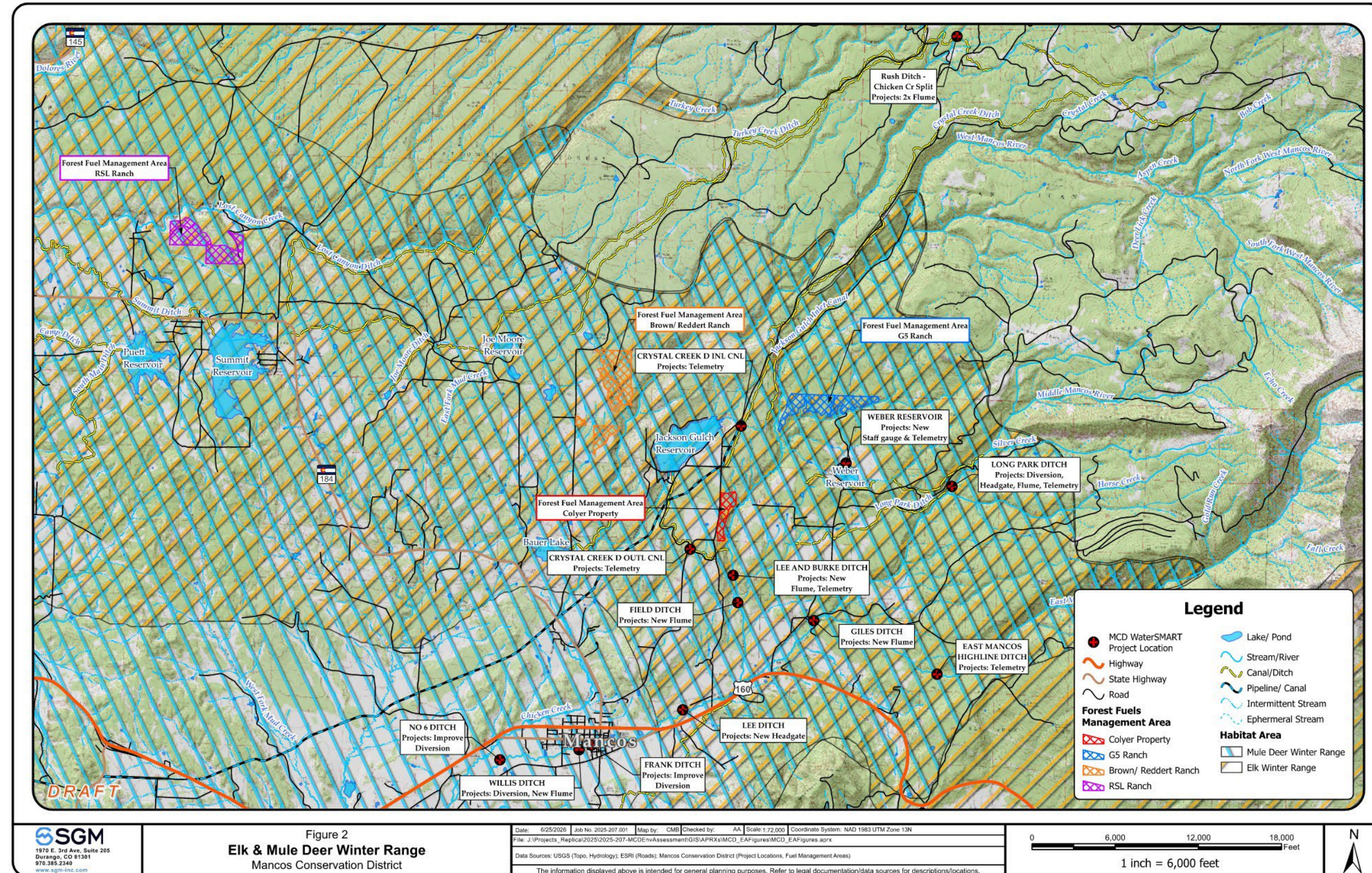
3.2.12 – Wildlife & Special Status Species

The Mancos, Chicken Creek, and Lost Canyon Watersheds in general are heavily vegetated with a variety of plant communities including upland ponderosa pine, Gambel oak, and aspen forests.

Low elevation cottonwood galleries dominate the riparian plant communities along the stream and river channels, as described in section 3.2.7 Vegetation. Wildlife present in the area likely includes the entire suite of western Colorado mammal fauna, including elk, deer, fox, coyote, mountain lion, bear, and a wide range of small mammals. Migratory birds frequent the area, attracted by the perennial water sources and the diversity of vegetation types.

The majority of the Mancos River Watershed is mapped as mule deer and elk winter range (**Figure 2**). This is due to its proximity to water sources and offering lower winter snowpack depths and a variety of vegetation types for cover and browsing. The landscape is fragmented by the county road network, agricultural operations, residential homes, private roads, and driveways. However, the predominant cause of fragmentation is the abundant irrigated and unirrigated pasture lands. These pastures offer foraging opportunities for wildlife, but the abundant fences create barriers to free dispersal and habitat utilization.

Figure 2. Elk & Mule Deer Winter Range



It is likely that deer and elk migrate through the Project Area for foraging in winter, and some amount of bedding occurs in the denser vegetation. Chicken Creek, west, middle, and east forks of the Mancos River support narrow riparian corridors. However, livestock fences are frequent barriers to natural movement throughout the area. In general, most of the Project Area has experienced significant levels of disturbance.

A Biological Memo has been prepared that provides an assessment of Special Status Species, including ESA-listed species, USFS Sensitive Species, and migratory birds including raptors within both the Irrigation Infrastructure Sites and the Forest Fuels Management Sites (SGM, 2026). The assessed species were selected based on the USFWS IPaC database, which was queried for each Project component individually (USFWS March 2026). The assessment includes twelve ESA-listed species (Canada lynx, gray wolf, Mexican spotted owl, yellow-billed cuckoo, southwestern willow flycatcher, Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub, bonytail, monarch butterfly, silverspot butterfly, and Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee) and one USFS Sensitive Species (northern goshawk) (Table 6).

Table 6. Summary of IPaC Federally Listed Species

Project Component	Canada Lynx	Gray Wolf	Mex. Spotted Owl	Yellow Billed Cuckoo	SW Willow Fly catcher	CO Pike Minnow	Razor back Sucker	Silverspot Butterfly	Suckley's Bumble bee	Monarch Butterfly
Crystal Creek Inlet	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Crystal Creek Outlet	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
East Mancos Highline	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Field Ditch		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Frank Ditch		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Giles Ditch		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Lee & Burke Ditch		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lee Ditch		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Long Park Ditch	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
No. 6 (Sheek) Ditch		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Project Component	Canada Lynx	Gray Wolf	Mex. Spotted Owl	Yellow Billed Cuckoo	SW Willow Fly catcher	CO Pike Minnow	Razor back Sucker	Silverspot Butterfly	Suckley's Bumble bee	Monarch Butterfly
Rush Ditch, Chicken Creek	x	x				x	x	x	x	x
Weber Reservoir	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Willis Ditch		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Brown/Reddert Ranch	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
RSL Ranch		x	x	x		x ²	x ²	x	x	x
Colyer Ranch	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
G5 Ranch	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

¹ BLUE cells are Irrigation Infrastructure components, GREEN cells are Forest Fuels Management components

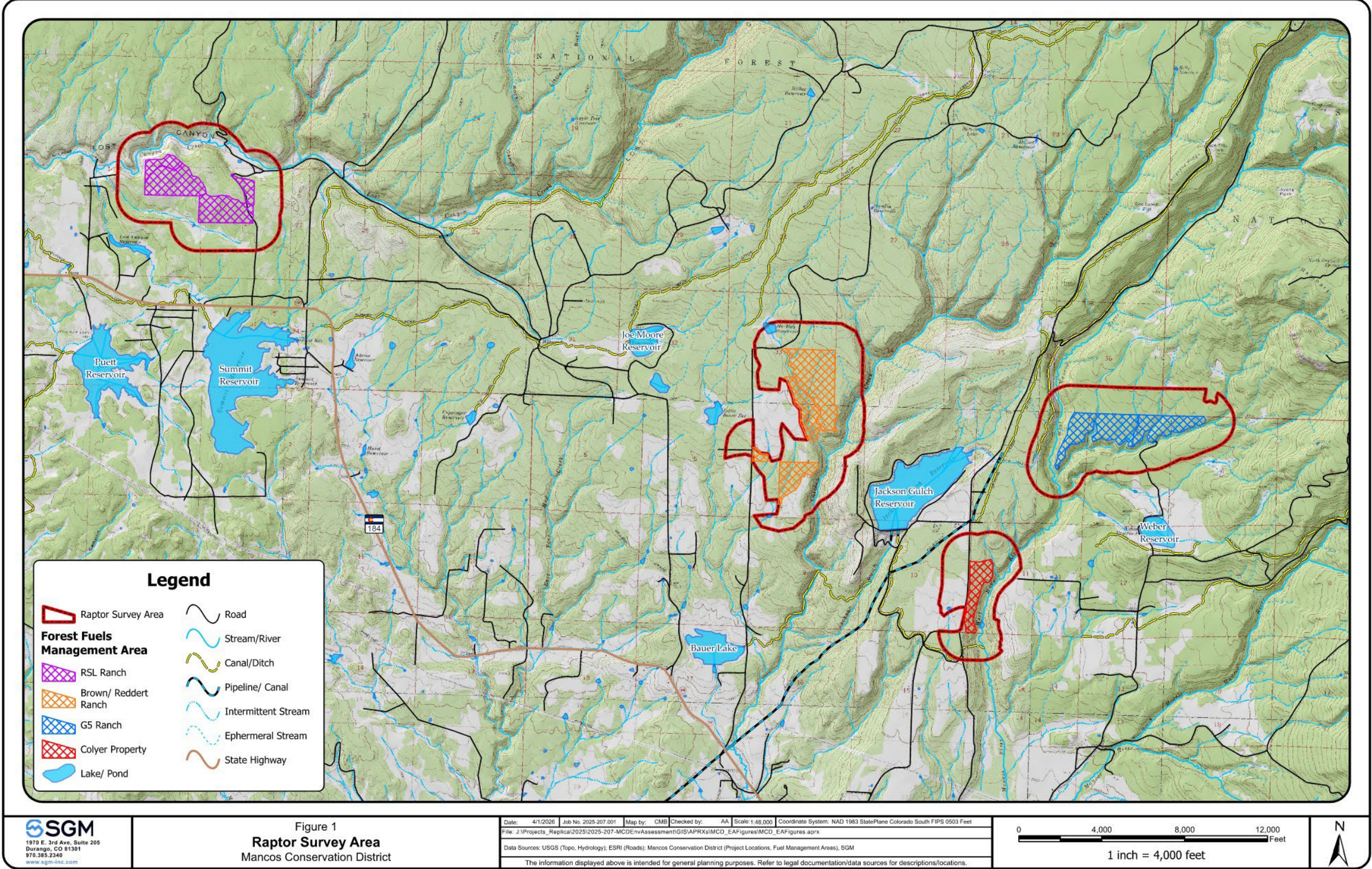
² RSL Ranch also includes Bonytail and Humpback Chub b/c of its location within the Dolores drainage

The following species were dismissed from analysis due to a lack of range or suitable habitat in the Project area, or the lack of jeopardy to Proposed/Experimental species: Canada lynx, gray wolf, Mexican spotted owl and silverspot butterfly. There would be *No Effect* to these species or their Critical Habitat.

Nesting Raptors: Two raptor nests were located, and nesting activity and territorial fidelity were confirmed during a comprehensive call-playback survey of the Project in 2025. The same protective timing restriction is recommended as for other sensitive species, consisting of a construction prohibition prior to September 1.

Nesting Raptor Survey: A tree-nesting raptor survey was conducted for the four Forest Fuels Management components of the Project and the surrounding 0.25-mile radius. The survey was completed in June 2025. The buffer areas were constrained in some cases by landowners who refused access requests for the survey work. The survey map (**Figure 3**) indicates the actual spatial extent of the buffer areas included in the survey effort.

Figure 3. Raptor Survey Area



Two active nests were found during the survey, both showing clear evidence of mated pair bonding, site fidelity, and nesting activity. A map of the survey area is provided in **Figure 3**. Both sites are in the buffer areas and would not be directly affected by proposed fuels management activities.

A 0.5-mile area surrounding the four Fuels Management components was also assessed for potential cliff-nesting raptor habitat. There are no cliff formations visible within 0.5 miles that could support cliff-nesting raptors.

As discussed in Section 2.8, implantation of the irrigation infrastructure components of the Proposed Action would take place after September 1st, 2026. Due to the proximity of the ranches proposed forest fuels management to the San Juan National Forest, the Proposed Action follows MBTA timing restrictions outlined in the San Juan National Forest Salter Vegetation Management Project Environmental Assessment (USFS, 2021). Understory forest fuels timing restrictions precludes the removal of Gambel oak and associated brush from April 1st through July 31st. Overstory tree clearing and crown thinning would follow USFWS raptor timing restrictions for Osprey and Coopers hawk requiring a ¼ mile buffer around the nest locations from March 1st through August 31st on the Brown/Reddert and G5 Ranches.

After the fuel reduction prescriptions are implemented, there would be no ongoing/permanent disturbance within 0.25 miles of the nests. Project implementation on all project components occurs after September 1.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no new effects on wildlife or special status species. The ditch companies and ranches would continue to operate as they have historically.

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action Alternative, small amounts of vegetation would be removed in the vicinity of the irrigation infrastructure components within the existing irrigation ditch prisms. A temporary increase in construction noise, dust, emissions, and a general increase in human activity would occur near the irrigation infrastructure components over the autumn construction season. Wildlife could be displaced by the increased human presence, though not during critical breeding seasons for most wildlife. The majority of the project area is within winter range for elk and deer established by the CPW and increased levels of human activity described above would be limited to the construction phase only. Once the Proposed Action is implemented, wildlife habitat would be substantially similar to pre-construction conditions. The implementation of the irrigation infrastructure improvements components are not expected to significantly degrade the habitat conditions that support winter elk and deer use, nor would the Proposed Action directly limit elk and deer use of the habitat during the winter.

The forest fuels management component of the Proposed Action would result in the loss of some wildlife habitat over the short-term and may limit the utilization in the treatment areas for elk and deer to some degree for a single autumn construction season. The Proposed Action would temporarily contribute to wildlife habitat disruption due to increased human activity during construction but would not contribute to any long-term trends in wildlife habitat loss after

construction is complete. The Proposed Action would not significantly affect the passive use of ecosystems, including stewardship, existence values, and bequest values.

The following Proposed or Experimental species were dismissed from analysis due to a lack of jeopardy: gray wolf, Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee, and monarch butterfly. There would be no potential to jeopardize the continued persistence of these species as addressed in more detail in the Biological Report (SGM, 2026). A minimal amount of vegetation removal is required for the irrigation infrastructure components of the proposed action resulting in little to no effect to the gray wolf, Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee, and monarch butterfly. The forest fuels management component of the proposed action would occur in ponderosa pine forests that typically do not support habitat for the bumble bee or the monarch butterfly. In addition, there is no gray wolf activity in Montezuma County, CO.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: There is no highly effective habitat for yellow-billed cuckoo in the riparian habitats encompassed within the various Project components. Vegetation removal for those Project components that occur in riparian corridors would be minimal due to the limited construction footprints of the proposed irrigation infrastructure upgrades. A conservation measure prohibiting riparian vegetation removal during the cuckoo's occupancy season (June 1 – August 31) is included to ensure that no indirect impact occurs to incidental migrating or foraging individuals. All riparian vegetation removal would be confined to the time period outside the cuckoo's occupancy season. Construction of the infrastructure components of the Proposed Action would not directly impact cuckoo habitat. There would be *No Effect* to the species based on the implementation of these conservation measures.

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher: There is no highly effective habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher in the riparian areas within the various Project components, which generally consist of modified/agricultural settings without sufficient density to support nesting. Vegetation removal for those Project components that occur in riparian corridors would be minimal due to the limited construction footprints of the proposed irrigation infrastructure upgrades. A conservation measure prohibiting riparian vegetation removal during the flycatcher's occupancy season (May 1 – August 31) is included to ensure that no impact occurs to nesting or foraging individuals, and that minor impacts to potential habitat would occur outside of the species' occupancy window. All riparian vegetation removal would be confined to the time period outside the Southwest Willow Flycatcher occupancy season. Construction of the infrastructure components of the Proposed Action would not directly impact cuckoo habitat. There would be *No Effect* to the species based on the implementation of these conservation measures.

Colorado River Endangered Fish: The Project area does not lie within the ranges of the Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub, and bonytail. Based on previously issued programmatic biological opinions that all depletions within the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins may adversely affect the four fishes, it is expected that the Proposed Action *May Affect, and is Likely to Adversely Affect*, the Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub, and bonytail. However, adverse effects resulting from these water depletions are mitigated by the Upper Colorado River Basin Endangered Fish Recovery Program and the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program ("Recovery Programs"), per the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) 1999 Colorado River Programmatic Biological Opinion and the USFWS' 1991

Animas-La Plata Project Biological Opinion (BOs). There would be no new effect to the Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub, and bonytail.

Colorado River Endangered Fishes Critical Habitat: Consumptive loss of water in the Upper Colorado and San Juan River basins due to agricultural irrigation practices resulting in depletions from those basins, affecting downstream critical habitat for the listed fish species. The estimated historic average annual depletion rate due to operation of the Irrigation Infrastructure components totals 1,639 acre-feet (**Appendix A**). This amount would not change as a result of the irrigation infrastructure project components. Water depletions to critical habitat for Colorado River endangered fishes are also mitigated by the Recovery Programs. There would be no new effect to the Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub, and bonytail critical habitat.

Northern Goshawk: A single Project component (Rush Ditch) occurs on USFS land at suitable elevation and in proximity to potential nesting habitat to warrant consideration of this USFS Sensitive Species. No direct impact is proposed to any suitable foraging or nesting habitat. The same protective timing restriction is recommended as for other sensitive species, consisting of a construction prohibition prior to September 1, to ensure that no indirect impact occurs to occupied habitat in areas within 0.5 miles of the Rush Ditch site.

3.2.13 – Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are defined as physical or other expressions of human activity or occupation. Such resources include culturally significant landscapes, prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, isolated artifacts or features, traditional cultural properties, Native American and other sacred places, and artifacts and documents of cultural and historical significance. Woods Canyon Archaeological Consultants conducted a Class III cultural resource inventory of the proposed action's Areas of Potential Effect (McAndrews, Kelly. 2026). The proposed construction disturbance areas, access roads, and the proposed staging area, were inventoried.

Seven cultural resource sites were documented as a result of the Class III survey. Six of the sites are recommended or have been determined to be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Five sites are linear resource segments, all of which are eligible. None of the linear site segments support the eligibility of the entire linear resource. Twelve isolated finds were recorded, and none are recommended for eligibility to the NRHP.

A goal of the cultural resource survey was to provide recommendations for managing eligible cultural resources in proximity to the proposed undertakings. The proposed project modifications to water infrastructure are in alignment with guidance in the Colorado Statewide Programmatic Agreement on Water Control Features of 2022 between Reclamation and the State Historic Preservation Office. The project would have no adverse effect to historic properties, and no protection measures are necessary.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no changes to existing conditions, and no effect on cultural resources.

Proposed Action: There would be no adverse effects to historic properties as a result of implementing the Proposed Action, including impacts to education and knowledge, learning and interpretation, and research opportunities. Reclamation is currently consulting with SHPO on the project's effect determination and the results of this consultation will be included in **Appendix A** of the Final EA.

3.3 – Summary

Table 7 provides a summary of environmental consequences for the resources evaluated in this EA. Resource impacts are outlined for both the No Action and the Proposed Action Alternatives.

Table 7. Summary of Impacts for the Proposed Action

Resource	Impacts: No Action Alternative	Impacts: Proposed Action Alternative
Agricultural Resources and Soils	No Effect	No farmland would be permanently removed from production. No change in the configuration of irrigated lands. No interruption to agricultural production. No part of the irrigation season would be lost.
Air Quality	No Effect	Dirt work would result in particulate emissions and diesel emissions; however, releases would be temporary and minor. No change from existing conditions once construction is complete.
Noise	No Effect	Increased noise during construction phase, largely screened by topography and vegetation. No permanent change in noise levels.
Noxious Weeds	Continued weed pressure due to annual maintenance/ground disturbance.	Weed pressure would increase temporarily during the installation of the Proposed Action due to expanded ground disturbance associated with construction. With revegetation efforts and weed mitigation, effects are expected to be short-term and minor and would not contribute to regional weed abundance.
Transportation & Public Safety	Wildfire within the forest fuels management area would continue to pose a safety risk for communities and landowners in the vicinity of the project area.	During the implementation phase of the Proposed Action, there would be minor increases in traffic on the county road network. Emergency services would not be hindered in their response. Implementation of the forest fuels management component of the Proposed Action would likely increase public safety by reducing the risk of wildfires.

Resource	Impacts: No Action Alternative	Impacts: Proposed Action Alternative
Vegetation	No Effect; continued sporadic treatment and clearing of riparian vegetation along ditches	All vegetation disturbance would occur within the ditch prisms for the irrigation infrastructure component of the project. There would be no permanent loss of vegetation. Forest fuels thinning would occur on four private ranches which would reduce wildfire risks and increase forest health. Areas disturbed would be revegetated after construction.
Visual Resources	No Effect	There would be no change to visual resources. Construction equipment and construction traffic would utilize the local road network over the short-term and construction operations would be completely hidden from public view by surrounding vegetation and topography. The level of change after project implementation would be imperceptible.
Water Rights & Use	No Effect	The irrigation infrastructure projects would result in better water management of the existing water rights.
Water Quality	No Effect	Beneficial effects on water quality. Implementing the forest fuels management would reduce the impacts of wildfires in the Mancos and Lost Canyon watersheds, reducing the potential for high levels of erosion and sedimentation from entering the associated streams. The irrigation infrastructure improvements would allow more efficient control and measurement of water diverted for agricultural purposes, reducing erosion and potential sedimentation.
Surface Water	No change to surface water	The irrigation infrastructure improvements would allow more precise measurement and distribution of existing irrigation water rights.

Resource	Impacts: No Action Alternative	Impacts: Proposed Action Alternative
Wildlife & Special Status Species	No changes to the existing levels of anthropogenic disturbance.	A temporary increase in construction noise, dust, emissions, and a general increase in human activity would occur near the irrigation infrastructure components over the autumn construction season. Wildlife could be displaced by the increased human presence, though not during critical breeding seasons for most wildlife. Once the Proposed Action is implemented, wildlife habitat would be substantially similar to pre-construction conditions. There would be no effect to any federally listed threatened and endangered species. There would be no new effect to the Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub, and bonytail critical habitat.
Cultural Resources	No Effect	There would be no adverse effects to historic properties, including impacts to education and knowledge, learning and interpretation, and research opportunities. Reclamation is currently consulting with SHPO on the project's effect determination and the results of this consultation will be included in Appendix A of the Final EA.

CHAPTER 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

This section summarizes the design features, BMPs, conservation measures, and other requirements (collectively, "Environmental Commitments") developed to further lessen the potential adverse insignificant effects of the Project. The actions in the following environmental commitment list would be implemented as an integral part of the Project and shall be included in any contractor bid specifications.

Note that in the event there is a change in the Project description, or any construction activities are proposed outside of the inventoried Project Area or the planned timeframes outlined in this EA, additional environmental review by Reclamation would be required to determine if the existing surveys and information are adequate to evaluate the changed project scope. Additional NEPA documentation may be required.

Table 8. Summary of Environmental Commitments

Environmental Commitment	Affected Resource	Authority
1. The irrigation infrastructure components of the Proposed Action will not interfere with water allocation, including winter stock water allocation, nor create any changes in allocation of water shares.	Water Rights & Use	Colorado Water Rights Protection Act
2. All irrigation infrastructure construction activities will be confined to existing ditch easements.	Access and Transportation	National Environmental Policy Act
3. All construction equipment will be power-washed and free of soil and debris prior to entering the construction site to reduce the spread of noxious and invasive weeds.	Noxious Weeds	Colorado Noxious Weed Act
4. Timely and consistent weed treatment will occur within the areas proposed for infrastructure improvements or wildfire fuels treatment.	Noxious Weeds	Colorado Noxious Weed Act

Environmental Commitment	Affected Resource	Authority
5. The individual ditch companies, ranches, and MCD will continue to be responsible for complying with the Colorado Noxious Weed Act and will obtain appropriate pesticide use permits in accordance with Section 402 of the Clean Water Act.	Noxious Weeds	Colorado Noxious Weed Act, Clean Water Act
6. In the event that threatened or endangered species are discovered during construction, construction activities shall halt until consultation is completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and protection measures are implemented.	Wildlife & Special Status Species	Endangered Species Act
7. If a change in plans will require work outside of areas inventoried for threatened and endangered species, Reclamation will be consulted to determine if additional surveys are required.	Wildlife & Special Status Species	Endangered Species Act
8. Woody vegetation removal will not occur between April 1 and August 15 to avoid effects to raptors and migratory birds. Pre-construction raptor and migratory bird surveys will be required if any vegetation clearing activities are required between April 1 and July 15 due to project contingencies.	Wildlife & Special Status Species	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
9. Riparian vegetation removal will not occur between June 15 and August 15 to avoid effects to federally-listed yellow-billed cuckoo. Pre-construction cuckoo surveys will be required if any riparian vegetation clearing activities are required between June 15 and August 15 due to project contingencies.	Wildlife & Special Status Species	Endangered Species Act

Environmental Commitment	Affected Resource	Authority
10. If a previously unknown active raptor nest is discovered within 1/2 mile of the Project Area during construction, construction shall cease until Reclamation can complete consultations with FWS and CPW.	Wildlife & Special Status Species	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940
11. Monitoring and continued revegetation would occur as soon as practical following project construction, to prevent the establishment and spread of noxious weed populations.	Vegetation, Noxious Weeds	Colorado Noxious Weed Act
12. If previously undiscovered cultural or paleontological resources are discovered during construction, construction activities must immediately cease in the vicinity of the discovery and Reclamation must be notified. If the discovery is on USFS lands, USFS must be notified as well. In any event, the SHPO shall be consulted, and work shall not be resumed until consultation has been completed.	Cultural Resources	National Historic Preservation Act
13. Construction limits will be shown on plans provided to the contractors, and the limits of irrigation ditch easements on USFS land will be flagged. Ground disturbance and vegetation removal will be limited to the smallest portion of the Proposed Action area necessary to safely implement the project.	Agricultural Resources and Soils; Vegetation	National Environmental Policy Act
14. Existing access roads will be used to access construction, staging and stockpile areas. No new roads will be constructed.	Agricultural Resources and Soils; Vegetation	National Environmental Policy Act
15. Topsoil will be stockpiled and re-distributed after construction, to facilitate revegetation success.	Agricultural Resources and Soils; Vegetation	National Environmental Policy Act
16. Soil erosion will be minimized by using erosion control measures at the edges of ground disturbances.	Agricultural Resources and Soils; Vegetation	Colorado Water Quality Control Act

Environmental Commitment	Affected Resource	Authority
17. A non-invasive, drought-tolerant seed mix will be developed in coordination with adjacent landowners to revegetate areas disturbed by the project that do not require maintenance in a vegetation-free state (inspection road, etc.)	Agricultural Resources and Soils; Vegetation	National Environmental Policy Act
18. Straw wattles, silt curtains, cofferdams, dikes, straw bales, or other suitable erosion control measures shall be used to prevent erosion from entering water bodies during construction.	Water Quality	Clean Water Act of 1972 as amended

CHAPTER 5 – CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

5.1 – Introduction

Reclamation's public involvement process presents the public with opportunities to obtain information about a given project and allows interested parties to participate in the project through written comments. This chapter discusses public involvement activities taken to date for the Proposed Action.

5.2 – Public Involvement

Notice of the public review period and availability of the Draft EA will be distributed to private landowners adjacent to the Proposed Action, and the organizations and agencies listed below. The Draft EA will be made available for public review on Reclamation's website. Publicly available electronic versions of the Draft EA meet the technical standards of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, so that the documents can be accessed by people with disabilities using accessibility software tools. Comments received and Reclamation responses to all comments will be included in the Final EA in **Appendix A**.

Agency
Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Colorado Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
Apache Tribe of Oklahoma
Fort Belknap Indian Community of the Fort Belknap Reservation of Minnesota
Navajo Nation
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Ute Mountain Ute
Colorado River Water Conservation District
Montezuma County Planning and Development

Agency
Montezuma County Road and Bridge
Montezuma County Commissioners
Empire Electric Association
The Journal
114 Landowners adjacent to the Proposed Action

CHAPTER 6 – PREPARERS

The following list contains the individuals who participated in the preparation of this EA.

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CHAPTER 8 – ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation or Acronym	Definition
APE	Area of Potential Effect
ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
CDPHE	Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
CPW	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
CWA	Clean Water Act
EA	Environmental Assessment
EO	Executive Order
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code
MCD	Mancos Conservation District
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
Reclamation	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture

Abbreviation or Acronym	Definition
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey

APPENDIX A – Agency Coordination

