TAOS INDIAN WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT MUTUAL-BENEFIT PROJECTS TS NEPA COMPLIANCE

Public Scoping Meetings
October 2019
WELCOME AND AGENDA

- Sign-in and Open House
- Introductions
- Project Overview Presentation
- Opportunity for Oral Commenting
- Open House and One-on-one Discussions
MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Get your input to help us determine the scope and important issues for analysis in the programmatic National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document
- Provide you with information about:
  - Project background
  - The NEPA process
  - How you can be involved and informed
Taos Indian Water Rights (Abeyta) Settlement Agreement approved by Congress in Claims Resolution Act of 2010

Summary of Settlement Agreement purposes:
- Avoid cost and uncertainty of litigation
- Legally quantify Taos Pueblo’s water rights
- Provide an opportunity to preserve Acequias and protect, develop, and maintain water uses
- Restore and protect Taos Pueblo Buffalo Pasture
- Foster cooperation on water allocation and use in the Taos Valley
Abeyta Settlement Agreement, Article 6, authorizes 14 Mutual-Benefit Projects

- Water supply wells
- Mitigation wells
- For Arroyo Seco Amba Project aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) wells or surface reservoir(s)

- 40-acre grid cells show general area of project locations
  - Specific locations or sites not yet identified for most projects
  - Actual project areas expected to be much smaller
Settlement Parties plan, design, and construct Mutual-Benefit Projects

New Mexico Office of the State Engineer issues well permits and other required permits

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) provides funding through grants
Title V of Claims Resolution Act of 2010 authorizes and directs Reclamation to provide grants for settlement parties to plan, permit, and construct the Mutual-Benefit Projects.

Reclamation is not constructing any Mutual-Benefit Projects and is not the project manager.

In providing the grants, Reclamation must comply with NEPA.
Programmatic NEPA document will analyze general effects of funding and constructing the Mutual-Benefit Projects within certain 40-acre grid cells.

This analysis will streamline and support future NEPA compliance.

Will also analyze a “no action” alternative, meaning no federal funding assistance.

NEPA analysis will not re-open the provisions of the Abeyta Settlement Agreement.

This programmatic NEPA document is one of many NEPA analyses that Reclamation will complete before wells are put into production.
Public Scoping and Data Collection (Oct. 7-Nov. 20, 2019)

Describe and Analyze Effects of Alternatives

Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA)/Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Public Review and Comment Period on Draft PEA/FONSI (Spring 2020)

Final PEA/FONSI if no significant impacts found (Spring 2020)

Distribute Final PEA/FONSI (Spring 2020)

Implement decision, including further site-specific NEPA and permitting

THIS PROGRAMMATIC NEPA PROCESS
What topics are of greatest concern to you?
Are there additional topics that should be considered
What measures do you think would help reduce or avoid impacts?
Can you suggest any information resources?
The scoping comment period closes November 20, 2019

Comment at the meetings via comment card or oral commenting

To provide comments after the meetings:
- Email: BOR-sha-AAOTaosNEPA@usbr.gov
- Mail: Bureau of Reclamation
  Attn: Rebecca Braz
  555 Broadway NE, Suite 100
  Albuquerque, NM 87102
- Sign up to provide oral comments at the sign-in station
- Attendees will be called in the order they signed up
- Speaking time is limited to three minutes
- We will take notes of comments
- To ensure accurate characterization of your comment, we encourage you to also submit a written comment tonight or during the comment period
Thank you for your interest in the Taos Indian Water Rights Settlement Mutual-Benefit Projects NEPA Analysis!