



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
and
DECISION RECORD

EASTSIDE REUSE SYSTEM
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PRO-EA-FY26-002

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION – UPPER COLORADO REGION
PROVO AREA OFFICE; PROVO, UTAH

1.0 Background and Introduction

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) was founded in 1902 under the Reclamation Act (Public Law [P.L.] 57-161) to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in the Western United States. Reclamation is the nation's largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydropower. One of Reclamation's priorities is to work in partnership with states, Tribes, water and power customers, and others to seek creative and collaborative solutions to Western water issues.

The Washington County Water Conservancy District (District) is a not-for-profit public agency, organized by the Fifth Judicial District Court in St. George on November 28, 1962, under the Utah Water Conservancy District Act (Utah Code Annotated § 17B-2a1001 et seq.). The District is charged under state law with conserving, developing, managing, and stabilizing water supplies for the citizens of Washington County.

A major component of the District's plan to meet future water demand is contingent on reusing the water used inside homes and businesses. Currently about 40% of Washington County's annual water supplies are used indoors, and about 90% of that water is collected and returned to water reclamation facilities. The District, in partnership with the Ash Creek Special Service District, proposes to construct and operate facilities to deliver reuse water for multiple uses in the communities of La Verkin and Toquerville, Utah.

Congress directed Reclamation to promote development of water reuse projects under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, P.L. 117-58, signed November 15, 2021. Pursuant to this authority, Reclamation awarded the District funds through its Large-Scale Water Recycling Projects Competitive Grant Program for the Eastside Reuse System (Proposed Action).

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related statutes, Reclamation prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the environmental impacts from implementing one of these two alternatives:

- Under the No Action Alternative, the Reclamation would not provide grant funding for the Proposed Action, which would not be built. The District would continue current operations and conservation programs and may implement future planned projects.
- Under the Preferred Alternative, the District would 1) augment potable water supplies by conveying non-potable reuse water to irrigation users in exchange for current irrigation sources to be used as potable supply, and 2) supplement secondary irrigation deliveries with non-potable reuse water. To achieve these objectives, the District would construct the following facilities:
 - Confluence Park Water Reclamation Facility to La Verkin Pond Pipeline
 - La Verkin Pond
 - La Verkin Pond to Toquerville Secondary Water System Pipeline and Pump Station
 - Toquerville Secondary Water System Pond to Chief Toquer Reservoir Pump Station
 - Advanced Water Purification Demonstration Facility

2.0 Environmental Commitments

Environmental commitments, also known as environmental protection measures, are outlined in Appendix B of the final EA. The District would implement environmental protection measures as part of the Preferred Alternative.

3.0 Finding of No Significant Impact Determination

Based upon the review of the analysis in PRO-EA-FY26-002, and in accordance with 42 U.S. Code § 4336 (e) (7), under NEPA, Reclamation has determined that an environmental impact statement is not needed for this proposed action. The selected Preferred Alternative will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment as defined in NEPA. This determination has been made by considering factors outlined in 516 DM 1 – U.S. Department of the Interior Handbook of NEPA implementing procedures, namely:

Both short- and long-term effects

The referenced EA includes analysis of short- and long-term effects on the identified issues and discussion of reasonably foreseeable environmental trends and planned actions in relation to those issues. None of the impacts from the Preferred Alternative are expected to rise to the level of significance.

Both beneficial and adverse effects

Potentially beneficial and adverse impacts related to the Preferred Alternative are disclosed and analyzed in Chapter 3 of the EA in the Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences sections, by each resource topic. None of these effects are determined to be significant.

Beneficial impacts to communities, irrigators, and municipalities are likely to develop over the coming years as water use patterns change. Adverse effects, although considered to be minimal, would also take place over time, yet the potential for adverse impacts to the resources examined in the EA have not been determined to be significant.

Effects on public health and safety

Effects on public health and safety are discussed throughout the EA and have not been found to be significant based on the nature of the Preferred Alternative analysis.

Economic effects

Implementing the Preferred Alternative would not result in significant adverse or beneficial economic impacts, but would likely be in concert with ongoing development in the project area, as described in the EA. The proposed project is not expected to cause large impacts (positive or negative) on employment or to area populations. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative in and of itself is not anticipated to cause significant impact to or substantially increase demand for local government services, infrastructure, or housing. The project is intended to maintain reliability and availability of water to the affected communities while facilitating more efficient use of water.

Effects on the quality of life of the American people.

The quality of life of the American people in the project area would continue to persist because water reuse would allow the District to continue to meet water needs of the American people in the area.

4.0 Decision Record

The NEPA process is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on an understanding of environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment. Reclamation has considered all relevant information raised in the NEPA process, which is now closed. Therefore, based on the information contained in the EA Number PRO-EA-FY26-002, and all other information available to me at this time, it is my decision to approve the implementation of the Preferred Alternative as described in the subject EA consistent with the above Finding of No Significant Impact determination.

Rick Baxter
Area Manager