

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Albuquerque Area Office
Albuquerque, New Mexico

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Reclamation's Funding for Bluewater Acres Water System
Improvements Project, Cibola County, New Mexico



Manager, Environment Division

Date 4/26/11



Area Manager, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Date 4/26/11

FONSI Number: AAO-11-004



Summary of the Proposed Action

The Albuquerque Area Office (AAO) has received a request for funding from the Bluewater Acres Mutual Domestic Water Users Association, in accordance with the Reclamation Emergency Drought Program, to provide additional water capacity for fire protection and increase distribution system pressure.

Reclamation has adopted the contractor's prepared Bluewater Acres Mutual Domestic Water Users Association's Environmental Report/Assessment (EA) titled Bluewater Acres Water System Improvements Project, Cibola County, New Mexico, and is independently preparing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). This adoption of another document is done in accordance with 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500.4(n), 516 DM 3.6) where Federal Agencies shall reduce excessive paperwork by adopting appropriate environmental documents prepared by other agencies.

Background

The proposed project involves the construction of infrastructure needed to safely and efficiently distribute water in Bluewater Acres (Bluewater). The town is located approximately 17 miles northwest of Grants, New Mexico along New Mexico State Highway 612. The project occurs on Bluewater Acres land in Cibola County, New Mexico and is located on the Pine Hill at approximately 7,425 to 7,600 feet in elevation. The proposed project will include a new 105,000 gallon water storage tank and approximately 1.17 miles of new water lines to distribute water to local residents. All the replacement lines and tank will be sited in the same locations as the existing infrastructure and be constructed on private land and previously disturbed public right-of-ways.

Environmental Impacts and Commitments

The following resources were evaluated in detail in the Environmental Report/Assessment: land use, floodplains, wetlands, cultural resources, biological resources, water quality, coastal resources, socioeconomics and environmental justice, climate and air quality, noise and visual impacts and other resources. The following resources are discussed further:

Land Use

There is no farm land within or adjacent to the project area. None of the soils in the project area are considered to be prime or unique farmland. No impacts to the land are expected, therefore no effects.

Floodplains

All project activities are located outside the 100 year floodplain. No impact, therefore no effect.

Wet lands

No wetlands are located in the project area, no impacts therefore no effect.



Cultural Resources

No impacts to cultural resources are expected from the development of the proposed action. A cultural resources/archaeological survey was completed, no archaeological sites were found and it was determined the project would have no effect on cultural resources.

Biological Resources

The project area occurs in developed area adjacent to community roads, much of the proposed project route is previously disturbed.

Threatened and Endangered Plant/Wildlife Species

No impact would occur to endangered, threatened, or sensitive plant species on the designated project land.

Water Quality

A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan are required for the project. Best Management Practices will be implemented and maintained both during and after construction to prevent pollutants in storm water runoff. Ground water contamination will be avoided, no impacts, therefore no effect.

Coastal Resources

Does not apply to New Mexico but mentioned in the original environmental report/assessment completed.

Environmental Justice and Socioeconomics

The proposed action could result in the creation of a small number of jobs for dirt and drilling contractors during the construction and drilling phases of the project. No minority or low-income populations that would be affected by the proposed project have been identified. The proposed action would not result in environmental justice implications.

Air Quality

During construction, there would be temporary increases in suspended dust (sediment transfer), resulting from activities such as vehicle traffic. All construction equipment will be required to use approved emission control devices and limit unnecessary idling. All mitigation measures listed in the EA will be followed.

Noise

Construction noise is expected to be a temporary impact ending when construction is completed. No impact therefore, no effect.

Visual Impact

After Construction of water lines, disturbed areas will be returned to the same appearance as prior to construction; no impacts, therefore no effect.

Indian Trust Assets

No ITAs have been identified in the Project area. There are no reservations or ceded lands



present. Because ITAs have not been identified in the affected areas, Reclamation determined there will be no impacts as a result from the proposed action.

Other Resources

Public health and Safety, Energy, and Transportation were all evaluated. Due to short term construction activities, it was determined no impacts, therefore no effect.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impact are defined as the impacts that result from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other action. Cumulative impact also can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

The proposed water system improvements are designed for greater capacity than the existing water system. This increased capacity will safely allow for more water capacity for fire protection and increase system distribution pressure. This project may encourage future residents to connect to the community water system. There are no other projects planned within Bluewater Acres. The project is not expected to stimulate growth in the project area.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis present in the EA, Reclamation finds that there would be no significant impacts associated with the proposed action. Reclamation makes this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and the Council on Environmental Quality implementing regulations (40 CFR 1500). Reclamation has determined that the proposed action does not constitute a major Federal action that would significantly affect the human environment. Therefore, no environmental impact statement will be prepared for this proposal.

