

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## **Finding of No Significant Impact for the Fontenelle Community Renovation, Seedskaadee Project, Lincoln County, Wyoming Environmental Assessment**



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Upper Colorado Region and Power Office

8/12/2010

## **Introduction**

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Power Office has conducted an environmental assessment (EA) of a proposed action to build new housing in the Seedskaadee Community. Reclamation is responsible for managing land and community and is the lead agency for the purposes of compliance with the NEPA for this proposed action. There were no cooperating agencies for this environmental assessment.

The EA was prepared by Reclamation to improve living and working conditions for employees at the Seedskaadee Project. This action is needed because there is insufficient housing for employees working at the Seedskaadee Project and the extant housing is not up to current building and energy efficiency standards. In addition, there are problems with the extant sewage system and the proposal will resolve these local problems for Seedskaadee Project workers and contractors.

## **Alternatives**

The EA analyzed the no action alternative and the proposed action alternative of building four new houses and a 3-plex within the existing Seedskaadee Community in Lincoln County, Wyoming. Other work includes restoring a road with curb and gutter. Also, a new sewage disposal system, including a septic tank(s) and drain field, will be developed.

My decision is to implement the proposed action. Mitigation measures that are integral to the alternative are described in the contract that will be issued and are listed in the EA as part of the proposed action.

## **Related NEPA Documents**

This EA is not tiered off any final environmental impact statement or resource management plan. There are no other environmental assessments currently being prepared or that will be prepared that are related to, but not part of the scope of this EA.

## **Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact**

My decision was made after carefully weighing economic, social, and technical considerations, as well as the potentially significant environmental effects

analyzed in the EA, and after reviewing comments and concerns of agencies, tribes, organizations, and individuals. I have determined that the project will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment as defined by 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This finding is based on consideration of the context and intensity as summarized here.

**Context**

As described in the EA, the affected locality is located on the west bank of the Green River in southwestern Wyoming, about 24 miles southeast of La Barge, Wyoming. Affected interests include the employees and contractors who work at the Seedskadee Project. Table 1 lists the predicted short-term effects of the proposed action.

Table 1. Short-term Predicted Effects of the Proposed Action.

Issue	Proposed Action
Wildlife	Minimal to no changes to wildlife
Vegetation and Weeds	No change or slight improvement due to landscaping
Water Quality	No change due to BMPs and stormwater pollution prevention plan
Air Quality and Noise	Minor increase during construction, but should be offset by reduction in employee and contractor travel once the project is completed
Historic Properties	No change, no properties present

Long-term effects are expected to be an improvement in the sewage or septic system that currently exists, some visual changes due to the construction of the new housing, but the area is not used by visitors or the public. The greatest long-term effect is a reduction in employee and contractor travel once the project is completed and an improved quality of life for the Seedskadee employees. By using energy efficient heating and cooling systems for the new housing, there should also be a long-term reduction in overall energy use of the employees. The landscaping should also help reduce erosion and improve the local viewscape for employees.

## **Intensity**

The following 10 factors have been considered in determining that effects of the proposed action would not significantly impact the human environment.

### **1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.**

The proposed action would benefit employees and contractors working at the Seedskaadee Project. It will also offer temporary benefits to contracted construction workers. As shown in Table 1, there should be no to minimal, short-term effects during construction on wildlife, water quality, air quality. There will be no effects on historic properties because none are present. There should be either no change or a slight improvement in vegetation and weeds due to landscaping once construction is complete.

Adverse effects will be to air quality during construction and adverse effects also include the use of raw materials to build the new housing such as lumber, concrete, wiring, metals, etc.

### **2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.**

The proposal would have no significant impacts on public health or safety. No minority or low income community would be disproportionately affected by the proposed action.

### **3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area.**

There are no park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas that would be affected by the proposal.

### **4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

Reclamation contacted representatives of state and local governments regarding the proposal and its effects on resources. Based on the responses received, the effects on the proposal on the quality of the human environment are not highly controversial.

### **5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

Some degree of uncertainty is expected due to the absence of final decisions on the sewage or septic system. As described in the EA, there are still several engineering options for handling human waste that have not been determined. However, all options would be built within the existing disturbed area of the compound and the final septic or sewage system will be an improvement over the existing situation.

When uncertainty about impacts to the human environment was identified in the EA, mitigation and monitoring measures were identified and included in the formulation of the proposed alternative and forthcoming contract.

**6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

The action will not establish a precedent.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions which are individually insignificant but cumulatively significant.**

The only cumulative effects are that this project will be built within a previously disturbed area. The project itself is a cumulative action from the original Congressional decision to build and operate the Seedskadee Project as part of the Colorado River Storage Project. The proposed action is unrelated to any reasonably foreseeable federal, state, or local actions.

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect National Register listed historic properties.**

The regional archeologist conducted an intensive pedestrian inventory of the area of potential effects and no cultural resources were found. No consultation was conducted with the State Historic Preservation Officer because of the lack of resources and prior ground disturbance.

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.**

While there are listed species in the county, there are none with the action area of the Seedskadee Community. Reclamation's finding is that there will be "no effect" on any threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

The preferred alternative violates no federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation, or policy.

**Approved:**



Power Office Manager  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

08-12-2010  
Date

