



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Managed Aquifer Recharge

Dodge City, Ford County, Kansas

Oklahoma-Texas Area Office

Interior Region 6: Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas-Gulf

24-32-KS-TXVI

Mission Statements

The U.S. Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; honors 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.

Introduction

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has prepared this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), supported by the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) 24-32-KS-TXVI, for Dodge City's (City) Reclaimed Water Distribution System in Ford County, Kansas. This EA evaluates the Proposed Action, which would obligate Federal funds to a financial assistance agreement for the completion of facility improvements including the construction of a new Reuse Wastewater Treatment Plant (Reuse WWTP), new pump station, and force main water pipeline that will connect the new Reuse WWTP to the proposed new outfall structure along the dry Arkansas Riverbed at Dodge City (Proposed Action).

Funding for the Proposed Action is authorized by the Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Program (Title XVI) under P.L. 102-575, providing up to \$30 million, but not exceeding 25% of the total cost for planning, design, and/or construction. Reclamation is providing the project funding and is designated as the lead agency to ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, 43 CFR Part 46, and 516 DM 1 in relation to the Proposed Action.

EA 24-32-KS-TXVI has been developed in accordance with NEPA, as amended, and specifically addresses the potential impacts on the human environment resulting from the implementation of the Proposed Action.

Background

Addressing a declining aquifer supply is key to sustainability in Dodge City and southwest Kansas. This Project focuses on the long-term security of the declining groundwater supply. Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) is one strategy that will contribute to the sustainable production of water for the community. MAR uses various techniques to intentionally recharge aquifers, supplementing natural recharge processes. These methods can be broadly categorized into gravity-based and injection-based techniques. Gravity-based methods rely on the natural flow of water, while injection-based methods directly inject water into the aquifer.

This MAR project uses a gravity-based method and will take water treated by the new Dodge City Reuse WWTP and transmit the treated effluent approximately 12 miles to the dry Arkansas Riverbed on the south side of Dodge City. Functioning as an aquifer recharge basin, the Arkansas Riverbed will filter, and transport treated effluent flows back into the Ogallala Aquifer. Water reuse through MAR is a proactive and sustainable way to bolster the aquifer's long-term viability, resiliency, and will replenish groundwater resources at existing city wells.

The Project will play a key role in serving the population and industry in Dodge City. The project is not on any federal facility or involving federal land.

Alternatives Considered

The EA 24-32-KS-TXVI analyzed the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action, which would provide federal funding to assist in the construction of the Dodge City Water Reclamation & Reuse Project. The No Action Alternative reflects future conditions without the Proposed Action and serves as a basis of comparison for evaluating potential effects to the human environment.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not provide federal funding to assist in the construction of the City of Dodge City Water Reclamation & Reuse Project and alternative long-range plans would need to be developed to ensure drought resilience and sustainable water supplies are available.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, Reclamation would provide federal grant funds under the authority of the Title XVI of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act for design and construction of the City of Dodge City's Water Reclamation & Reuse Project.

The proposed MAR project will discharge treated wastewater effluent into the dry, Arkansas Riverbed which will recharge the Ogallala Aquifer and replenish groundwater resources at existing city wells. An upgrade of Dodge City's existing wastewater treatment process is necessary to provide an acceptable level of treatment so that treated effluent can be introduced into the aquifer according to MAR guidelines and Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) regulations.

Conceptual treatment alternatives were evaluated for compatibility with existing MAR regulations, and hydrogeologic conditions were evaluated to determine the impact of treated wastewater recharging the aquifer. Preliminary estimates indicated up to approximately 90 percent of the water recharged will be recovered in the geographic area covered by the existing Dodge City wellfield.

The Project includes the construction and operation of three main components:

- 1) Reuse WWTP and new pump station,
- 2) 18-inch diameter force main water pipeline, and
- 3) An outfall along the Arkansas River.

Environmental Commitments

Environmental commitments are environmental protection measures to avoid and/or mitigate potentially adverse effects of the Proposed Action. The commitments shall be implemented as detailed specified in Chapter 3 of the EA, with key commitments summarized in this FONSI, and are considered integral part of the Proposed Action.

1. Construction will conform to all KDHE construction standards.
2. Construction within a Floodplain permit would be obtained from the floodplain administrator prior to the start of construction.
3. A State Action Permit application would be submitted to KDWP for the portion of the Project occurring within the designated critical habitat for the eastern spotted skunk.
4. In the unlikely event historic properties are encountered during construction activities, Dodge City shall immediately suspend all work in the vicinity of the discovery and notify the Bureau of Reclamation. Construction shall not resume in the affected area until the Section 106 consultation process, as required under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), has been completed in coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and any necessary protective measures have been implemented.
5. If any species currently proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act become officially listed, the appropriate evaluations and coordination will be conducted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in accordance with applicable regulations.
6. Any significant changes in the scope of the Project will require notification to Reclamation and potential additional NEPA compliance.

Findings

In compliance with the NEPA, Reclamation assessed the potential short-term and long-term effects of the Proposed Action, considering both beneficial and adverse effects. Table 3.1 of the EA presents a summary of resources that were dismissed from further analysis, such as Wild and Scenic Rivers, along with the rationale for their exclusion. A detailed summary of these reasonably foreseeable effects is found in Table 4.1 of the EA, which provides justification for why the impacts related to the Proposed Action are deemed not significant concerning the affected environment and the magnitude of effects associated with the action. With key findings summarizes below.

Cultural Resources

The proposed project qualifies as an undertaking as defined by 36 CFR § 800.16(y) and represents an activity that may impact historic properties, necessitating compliance with Title 54 USC § 306108, commonly referred to as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended. The area of potential effects (APE) encompasses all construction, access, and staging activities required for the proposed action.

A Phase I cultural resources background review and a Phase II archaeological survey were conducted and documented in the Archaeological Survey Report dated May 2025. On May 23, 2025, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) of the Kansas Historical Society concurred that the project will have no effect on historic properties.

Threatened and Endangered Species

A habitat assessment field survey for protected species was conducted on March 31, 2025, to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed project on state and federally protected species and their designated critical habitats. Following review of the survey results and in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), Reclamation has determined that the proposed action will have no effect on any federally listed species. Therefore, no further consultation under Section 7 of the ESA is required.

However, potential habitat was identified within the proposed action area for the state-listed Eastern Spotted Skunk (*Spilogale putorius*); resulting in a determination of may affect but not likely to adversely affect. A State Action permit application will be submitted to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks by the City for project activities occurring within designated critical habitat for the Eastern Spotted Skunk.

Additionally, it was concluded that the project will have no effect on any designated Critical Habitat under the amended ESA of 1973 (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.) and will result in no take of birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. § 703 et seq.).

Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.

A wetland delineation survey conducted on March 31, 2025, identified eight water features within the project area, including one palustrine emergent wetland and two streams. Of these, five are potentially jurisdictional, while three are likely non-jurisdictional.

Construction of the project is not anticipated to result in significant adverse effects to wetland or stream resources. The Reuse WWTP footprint is entirely within uplands and is not expected to cause any temporary or permanent adverse impacts to streams or wetlands. Construction of the outfall structure and placement of riprap along the Arkansas River is expected to result in less than 0.1 acre of permanent impact. Compensatory mitigation for the project was deemed unnecessary.

Conclusion

Based on the EA and Reclamation's independent evaluation and verification of the environmental analysis, which meets bureau standards and complies with NEPA, including the methodologies, Reclamation finds that the Project is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

The EA describes the existing environmental resources at the location of the Project and evaluates the reasonably foreseeable effects of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives. The EA was prepared in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act, 43 CFR Part 46, and Department of the Interior Handbook (516 DM 1).

The following outlines the rationale for the assessment that the Proposed Action would not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment:

- i. The Proposed Action will not result in significant short-term and long-term effects (516 DM 1 Section 1.2(b)(2)(i)).
- ii. The Proposed Action will have beneficial effects, and the adverse effects are not significant (516 DM 1 Section 1.2(b)(2)(ii)).
- iii. The Proposed Action will not significantly affect public health and safety (516 DM 1 Section 1.2(b)(2)(iii)).
- iv. The Proposed Action will not result in significant economic effects (516 DM 1 Section 1.2(b)(2)(iv)).
- v. The Proposed Action will not result in significant effects on the quality of life of the American people (516 DM 1 Section 1.2(b)(2)(v)).

Approved by: _____

JOHN BUTTELMAN

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