

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
FOR THE  
RENEWAL OF THE WATER SERVICE CONTRACT  
FOR THE FEATHER WATER DISTRICT**

**AUGUST 9, 2005**

**CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT  
CALIFORNIA**

The Mid-Pacific Region of the Bureau of Reclamation has found that implementation of the proposed action to renew the water service contract with the Feather Water District will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. The renewal will be for 25 years, and the contract period will extend from March 1, 2005, to February 28, 2030. The Environmental Assessment (EA) that is incorporated by reference supports this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Section 3409 of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) stipulates that Reclamation must prepare appropriate environmental review for renewal of long-term water service contracts. Reclamation initially prepared a draft EA in May of 2003 and revised it in August 2003 following a 30-day public review period, and again in August 2004 for an additional 30-day comment period. Comments received in the public review of those documents have been incorporated and are presented in the current August 2005 final EA.

Reclamation has prepared the EA to determine if renewing the Feather Water District long-term water service contract would result in any significant impacts to the human environment. This EA has been prepared pursuant to and in accordance with Section 102 (2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 USC§ 4321-4370d), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations on implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Reclamation's NEPA handbook (Bureau of Reclamation 1990).

The proposed action is the execution of a long-term contract between the United States and the Feather Water District for 25 years. The purpose of this action is to renew the Feather Water District water service contract providing for project water service from the Sacramento River Division consistent with the provisions of CVPIA.

Long-term contract renewal is needed to:

- Continue beneficial use of water, developed and managed as part of the Central Valley Project (CVP), with a reasonable balance among competing demands, including the needs of irrigation and domestic uses; fish and wildlife protection, restoration, and mitigation; fish and

- wildlife enhancement; power generation; recreation; and other water uses consistent with requirements imposed by the State Water Resources Control Board and the CVPIA;
- Incorporate certain administrative conditions into the renewed contract to ensure CVP continued compliance with current Federal reclamation law and other applicable statutes; and
- Allow the continued reimbursement to the Federal government for costs related to CVP construction and operation.

## FINDINGS

In accordance with NEPA and its implementing regulations and consistent with the analysis in the Feather Water District Long-Term Water Service Contract Renewal EA, Reclamation has found that implementation of the proposed action will result in no significant impact to the quality of the human environment. This finding is supported by the following factors:

1. **Water Resources.** Renewal of the long-term contract will not change contract water quantities from the quantities in the existing contract and, therefore, will not cause any increased use. There will be no effect on surface water supplies or quality. For the same reason, renewal of the long-term contract will not result in any growth-inducing impacts that will increase water demand during the time frame of this renewal.
2. **Land Use.** The renewal of the contract will not provide for additional water supplies that could act as an incentive for conversion of native habitat for increased acreage of agricultural production or other activities. The amount and types of crops will vary according to the annual water allocation and farming practices, and a small quantity of irrigation use may be changed to other purposes where the existing contract and governing laws and regulations allow. Therefore, there will be no significant effect on land uses.
3. **Biological Resources.** The amount and timing of storage at CVP reservoirs and flows in rivers and streams that convey CVP water during the contract renewal period are expected to be similar to the amount and timing of storage and flows under historic CVP operations and will be in conformance with all existing biological opinions and with regulatory requirements. Renewal of the long-term contract will not cause changes in existing programs to protect biological resources and programs will continue to be implemented to ensure that no significant impacts to biological resources will occur. Because there will be no significant effect on, or changes to, land or water use, there will be no significant effect on biological resources.
4. **Threatened and Endangered Species.** The proposed long-term contract renewal will continue the deliveries of CVP water to the Feather Water District. It will not change or alter habitat use by, or populations of, species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered that are known to occur or have the potential to occur in the contractor's service area. Thus this action results in no significant impact to listed species. Reclamation has consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fisheries (NOAA Fisheries). Results of these consultations were considered in finalizing the Environmental Assessment and executing this FONSI. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided Reclamation a letter on August 17, 2004, which concluded informal consultation for

long-term renewal of contracts including the Feather Water District with a finding that the proposed contract renewal is not likely to adversely affected listed species or critical habitat.

NOAA Fisheries provided a final Biological Opinion (BO) dated July 28, 2005. NOAA Fisheries concluded that the contract renewal is not likely to adversely affect the essential fish habitat of Pacific salmon identified by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act. NOAA Fisheries also concluded that the contract renewal is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the listed Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead, or adversely modify their designated or proposed critical habitat. As a consequence of contract renewal, however, NOAA Fisheries anticipates incidental take of Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead due to entrainment at the northern and southern diversion pumps and by causing injury or death from exposure to contaminated agricultural discharge and increased water turbidity and water temperature. Although it has been determined that the level of take is not likely to jeopardize these species' continued existence, Reclamation has committed to following the terms and conditions identified in the BO. These terms and conditions include measures to minimize salmonid injury and mortality during the contract period to the maximum extent practicable. The measures include:

- Coordinating with the Feather Water District and with NOAA Fisheries to minimize pumping of CVP replaced water from the Feather River, to the maximum extent practicable, during the months of May and June to minimize entrainment of juvenile salmonids, until the diversion pumps are screened in accordance with NOAA Fisheries fish screen criteria.
- Coordinating with the Feather Water District, NOAA Fisheries, and the California Department of Fish and Game to conduct fish entrainment monitoring at the pumping stations.
- Utilizing programs within Reclamation's authority to develop and implement water use efficiency projects with the Feather Water District and other Central Valley water contractors to minimize water demand and the amount of water withdrawn from anadromous fish habitat.
- Developing and implementing a real-time juvenile salmonid monitoring program in the lower Feather River in cooperation and with assistance from the California Department of Water Resources, the California Department of Fish and Game, and NOAA Fisheries in order to adaptively manage water deliveries and diversions with the objective of minimizing entrainment of juvenile salmonids at the pumping facilities.

5. Cultural Resources. The proposed action will not cause activities that could affect cultural resources, such as permanent changes in reservoir elevations, development of native habitat for agricultural or other use, or the construction of any new facilities. No impacts to cultural resources are expected.

6. **Recreation Resources.** The proposed action will not cause changes in historic CVP operations that determine reservoir storage or the amount or timing of water deliveries. Therefore, no impacts to recreational resources are anticipated.

7. **Demographics and Environmental Justice.** The proposed action will not cause changes in historical water supplies or CVP operations and, as a result, no changes in population and the various indicators of social well-being will result from the contract renewal. The proposed action will support continued agricultural production and, therefore, will not cause changes to employment of minority and low-income populations. No disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations are expected to occur as a result of renewing this contract.

8. **Indian Trust Assets.** Continued delivery of project water under the existing contract will not affect any Indian trust assets because existing rights will not be affected, no physical changes to existing facilities are proposed, and no new facilities are proposed.

9. **Economic Resources.** The renewal of the long-term CVP contract will not cause changes from the existing contract in deliveries or pricing of CVP water, CVP facilities operations, CVP power generation and use, or recreation use and, therefore, will not cause economic impacts.

Information about the EA prepared for the proposed action or this FONSI may be obtained from Basia Trout, Bureau of Reclamation, 530-528-0512.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
MID-PACIFIC REGION  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AREA OFFICE  
SHASTA LAKE, CALIFORNIA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Long-Term Water Service Contract Renewal  
for the Feather Water District  
Central Valley Project

Sacramento, California

FONSI NO. NC-04-06

Recommended: *[Signature]* 8/9/05  
Environmental Officer Date  
Northern California Area Office

Approved: *[Signature]* 8/15/05  
Area Manager Date  
Northern California Area Office

Concur: *[Signature]* 8/9/05  
*Deputy*  
*acting* Regional Environmental Officer Date  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office