

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

**Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

## **Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District 5-year Warren Act Contract for Kings River Water**

**FONSI-17-030**



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
South-Central California Area Office

**September 2017**

## **Mission Statements**

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

**BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**  
**South-Central California Area Office, Fresno, California**

**FONSI-17-030**

**Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District 5-  
year Warren Act Contract for Kings  
River Water**

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## Introduction

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for the Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District 5-Year Warren Act Agreement for Kings River Water. This draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA)-178-030, *Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District 5-year Warren Act Agreement for Kings River Water*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

No final decision shall be made on the FONSI until public review has been completed and comments, if any, considered.

## Background

The Friant-Kern Canal transports water for the Friant Division of the Central Valley Project (CVP), operated by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). Project water originates from the San Joaquin River, which is stored in Millerton Reservoir. The CVP water released in to the Friant-Kern Canal is used to meet the irrigation and municipal and industrial needs of 27 Friant division CVP contractors.

In recent years, California has experienced droughts that have reduced water supplies to many water districts. As a result of the drought, as well as environmental and regulatory restrictions, Friant Division CVP water service contractors received unprecedented zero percent water supply allocations in 2014 and 2015. The zero allocation follows previous dry years in 2012 and 2013, in which Friant Division CVP contractors received 57 and 62 percent of their Class 1 contract supply, respectively (Reclamation, 2017).

In order to continue meeting their customers' needs, affected contractors are pursuing a range of additional water supplies, such as transfers, pumped groundwater, and other surface water sources.

Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District (Lindsay-Strathmore) is located in Tulare County, and is a Friant Division CVP Contractor (Figure 1). During Contract Years 2014 and 2015, Lindsay-Strathmore had to rely on its non-CVP Kaweah River water (covered under separate Warren Act Agreement) to meet its agricultural and domestic water demands. The available supply of this water was not sufficient to meet those demands. Lindsay-Strathmore also has a Warren Act agreement to pump groundwater into the Friant-Kern Canal (up to 3,000 acre-feet), but groundwater subsidence issues and new State of California regulations may curtail future deliveries of this water. To supplement their water supply portfolio, Lindsay-Strathmore intends to participate in programs with Corcoran Irrigation Company (Corcoran) that will provide Lindsay-Strathmore with Kings River water (hereafter referred to as non-CVP water). In order to receive this non-CVP water, Lindsay-Strathmore has requested approval from Reclamation to introduce and convey their purchase non-CVP water in the Friant-Kern Canal.

## **Proposed Action**

### **Warren Act Agreement**

Reclamation proposes to issue a 5-year Warren Act agreement to Lindsay-Strathmore for the introduction and conveyance of up to 8,000 AF per year of non-CVP water that will be obtained from Corcoran. This agreement would end February 28, 2022. This non-CVP water would be introduced into the Friant-Kern Canal at Milepost 29.10 (Figure 1) from the pumping station owned by Delta Lands Reclamation District No. 770 (Delta Lands). From this point on the Friant-Kern Canal, the non-CVP water is conveyed down the canal to Lindsay-Strathmore's sole delivery point at Milepost 85.55 (Figure 1). Lindsay-Strathmore is also requesting that Milepost 29.10 be added to its list of approved Points of Introduction to the Friant-Kern Canal.

The non-CVP water would only be introduced into the Friant-Kern Canal only when there is excess capacity available, as determined by Reclamation.

No ground disturbance or modification of existing facilities would be needed to complete the Proposed Action.

### **Operational Transfer**

A transfer from Corcoran to Alta Irrigation District (Alta), both non-CVP contractors, would be necessary, as part of the Proposed Action. Corcoran will continue to use Kings River water and other supplies. Alta will convey Corcoran's Kings River water to the Delta Lands pumping station.

### **Environmental Commitments**

Lindsay-Strathmore shall implement the environmental protection measures listed in Table 1 of EA-17-030 to reduce environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action.

Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

## **Findings**

Reclamation's finding that implementation of the Proposed Action will result in no significant impact to the quality of the human environment is supported by the following findings:

### **Resources Eliminated from Detailed Analysis**

As described in Table 2 of EA-17-030, Reclamation analyzed the affected environment and determined that the Proposed Action does not have the potential to cause direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse effects to the following resources: air quality, cultural resources, environmental justice, global climate change, Indian Sacred Sites, Indian Trust Assets, land use, recreation, or socioeconomic resources.

### **Biological Resources**

The Proposed Action would involve the diversion of 8,000 acre-feet of water from the Kings River, for delivery to Lindsay-Strathmore annually over a 5-year period. The Proposed Action would not involve any construction or changes in land use. The water involved in the Proposed

Action would be used to support existing uses within Lindsay Strathmore Irrigation District and would not be used to convert fallowed lands or lands that have been untilled for three or more years. No native lands would be cultivated as a result of the Proposed Action. With the implementation of the environmental commitments included in Table 3, Reclamation has determined that the Proposed Action would result in No Effect to proposed or listed species or Critical Habitat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq.), and there would be No Take of birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. §703 et seq.).

### **Water Resources**

The Proposed Action would allow non-CVP Kings River water purchased from Corcoran to be conveyed in CVP facilities when excess capacity is available. This would allow the water to be delivered to Lindsay-Strathmore's service areas for agricultural use. There would be no modification of the Friant-Kern Canal.

The Kings River water is already allocated for use. Corcoran would meet its water needs with water from the State Water Project. The Proposed Action does not represent a new diversion of the water, or a new water right, but an alternate use for existing supply.

The total quantity of water that would be conveyed in the Friant-Kern Canal under the Proposed Action would be limited to 8,000 AF/year through February 28, 2023. The quantity of water pumped into the Friant-Kern Canal would be delivered (less conveyance losses) and used for irrigation purposes. Some of the irrigation water would be lost to evapotranspiration, and some would also percolate back into the aquifer.

Non-CVP water introduced into the Friant-Kern Canal must meet Reclamation's then-current Policy for Accepting Non-Project Water in Friant Division Facilities prior to approval for conveyance (Appendix B). If testing shows that the water does not meet then-current standards, the contractors would not be allowed to discharge into the Friant-Kern Canal until water quality concerns are addressed. This testing program is anticipated to adequately protect the quality of water and limit degradation of other users' supplies.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

Cumulative impacts result from incremental impacts of the Proposed Action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment.

### **Biological Resources**

As the Proposed Action is not expected to result in any direct or indirect impacts to biological resources, there would be no cumulative impacts.

### **Water Resources**

The Friant-Kern Canal is used to convey water for a variety of users from a variety of sources. The quality of water being introduced is tested regularly in order to limit the potential for degradation of mixed water supplies. This testing program is anticipated to adequately protect

the quality of water in the Friant-Kern Canal from the cumulative effects of this and other water conveyance actions.

Although capacity in the Friant-Kern Canal is limited, Friant Water Authority and Reclamation actively operate it in order to balance competing demands. Non-CVP water such as the water which would be conveyed under the Proposed Action has a lower priority than CVP water. Therefore the Proposed Action is not anticipated to cause conflicts or create other cumulative impacts to Friant-Kern Canal operations.