

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## Finding Of No Significant Impact

# Loma Rica Hydroelectric Generating Facility

## WaterSMART Water Energy and Efficiency Grant

FONSI 17-30-MP

Recommended by:



Douglas Kleinsmith  
Natural Resource Specialist  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date: 10/17/17

Concurred by:



Brad Hubbard  
Acting Chief, Resources Management Division  
Central California Area Office

Date: 10/24/17

Approved by:



Drew Lessard  
Area Manager  
Central California Area Office

Date: 10/25/17



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mid-Pacific Region

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# **1 Background**

Through WaterSMART Water Energy and Efficiency Grants, Reclamation provides 50/50 cost share funding to irrigation and water districts, Tribes, States and other entities with water or power delivery authority to conserve and use water more efficiently, increase the use of renewable energy, protect endangered species, or facilitate water markets. Nevada Irrigation District (NID) would like to maximize hydropower potential from their Banner-Cascade Pipeline which feeds into their Loma Rica Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to help reduce electrical costs within the system and to provide a potential source of income to NID. Therefore, NID applied to Reclamation and received a \$285,000 2014 WaterSMART Water Energy and Efficiency Grant (Number R14AP00168) to help fund construction and operation of a hydroelectric generation station near NID'S WTP. The project is 3 miles east of Grass Valley in Nevada County.

The environmental assessment (EA) was available for public review on August 31, 2017. The review period ended on September 15, 2017. No comments were received on the EA.

## **2 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action**

### **2.1 No Action**

Under No Action, Reclamation would not award a WaterSMART Water Energy and Efficiency Grant to partially fund NID to construct and operate a hydroelectric generation station near the WTP.

### **2.2 Proposed Action**

Under the Proposed Action, Reclamation would award a WaterSMART Water Energy and Efficiency Grant to partially fund NID to construct and operate a hydroelectric generation station near the WTP. The grant would provide \$285,000 of the \$3.8 million project.

A concrete building would enclose a turbine and generator capable of producing up to 1.4 megawatts and would allow NID to maximize hydropower potential, help offset electrical costs within the system and provide a potential source of income for NID. The facility would take advantage of existing piping and flow that was constructed for the Banner Cascade Pipeline project completed in 2012. As the proposed hydroelectric generating facility would generate far more electric power than needed by the Loma Rica WTP, the excess electrical power would be sold to Pacific Gas and Electric Company or other similar power companies. This would assist NID in recovering a portion of its annual operating costs for these facilities.

### 3 Findings

Based on the attached EA, Reclamation finds that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary. The EA describes the existing environmental resources in the area of the Proposed Action, and evaluates the effects of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives on the resources near the WTP. This EA was prepared in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior regulations (43 CFR Part 46). Effects on environmental resources were examined and found to be absent or minor. That analysis is provided in the attached EA, and the analysis in the EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

Following are the reasons why the impacts of the proposed action are not significant:

1. The proposed action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)).
2. The proposed action will not significantly impact natural resources and unique geographical characteristics such as historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order (EO) 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3) and 43 CFR 46.215(b)).
3. The proposed action will not have possible effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).
4. The proposed action will neither establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).
5. There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
6. The proposed action will not have significant cumulative impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
7. The proposed action will not adversely affect any districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)). Pursuant to 54 USC § 306108, commonly known as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800, Reclamation

determined the undertaking has no potential to cause effects on historic properties and therefore, will result in no significant impacts to cultural resources.

8. The proposed action will not affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).

9. The proposed action will not violate Federal, state, tribal or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).

10. The proposed action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).

11. Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898).

12. The proposed action will not limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007 and 512 DM 3).