

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Finding Of No Significant Impact

Stockdale East Groundwater Recharge Project – Rosedale – Rio Bravo Water Storage District

FONSI 17-12-MP

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1 Background

In accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze impacts of granting a WaterSMART Water Use Efficiency Grant to the Rosedale – Rio Bravo Water Storage District (district) for its Stockdale East Groundwater Recharge Project.

The Proposed Action would take place approximately 6 miles west of the City of Bakersfield. The Proposed Action involves construction of the Stockdale East Recharge Ponds (Phase 1) and the Central Intake Pumping Plant (Phase 2). The project will be located on a 230 acre parcel. Of the 230 acres, approximately 200 acres will be used for the recharge ponds and the remaining area will be used for construction of the Central Intake Pumping Plant along with access roads and equipment staging.

2 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

2.1 No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not award the district with a WaterSMART grant of \$1,000,000. Although it is possible the district may find alternate sources of funding for the Proposed Action, for the purposes of this EA, the consequences of Reclamation not providing funding for the Proposed Action would result in no construction which would result in no water savings of 8,700 AFY along with 6,870 AFY of better managed water.

2.2 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action will be designed to improve the overall district system efficiency by increasing the district's ability to intercept high flow surface runoff for storage within the Kern Fan area groundwater basin. This will be accomplished by:

1. Construction of Stockdale East Recharge Ponds (Phase 1) (Approximately 200 of the 230 acre parcel);
2. Construction of the Central Intake Pumping Plant (Phase 2) (4 pump installations with approximately 140 cubic feet per second (cfs) pumping capacity); and
3. On-Farm Irrigation Improvements.

2.2.1 Stockdale East Recharge Ponds (Phase 1)

The Stockdale East Recharge Ponds will be approximately 200 acres impounded by placement of approximately 203,000 cubic yards of compacted levees approximately 2 to 5 feet in height. The ponds would store approximately 19,000 AFY during wet water years (typically 3 out of every 10 years).

2.2.2 Central Intake Pumping Plant (Phase 2)

The Central Intake Pumping Plant includes a 48 to 72 inch pipeline that will allow Rosedale the flexibility to recharge various ponds and facilities which will maximum use of available runoff water which would otherwise be lost. In order to deliver runoff water, and or state and federal water for recharge purposes to the Stockdale East Recharge Ponds and other existing recharge facilities, 4 low lift pumps (140 cfs capacity) along with high efficiency motors, VFDs, SCADA control units, flow meters, and discharge piping must be added to the Pumping Plant.

2.2.3 On-Farm Irrigation Improvements (Phase 2)

In addition to the water supply shortages from the State Water Project (SWP), the Central Valley RWQCB has also been implementing waste discharge requirements, resulting in district growers considering additional irrigation system improvements to reduce over irrigation and leaching of nutrients and pesticides. Rosedale plans to work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to facilitate on-farm cost-share programs and projects to better manage irrigation water and reduce deep percolation.

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. The EA incorporates by reference the district Environmental Impact Report (2015 Stockdale Integrated Banking Project EIR), which describes the existing environmental resources in the area of the Proposed Action, and evaluates the effects of the project on those resources. The EIR was certified by the district on December 8, 2015. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) was included in the EIR that outlines mitigation measures, implementation monitoring and reporting responsibility, and the monitoring schedule. All resources analyzed in the EIR were found to either be less than significant or less than significant with mitigation measures incorporated.

This EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior Regulations (43 CFR Part 46). Analysis of the effects of the proposed action 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)(2)).

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 notified the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) of a finding of no historic properties affected for the undertaking through correspondence on May 3, 2017. Through correspondence dated June 2, 2017, the SHPO responded with no objection to Reclamation's finding.
8. The proposed action would not adversely affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)). Reclamation determined that the action may affect listed species, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with Reclamation on October 27, 2017 that the proposed action was not likely to adversely affect these species.
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 Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993). A records search was conducted on 12/21/2016 and found that the closest ITA to the Proposed Action was 52.88 miles northeast of the Proposed Action.
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).