

# RECLAMATION


*Managing Water in the West*

## Finding Of No Significant Impact

# Semitropic Water District: Groundwater Well Operational Data Acquisition, Solar Power and Lateral Canal Lining Project


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# 1 Background

Through the WaterSMART program, Reclamation provides cost-shared funding on a competitive basis for projects that seek to conserve and use water more efficiently, increase the use of renewable energy and protect endangered species or facilitate water markets. Semitropic Water Storage District (District) would like to be able to conserve and manage groundwater supplies more efficiently during times of draught. They also would like to reduce their electrical cost and demand associated with pumping private- and District-owned groundwater wells. Therefore, the District applied to Reclamation and received two WaterSMART Water Energy and Efficiency Grants to help fund construction and operation of three projects:

- The Groundwater Well Operational Data Acquisition Project would include the construction of a remote data acquisition system installed on 390 privately-owned and District-owned groundwater wells currently connected to the District's water conveyance system.
- The Solar Power Project would provide a 5-megawatt photovoltaic system, consisting of solar panels, a racking system, inverters, electrical equipment, and conduit and wiring. The facility would occupy an area that is approximately 40 acres.
- Lateral Canal Lining Project would involve the lining of approximately 3.75 miles of existing conveyance ditches at the District's Pond-Poso Spreading and Recovery Facility with a plastic impervious material.

Reclamation provided the District a total of \$1,750,000 of a total project cost of \$3,574,962.

The environmental assessment (EA) was available for public review on October 25, 2017. The review period ended on November 8, 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 the District for constructing and operating the groundwater well operational data acquisition, solar power and lateral canal lining projects.

## **2.2 Proposed Action**

Under the Proposed Action, Reclamation would award a WaterSMART Water Energy and Efficiency Grant to the District for constructing and operating the groundwater well operational data acquisition, solar power and lateral canal lining projects.

## **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 groundwater well operational data acquisition, solar power and lateral canal lining projects. This EA was prepared in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act, 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)(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 determined that no historic properties would be affected and therefore, the proposed action 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 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).