

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

**Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

## **Hills Valley Irrigation District 5-year Warren Act Agreement for Kings River Water**

**FONSI-17-036**



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

**January 2018**

## **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-17-036**

**Hills Valley Irrigation District 5-year**  
**Warren Act Agreement for Kings River**

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Prepared by: Stacy L. Holt  
Natural Resources Specialist

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Date

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Concurred by: Jennifer Phillips  
Wildlife Biologist

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Date

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Concurred by: Rain L. Emerson  
Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist

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Date

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Approved by: Michael P. Jackson, P.E.  
Area Manager

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Date



## 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 introduction and conveyance into and through the Friant-Kern Canal of King's River water purchased by Hills Valley Irrigation District (Hills Valley) from Alta Irrigation District (Alta). This draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Draft Environmental Assessment (EA)-17-036, *Hills Valley 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 Reclamation. Friant Division CVP water originates from the San Joaquin River, which is stored in Millerton Reservoir. The CVP water released into the Friant-Kern Canal is used to meet the irrigation and municipal and industrial needs of 32 Friant Division CVP contractors.

Hills Valley is a Friant Division CVP Contractor located in Fresno and Tulare Counties, and (see Figure 1 in Draft EA-17-036). Hills Valley has negotiated the purchase of previously banked storm and flood waters that have been exchanged for Kings River entitlement water (hereafter referred to as non-CVP water) from Alta. In order to receive their purchased non-CVP water, Hills Valley has requested approval from Reclamation for the introduction and conveyance of this water in the Friant-Kern Canal for diversion at their existing turnouts.

## Proposed Action

Reclamation proposes to issue a 5-year Warren Act Agreement to Hills Valley for the introduction and conveyance of up to 2,500 AF per year of non-CVP water purchased from Alta. This agreement would end February 28, 2022. This non-CVP water would be introduced into the Friant-Kern Canal at Milepost 29.10 (see Figure 1 in Draft EA-17-036) from the pumping station owned by Delta Lands Reclamation District No. 770 (Delta Lands). Once in the Friant-Kern Canal, the non-CVP water would be conveyed to Hills Valley's sole delivery point at Milepost 41.15L (see Figure 1 in Draft EA-17-036).

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

Hills Valley is also requesting that Milepost 29.10 be added to its list of approved Points of Introduction.

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

### **Environmental Commitments**

Hills Valley shall implement the environmental protection measures listed in Table 1 of EA-17-036 avoid 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-17-036, 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, or socioeconomic resources.

### **Biological Resources**

The Proposed Action would involve the introduction and conveyance of up to 2,500 AF per year of Kings River water purchased by Hills Valley from Alta for delivery to Hills Valley 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 Hills Valley 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 1, 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 Alta to be conveyed in CVP facilities when excess capacity is available. This would allow the water to be delivered to Hills Valley's service area for agricultural use. There would be no modification of the Friant-Kern Canal.

The Kings River water is already allocated for use. Alta would meet its water needs with surface runoff from storm events that it has recaptured as part of its irrigation demand. 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 2,500 AF/year through February 28, 2022. 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 water quality requirements prior to approval for introduction (see Appendix B of EA-17-036). If testing (by the Kings River Watershed Coalition Authority) shows that the water does not meet then-current standards, Hills Valley would not be allowed to discharge into the Friant-Kern Canal until water quality concerns are addressed. Testing is conducted on a yearly basis using Reclamation's then current water quality requirements. This testing program is anticipated to adequately protect the quality of water and limit degradation of other users' supplies. Reclamation anticipates that the current Kings River water quality will be similar to that in Table 4 sampled during 2013-2014.

### **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.