

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Sacramento Suburban Water District Warren Act Contract— 2018 5-year Contract

Environmental Assessment

prepared by

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region
Central California Area Office**



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Bureau of Reclamation

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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.

Introduction

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) proposes to enter into a 5-year, “wet year only”¹, Warren Act Contract (WAC) with the Sacramento Suburban Water District (SSWD) to facilitate the delivery of up to 14,500 acre feet per year (AFY) of Non-Central Valley Project (Non-CVP) Water through Folsom Reservoir for Municipal and Industrial (M&I) uses in SSWD’s service area in north-central Sacramento County. Water would be diverted at Folsom Dam and conveyed via an existing 84-inch conduit and North Fork Pipeline for treatment and distribution at the Sydney N. Peterson Water Treatment Plant (Peterson WTP) facilities, owned and operated by the San Juan Water District (SJWD). The water ultimately would be used within the North Service Area of SSWD’s service area in north-central Sacramento County that includes the former Northridge service area and the former Arcade service area (see Figure 1). The water also could be provided to areas adjacent to the North Service Area served by the Cal American Water Company. The entire area that could receive water diverted under the 5-year WAC is shown in Figure 1.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of executing the proposed contract is to allow for the conveyance of SSWD’s WAC water rights water through Folsom Reservoir to help meet the existing water supply needs in SSWD’s existing boundaries.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

The proposed action evaluated in this document is the execution of a “wet-year only”, 5-year WAC between Reclamation and SSWD to facilitate the delivery of up to 14,500 AFY of Non-CVP water through Folsom Reservoir for M&I uses in SSWD boundaries in north-central Sacramento County. The project would facilitate delivery of a substitute surface water supply when available, therefore reducing reliance on groundwater resources within the region. No changes in land use or construction related activities are included as part of this action; the proposed surface water supply would only be an in-lieu replacement of an already existing water supply (groundwater) and not an additional water supply. The proposed action would execute a 5-year WAC with SSWD to convey Placer County Water Agency’s (PCWA) Middle Fork American River Project Waters (MFP) to SSWD through the facilities at Folsom Dam.

There are existing minimum in-stream flow agreements between PCWA and SSWD. As noted in the contract, the MFP water, under PCWA Permits 13856 and 13858, is made available to the contractor, SSWD, in accordance with the agreement between the contractor’s predecessor in interest, Northridge Water District, and PCWA Water District for a “Water Supply For Groundwater Stabilization,” (Agreement) dated June 1, 2000. This Agreement provided: That Non-CVP Water shall be delivered to the contractor only: a) in years when the projected March-to-November unimpaired inflows to Folsom Reservoir (UIFR) is greater than 1,600,000 acre feet

¹ The “wet year” condition under the contract is when unimpaired inflow to Folsom Reservoir exceeds 1.6 million acre-feet.

(AF); or b) Notwithstanding a) above, in a December, January, and February following a March through November period when the UIFR was less than 1,600,000 AF, when and after water is being released from Folsom Reservoir for flood protection.

Non-CVP water is conveyed through excess capacity in project facilities.

Excess Capacity is defined as, "... capacity in the Project Facilities in excess of that needed to meet the Project's authorized purposes, as determined solely by the Contracting Officer, which may be made available to convey and deliver Non-Project Water."

No Action Alternative

Under the no action alternative, Reclamation would not execute a 5-year WAC with SSWD.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance

The purpose of this document is to meet Reclamation's obligations pursuant to the NEPA of 1969 (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 et seq.), Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and the Departmental Manual (DM) 516 DM 1-7.

The proposed action does not qualify for categorical exclusion from NEPA review because a specific exclusion category for WACs is not available. The proposed action does, however, meet all the evaluation criteria to be categorically exempt because the proposed action does not: 1) have a significant effect on the quality of human environment and 2) involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

In accordance with Reclamation's requirements for implementing NEPA, the draft EA for the SSWD 5-year WAC was circulated for review by agencies, stakeholders, and the public on January 17, 2018. No comments were received on the Draft EA.

Environmental Consequences

A draft EA which evaluates the potential effects of executing a long-term (25 year) Warren Act contract (LTWAC) for the same water sources identified in the proposed action was prepared by Reclamation in June 2017 (Reclamation 2017). The analysis contained in the June 2017 LTWAC EA is incorporated by reference into this document.

This section describes the potential environmental consequences (i.e., potential impacts) for the proposed action and the no action alternative. The resources and issues described in this document include:

- Water Supply and Hydrology
- Facility Operations
- Biological Resources
- Indian Trust Assets

This EA does not analyze resources for which it would be reasonable to assume that impacts do not occur. Specifically, potential effects to water quality, land use, recreation, air quality, soils, visual resources, transportation, noise, hazards, hazardous materials, public services, non-water utilities and service systems, and socioeconomics are not analyzed because they were not identified as potential issues during scoping for the LTWAC and it would not be reasonable to assume that the proposed 5-year WAC would result in any potential changes to these resources or services.

Water Supply and Hydrology

Proposed Action

Implementation of the proposed action does not change current hydrology for the water sources included in the proposed action. Potential changes in French Meadows and Hell Hole Reservoir storage and surface water elevation would not adversely affect water supply availability for CVP, State Water Project customers, and non-CVP American River water users. In addition, there would be no impacts on water supply availability at Folsom Reservoir or within the Lower American River (LAR) under the proposed action, relative to the no action alternative.

Existing minimum in-stream flow agreements would remain in effect and Non-CVP water shall be delivered to the contractor only:

- a) In years when the projected March-to-November unimpaired inflow to Folsom Reservoir is greater than 1,600,000 AF; or
- b) Notwithstanding a) above, in a December, January, and February following a March through November period when the unimpaired inflow was less than 1,600,000 AF, when and after water is being released from Folsom Reservoir for flood protection.

No Action

Implementation of the no action alternative does not change the current hydrology of the Middle Fork of the American River.

Cumulative Effects

The proposed action, when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, does not result in cumulative effects to water supply or hydrology. There are no cumulative effects to water supply or hydrology because the proposed action is a 5-year contract, that is contingent on hydrologic conditions and existing agreements.

Conclusion

Implementation of the proposed action, relative to the no action alternative, would result in no adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative effects for the Middle Fork of the American River because in-stream flows would remain the same and existing minimum in-stream flow agreements would remain in effect. Therefore, implementation of the proposed action, relative to the no action alternative would result in no adverse impacts to water supply and hydrology.

Facility Operations

Proposed Action

The Draft Biological Assessment for the LTWAC included analysis to evaluate potential impacts to Folsom Reservoir operations and Reclamation's management of the cold water pool with implementation of the LTWAC. This analysis indicates that only minor changes in cold water pool volume would result in any change to Folsom Reservoir operations and therefore would not have an adverse effect on Reclamation's ability to meet downstream fisheries requirements (Reclamation BA 2017). Because the implementation of the LTWAC was found to not adversely affect Folsom Reservoir operations, it is reasonable to conclude that implementation of the proposed action, a 5-year WAC, would also not result in any adverse effects to Reclamation's operation of Folsom Reservoir or management of the cold water pool.

No Action

Implementation of the no action alternative has no impact to Folsom Reservoir facility operations or to the cold water pool in Folsom Reservoir. The water sources identified in the proposed action would continue to flow downstream into Folsom Reservoir.

Cumulative Effects

The proposed action, when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, would have no result in any cumulative effects to Folsom Dam and Reservoir operations or cold water pool management because the proposed action is a 5-year WAC that is contingent on hydrologic conditions.

Conclusion

Implementation of the proposed action would not adversely affect Folsom Reservoir operations because the analysis conducted for implementation of the LTWAC found that there were no adverse effects to Folsom Reservoir operations. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that implementation of the proposed action, a 5-year WAC, would also not result in any adverse effects to Reclamation's operation of Folsom Reservoir or management of the cold water pool. There are no indirect or cumulative effects to Folsom Dam and Reservoir associated with the proposed action.

Biological Resources

Aquatic Resources

Central Valley steelhead and fall-run and spring-run Chinook salmon may occur in the American River below Folsom and Nimbus Dams. Spring-run Chinook salmon juveniles could enter and rear in the American River (i.e., non-natal rearing). American River steelhead and Chinook salmon populations consist of a mixture of hatchery and wild fish. Critical habitat for Central Valley steelhead and spring-run Chinook salmon includes the LAR.

Other federally listed aquatic species within the Sacramento-San Joaquin system include the Delta smelt, winter-run Chinook salmon, and green sturgeon. These species are not known to occur in the American River. Delta smelt occur in the main stem Sacramento River. Winter-run Chinook salmon primarily spawn in the main stem Sacramento River between Keswick Dam and the Red Bluff Diversion Dam. There have been no recent occurrences of green sturgeon (adults or juveniles) in the American River. Reclamation determined that there was no effect to Delta smelt, winter-run Chinook salmon, or green sturgeon because they do not occur in the action area.

Proposed Action

The proposed action will have no effects to operations, thus resulting in no changes in downstream flows or temperatures in the LAR. Therefore, Reclamation's determination of no effects to listed or proposed aquatic species, or designated or proposed critical habitat protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is based on the following:

- The CalSim II modeling analysis (November 2017) for the LTWAC found that there was no effects to Folsom Reservoir operations or cold water pool management with implementation of a long-term WAC. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that the implementation of a 5-year WAC (Proposed Action) would result in no effects to Reclamation's operation of Folsom Reservoir to meet downstream fisheries requirements for steelhead, and fall/spring-run Chinook salmon.
- Any changes from receiving additional non-project water into Folsom Lake and storing this water during wet water years would fall within the normal operations of the lake for wet year operations and will not result in biological effects in the river downstream of Nimbus Dam.

No Action

Implementation of the no action alternative would have no effect to listed or proposed species or designated or proposed critical habitat protected under the ESA.

Cumulative Effects

The proposed action, when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, would not result in adverse cumulative effects to listed species or critical habitat because the contract is a short term 5-year action and only Non-CVP water that is measured and reported as entering Folsom Reservoir will be available for diversion. No interrelated to interdependent actions have been identified, associated with the proposed action.

Conclusion

Implementation of the proposed action would result in no effects to aquatic species and critical habitat protected under the ESA.

Cultural Resources

The area of potential effect for the proposed action is defined in the June 2017 LTWAC EA.

Proposed Action

The proposed action will not affect properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places because no ground disturbing activities or construction activities are included or will result from the execution of a 5-year WAC (see cultural resource memo dated 6-27-2017; Tracking number 17-CCAO-211).

No Action

Implementation of the no action alternative would have no potential to affect historic properties. The PCWA's MFP is the source of the water and the contract conveyance will not exceed 14,500 AFY from March 1, 2018 through February 28, 2023. This water would not be used to place new or untilled lands into production, nor convert undeveloped land to other uses. Additionally, the movement of water would not require the construction of any new water diversion or conveyance facilities.

Cumulative Effects

The proposed action, when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, would not result in adverse cumulative effects to historic properties because no land use changes or new development would occur in SSWD's existing federal service area.

Conclusion

Implementation of the proposed action, relative to the no action alternative, would result in no potential to effect historic properties pursuant to the regulations of CFR Part 800.3(a)(1).

Indian Trust Assets

There are no tribes possessing legal property interested held in trust by the United States in the water involved with this action, nor is there such a property interest in the lands designated to receive the water proposed in this action. The nearest Indian Trust Asset in the proposed project site is the Auburn Rancheria which is approximately 11 miles north-west of the project location.

Proposed action

Indian Trust Assets would not be affected with implementation of the proposed action because there are no assets present in SSWD's existing federal service area.

No Action

Indian Trust Assets would not be affected with implementation of the no action alternative because there are no assets present in SSWD's existing boundaries.

Cumulative Effects

The cumulative effect of the proposed action will have no adverse effects to Indian Trust Assets because a) the project only involves conveyance of Non-CVP Water through existing State and Federal facilities and will not directly or indirectly result in the construction of new facilities, b) there are no Indian Trust Asset's located within the area where this water will be delivered, and c) the Proposed Action, would extend the practice of delivery of PCWA water in wet years to SSWD that has historically occurred, and continues to occur as enabled by short-term Warren Act contracts.

Conclusion

There are no Indian Trust Assets identified within the action area, therefore no adverse impacts to Indian Trust Assets are anticipated with implementation of the proposed action.

References

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). 2017. Draft Environmental Assessment for the Long-term Warren Act Contract Warren Act Contract (LTWAC) Between the United States and Sacramento Suburban Water District (SSWD). U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation.

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). 2017. Draft Biological Assessment for the Long-term Warren Act Contract Warren Act Contract (LTWAC) Between the United States and Sacramento Suburban Water District (SSWD). U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation.

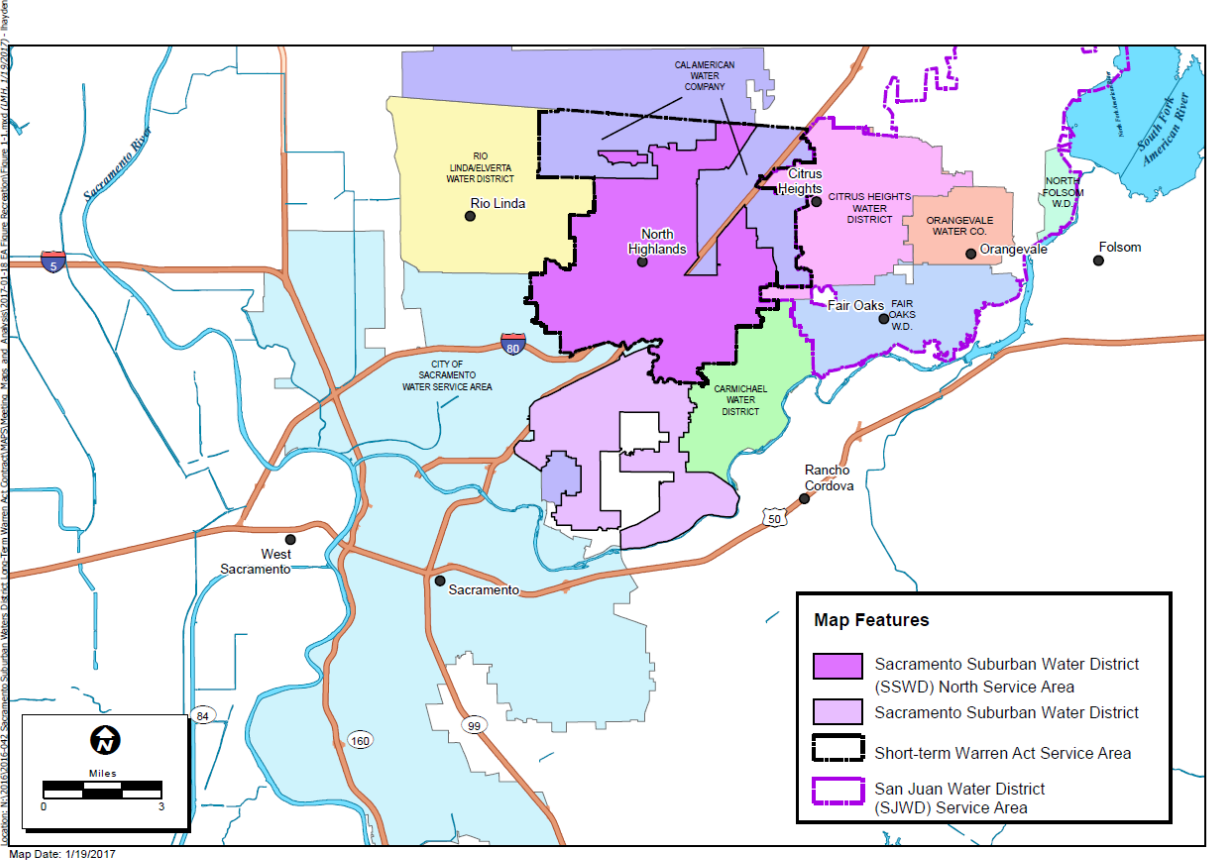


Figure 1. SSWD 5-year WAC Service Area
 2018 Sacramento Suburban Water District Warren Act Contract

Figure 1. SSWD 5-Year WAC Service Area