

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Finding of No Significant Impact

Kern County Water Agency Improvement District No. 4 Cross Valley Canal Extension – Pool No. 8 Lining Project

FONSI 18-12-MP

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Background

The Kern County Water Agency operates and maintains the 22-mile-long Cross Valley Canal (CVC). The CVC was constructed in 1976, and is used to deliver surface water supplies to various purveyors and groundwater banking projects within Kern County for agricultural and urban use. In 2012, Kern County Water Agency expanded the CVC and constructed the CVC Extension. The CVC Extension is an approximately three-mile section consisting of Pool No. 7 and No. 8. Pool No. 7 is a two-mile canal and was concrete lined in 2016 and 2017. Pool No. 8 is a one mile canal that remains earthen. The earthen lining of Pool No. 8 results in a loss of surface water supplies due to seepage into the ground. The long-term average seepage losses are approximately 2,300 acre-feet per year (AFY) based on data from 2004 to 2015.

Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not award WaterSMART Grant funding to Kern County Water Agency and Pool No. 8 would remain an earthen canal. The CVC Extension would continue to provide water to ID4 and Cawelo Water District in its current condition.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, Reclamation would award a \$1 million WaterSMART – Water and Energy Efficiency Grant to Kern County Water Agency to line the Pool No. 8 canal with concrete to reduce seepage losses and thereby retain more water volume delivered in the canal.

Findings

Based on the attached environmental assessment, Reclamation finds that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The environmental assessment was prepared in accordance with NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior Regulations (43 CFR Part 46); the attached environmental assessment 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 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 would not affect historic properties.
3. The proposed action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).

4. 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).
5. 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)).
6. 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)).
7. 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)).
8. There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
9. The proposed action will not have significant cumulative impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
10. The proposed action will not significantly affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).
11. Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898).