

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Riparian Habitat Restoration at Dos Rios Ranch

FONSI 18-05-MP

Prepared by:



Kaitlin Flahive
Natural Resources Specialist
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date: July 30, 2018

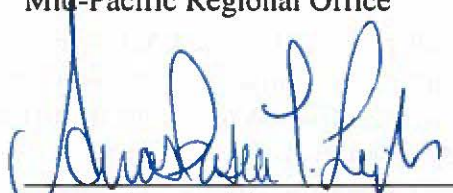
Reviewed by:



Daniel Strait
Program Manager, CVPIA Habitat Restoration Program
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date: July 30, 2018

Approved by:



Anastasia T. Leigh
Regional Environmental Officer
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date: 7/31/2018



Background

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Riparian Habitat Restoration at Dos Rios Ranch project. The EA was prepared to examine the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects associated with providing funding through the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Habitat Restoration Program to River Partners, a nonprofit conservation organization, to restore and enhance 159 acres of native riparian habitats. The Habitat Restoration Program helps mitigate the past impacts of Reclamation's Central Valley Project on threatened and endangered species and helps minimize future impacts.

Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

No Action: Reclamation would not award River Partners with a grant to conduct the habitat restoration project. River Partners would not be able to complete restoration activities and the Dos Rios Ranch fields where the Proposed Action would take place would continue to be farmed.

Proposed Action: Reclamation would provide \$499,730 to River Partners to partially fund a habitat restoration project on 159 acres on Fields 10, 11, and 12 of Dos Rios Ranch in Stanislaus County, California. Restoration of the fields would benefit a variety of federally-listed, state-listed, and sensitive species, including the riparian brush rabbit, riparian woodrat, and least Bell's vireo, each listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Reclamation would provide funding for site preparation and irrigation installation, plantings, maintenance, and monitoring over three growing seasons. Over 18,000 propagated plants would be planted to restore native riparian vegetation, and approximately 3 acres of elevated land within the 159-acre area would be created and planted to riparian habitat to provide high ground refuge for wildlife during flooding events.

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 required. The EA describes the existing environmental resources at the location of the Proposed Action and evaluates the effects of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives. The attached 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) and 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)(3)).
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 the undertaking would not affect historic properties.

8. The Proposed Action will not negatively affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).

9. The Proposed Action will not violate Federal, State, local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).

10. The Proposed Action will not affect any 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).