

RECLAMATION


Managing Water in the West

Finding of No Significant Impact 17-26-MP

Sutter National Wildlife Refuge Lift Station Project

Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region
Sacramento, California

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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) and its partners, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Ducks Unlimited Inc. (DU), propose to construct the Sutter National Wildlife Refuge (SNWR) Lift Station (Proposed Action). The Proposed Action would further the goals and objectives of the Refuge Water Supply Program by improving refuge water availability at the SNWR. The lift station would allow SNWR to divert water from the East Borrow Ditch (EBD) including when water surface elevations are below 38.1 feet and the current gravity diversion infrastructure is not able to divert water. The lift station would be sized to deliver the maximum refuge water supply demands inside the Sutter Bypass but versatile enough to efficiently handle a wide range of flow rates to satisfy diverse wildlife habitat management goals of refuge staff.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide reliable Level 2 (L2) and Incremental Level 4 (IL4) refuge water supplies to the SNWR in accordance with requirements under Section 3406(d) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA). Current SNWR water supplies are taken from the EBD via a gravity main canal inlet. This gravity channel can only be used when water surface elevations in the EBD are at or above elevation 38.1 feet. When water elevations are held at levels needed for optimal use of the gravity channel for SNWR, the higher elevations cause seepage of neighboring agricultural fields. The EBD is managed by California Department of Water Resources (DWR) in a manner that limits the water elevation at Weir No. 2 to avoid this upstream seepage impact. This severely limits the SNWR's ability to divert water during critical habitat management periods and at the rates needed for optimal habitat management. The Proposed Action will alleviate this impairment to SNWR's water conveyance system, allowing access to its existing water supplies and increase its capacity to receive water supplies required for optimal management of its wetland habitat areas.

The objectives for the Proposed Action are as follows:

- Ensure the SNWR's ability to divert licensed water supplies (including future CVPIA water supplies) from the EBD in order to manage for habitat and wildlife needs;
- Design, permit, construct and operate a screened intake pump facility and associated infrastructure to provide the capability to deliver L2 and IL4 water supply to SNWR as required by CVPIA. The facility will be owned and operated by USFWS; and
- Screen the new intake facility in a manner that meets current National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) fish screen design criteria for screen slot size and approach velocity, or as approved by these two agencies.

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA Number 17-26-MP), and is hereby attached and incorporated by reference.

Alternatives Including Proposed Action

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would consist of Reclamation and its partners not constructing the SWNR Lift Station to help meet SNWR's water demands. The delivery of L2 and IL4 refuge water to the SNWR lands would continue to be unreliable due to inadequate surface water conveyance facilities, fluctuating water surface elevations, and fluctuating water availability in the EBD. SNWR would continue to not be able to meet their Section 3406(d) CVPIA water supply requirements, and wildlife and habitat management goals due to an inability to utilize regular dependable refuge water supplies for wetland habitat benefits. In addition, the diversion on EBD would remain unscreened and not meet current NMFS and CDFW screening criteria requirements.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action/Project consists of the following elements, which are described in more detail below: (1) construction of a pump station (lift station) with 4 vertical-turbine pumps located approximately 200 feet upstream of California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Weir No. 2 structure and on the west side of the EBD; (2) installation of approximately 700 feet of 54-inch diameter buried pipeline from the proposed pump station to a new concrete distribution box; (3) construction of a new concrete distribution box connected to the new buried pipeline and existing internal SNWR water conveyance facilities; (4) installation of two cylindrical fish screens fitted to the new pump station intakes; (5) improving a maintenance road; and (6) installing infrastructure to supply power to the pump station. The above elements are located on lands owned by the USFWS (SNWR property) and lands owned by the State of California (Sacramento and San Joaquin Drainage District acting by and through the Central Valley Flood Protection Board).

Findings

In accordance with NEPA, the Mid-Pacific Regional Office of Reclamation has found that approval of the Proposed Action is not a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Consequently, an environmental impact statement is not required.

Following are the reasons why the impacts from 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 affect natural resources and unique geographical characteristics such as proximity to 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); floodplains (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. There is no potential for effects of the Proposed Action to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
4. 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)).
5. 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)).
6. The Proposed Action will not have a cumulatively significant impact (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
7. The Proposed Action will not significantly affect historic properties (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).
8. The Proposed Action will not significantly affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species, or habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).
9. The Proposed Action will not threaten a violation of 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 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 adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007 and 512 DM 3).
13. The Proposed Action will not result in adverse impacts to water or land resources. The Proposed Action would not adversely impact water conveyance facilities or activities within the Refuge.
14. The Proposed Action will not have significant air quality impacts. There would be no construction or ground disturbance.