

Finding of No Significant Impact

Mendota Dam Sluice Gates Replacement Project



December 2011

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
MID-PACIFIC REGION
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**MENDOTA DAM SLUICE GATES REPLACEMENT PROJECT
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM**

Recommended:



Date: 12-29-11

**Michelle Banonis
Natural Resources Specialist
San Joaquin River Restoration Program
Mid-Pacific Region**

Concurred by:



Date: 12-29-11

**Stephen Tighe
Project Manager
San Joaquin River Restoration Program
Mid-Pacific Region**

Approved by:


For **Alicia Forsythe**
Program Manager

Date: 12-30-11

**San Joaquin River Restoration Program
Mid-Pacific Region**

This page left blank intentionally.

PROPOSED ACTION

During Central California Irrigation District's (CCID) 2011-2012 winter dewatering and maintenance activities in Mendota Pool and at Mendota Dam, CCID will replace all 6 of the existing Calco rectangular cast iron gates on the dam with heavy duty Waterman Gates (Model S 5000 FY). Replacing the gates will eliminate the need to refurbish the gates every other year. The old gates tend to stick, come off the guides or otherwise malfunction. New gates would improve reliability and allow CCID to be able to work more quickly in response to San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) Interim and Restoration flow deliveries through the dam.

Reclamation has determined that replacing the gates would improve functionality for the passing of SJRRP flows and would be reasonable to fund. The total cost to fund the sluice gate equipment is estimated by CCID at \$120,000. Reclamation's involvement is directly related to the purchase price of the gates. CCID shall be responsible for the cost of labor and physical installation of the gates. Installation of the gates is proposed to be completed in December 2011 and January 2012. No disturbance to the river channel would be needed and all work will occur within the confines of the existing dam structure.

The benefits of the Proposed Action are: 1) Improved flow control capabilities at Mendota Dam to allow for more accurate releases of San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) flows downstream while increasing control of Mendota Pool water levels needed by other Reclamation water service contractors and other water diverters. The gates will allow for more precise control of releases from Mendota Dam and will be integrated into CCID's electronic control system; 2) CCID will be able to reliably pass up to 1,300 cfs of SJRRP flows through automated gates that are monitored continuously; 3) Reduced operations and maintenance costs resulting from implementing SJRRP flows by increasing CCID's capabilities and accuracy to control water flow and pool levels and reduction in staff time currently necessary to make manual adjustments at the dam; 4) Reduced maintenance costs due to elimination of gate failure and reduced maintenance requirements for the new Waterman heavy duty gates; 5) Increased safety for CCID staff due to reduced need to make manual adjustments at the dam.

FINDINGS

In accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and the Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code and Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1508), the Mid-Pacific Region of Reclamation finds that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action that will significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for implementing the Proposed Action. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by the attached Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Mendota Dam Sluice Gates Replacement Project, and supporting appendices and documents.

The public review and comment period for the Draft Mendota Dam Sluice Gates Replacement Project EA began on December 14, 2011. Comments were due on December 28, 2011. As of the signing of this FONSI, no comments were received.

The affected environment and environmental consequences analyses as described in the Draft Mendota Dam Sluice Gates Replacement Project EA are summarized below.

1. The Proposed Action will not significantly impact land use and planning. The Proposed Action will not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency because the replacement of the gates on Mendota Dam will not change any existing water deliveries, land use, or regulatory requirements.
2. The Proposed Action will not result in significant impacts to terrestrial biological resources. All vehicles will utilize existing roads and parking areas and no ground disturbance will occur in conjunction with the Proposed Action. All work will occur on the Mendota Dam itself and physical activities will be confined to the area immediately at or around the bays on Mendota Dam. As a result, the Proposed Action will have no impact on terrestrial biological resources.
3. The Proposed Action will not significantly impact fisheries resources. The activity will not result in modifications to fish habitat or water levels and will not impact fish present in the San Joaquin River. No disturbance will occur to the channel of the river associated with this project and no in-channel vegetation or refugia will be altered. All work will occur on the Mendota Dam itself and physical activities will be confined to the area immediately at or around the bays on Mendota Dam. As a result, the Proposed Action will have no impact on fisheries resources.
4. The Proposed Action will not significantly impact hydrology and water quality. The implementation of the Proposed Action could result in a beneficial impact to water users with supplies originating from Mendota Pool as the project would result in less maintenance for CCID and could result in a lesser need to drain Mendota Pool. The Proposed Action would not result in changes to water quality in Mendota Pool or the San Joaquin River.
5. The Proposed Action will not significantly impact air quality. With the implementation of applicable fugitive dust emissions controls as identified in as Mitigation Measure AQ-1 in the Mendota Dam Sluice Gates Replacement Project EA, no applicable air quality plan or air quality standard would be violated. The Proposed Action would also not create, exacerbate, or change existing objectionable odors that would affect a substantial number of people, nor would it generate greenhouse gas emissions that would have a significant impact on the environment.
6. The Proposed Action will not significantly impact noise. Noise impacts related to implementing the Proposed Action would be from equipment and persons installing the sluice gates. This noise increase would occur only during daylight hours and will be short-term and temporary. The Proposed Action will not create a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels.
7. The Proposed Action will not significantly impact recreation or commercial or recreational fisheries. The proposed action will not change water levels or make

significant alterations to the area around Mendota Dam that could result in a loss of angling opportunities or recreational boating.

8. The Proposed Action will not impact protected areas such as wilderness areas, scenic rivers, scenic routes and preserves. There are no protected areas in or near the Proposed Action area. Additionally, the replacement of the gates on Mendota Dam could reduce or eliminate the need for biannual dewatering, which could provide added predictability for wildlife areas that receive water deliveries from Mendota Pool.
9. The Proposed Action will not result in impacts to cultural resources eligible for listing under the National Historic Preservation Act, 36 CFR Part 800. The installation of gates on Mendota Dam would not substantially alter the eligibility of the facility for listing in the National Register. Should archeological or historic resources be identified or affected, these resources will be evaluated and mitigated through consultations with the SHPO, Native American tribes, and interested parties.
10. The Proposed Action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets as it is outside of the range of Tribal lands held in trust. The nearest Indian Trust Asset is Table Mountain Rancheria, which is approximately 40 miles east of the project area.
11. The Proposed Action will not impact public health and safety. The Proposed Action may serve a benefit to the local populous as it would improve dam operations by increasing the capacity of flows that could be sent through Mendota Dam, which could minimize maintenance and thereby increasing the safety of the dam.
12. The Proposed Action will not impact energy production, consumption, and conservation. There are no hydroelectric facilities or power generation facilities within the immediate vicinity of Mendota Dam. The Proposed Action would have no impact or change to energy production, consumption, or conservation.
13. The Proposed Action will not have socioeconomic impacts. Existing population and housing trends, employment and labor force trends, prominent business and industry types, and government and finance conditions within the area will not be affected by the Proposed Action.
14. The Proposed Action will not disproportionately impact minority and disadvantaged populations or communities. The Federal Action under consideration will not disproportionately burden minority groups, low-income populations, or Native American Tribes.
15. The Proposed Action will not significantly impact transportation and traffic. A minor increase in the frequency of CCID staff vehicles may occur in and around the dam for the installation of the gates. However, this will be short-term and temporary and is not significant enough to change traffic patterns or cause permanent transportation modifications. The Proposed Action would have no impact on air traffic patterns, road hazards, or parking capacity.

16. The Proposed Action will not significantly impact hazardous materials or result in the creation of hazardous materials. The Proposed Action would not involve any construction or the routine transport or disposal of any hazardous material. Additionally, there are no listed contaminated sites within the project area.
17. The Proposed Action will not significantly impact utilities and service systems. There would be no disruption to water deliveries or the generation of power at upstream facilities. No utility line removal or replacement is proposed as part of the project.