

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Washington County Water Conservancy District WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects

**Finding of No Significant Impact and Final Environmental
Assessment LC-17-27**

Lower Colorado Region, Boulder City, Nevada



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Lower Colorado Region
Boulder City, Nevada**

July 2017

Mission Statements

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and manage the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provide scientific and other information about those resources; and honor 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.

Cover photo: St. George, Utah (Bureau of Reclamation photo)

Contents

Finding of No Significant Impact	iii
Final Environmental Assessment.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Proposed Federal Action.....	1
1.2 Purpose and Need	1
1.3 Relevant Statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders	2
2.0 Description of Alternatives	3
2.1 No Action Alternative.....	3
2.2 Proposed Action Alternative.....	3
2.2.1 Mitigation Measures/Design Features	4
2.2.2 Alternatives Considered but Not Evaluated in Detail.....	4
3.0 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences	5
3.1 Affected Environment.....	5
3.2 Environmental Consequences	5
3.2.1 No Action Alternative.....	5
3.2.2 Proposed Action.....	5
4.0 Coordination and Consultation	6
4.1 Agencies Consulted	6
4.2 Scoping/Public Involvement.....	6
5.0 List of Preparers.....	6
6.0 References.....	7

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym or abbreviation	Term
acre-feet per year	afy
Agreement	Cooperative Agreement R17AP00049
DOI	Department of the Interior
EA	Environmental Assessment
EO	Executive Order
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended
Project	WaterSMART Small –Scale Water Efficiency Program grant for incentives for water efficiency in Washington County
Reclamation	Bureau of Reclamation
U.S.	United States
WETAP	Water Efficient Technical Assistance Program
WCWCD	Washington County Water Conservancy District
WF	Water Factor

Finding of No Significant Impact

(FONSI)

LC-17-27

For

**Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for Washington County Water
Conservancy District WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects**

Boulder City, Nevada

Based on a thorough analysis of the potential environmental impacts presented in the EA, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) finds that implementation of the Proposed Action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment within or adjacent to the project area, therefore an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Accordingly, this FONSI is submitted to document environmental review and evaluation of the Proposed Action in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended.

Prepared: Faye Strieker Date: August 5, 2017
Natural Resource Specialist

Recommended: [Signature] Date: 5 July 2017
Manager, Environmental Compliance Group

Approved: [Signature] Date: 7/6/2017
Chief, Resources Management Office

Background

Reclamation proposes to award Cooperative Agreement R17AP00049 (Agreement) with the Washington County, Utah, Water Conservancy District (WCWCD) for a WaterSMART Small – Scale Water Efficiency Program grant for incentives for water efficiency in Washington County, Utah (Project).

This FONSI tiers to and incorporates by reference the *Washington County Water Conservancy District WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects Final EA*.

Alternatives Considered

A No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action were considered. Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not award the Agreement.

The Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action Reclamation would provide \$75,000.00 to WCWCD for two water efficiency incentive programs which are identified in WCWCD’s Water Conservation Plan. The Proposed Action is described on pages 4 to 5 of the EA.

Environmental Commitments

The following measures will be implemented as part of the Proposed Action to reduce or eliminate impacts to resources:

General

The WCWCD would be responsible for obtaining all required Federal, State, County, and City permits for the Project.

Cultural Resources/Traditional Cultural Properties/Sacred Sites

If during the course of any activities associated with the execution of the Project, WCWCD becomes aware of or discovers an architectural and/or archaeological resource, the activity in the vicinity of the resource will cease. The WCWCD will secure and protect the resource, and notify Reclamation. Reclamation will ensure that the stipulations of 36 CFR Part 800.11 are satisfied before activities in the vicinity of the resource can resume.

Environmental Impacts and Findings

Implementation of the Proposed Action will not result in significant impacts to any of the resources evaluated in the EA. There would be no direct, indirect or cumulative impacts to Indian Trust Assets, visual resources, floodplains, wetlands, water quality, environmental justice,

cultural resources including traditional cultural properties, Indian sacred sites, or biological resources including threatened and endangered species.

Minor, insignificant, temporary, impacts were identified related to noise, air quality, and soils.

Beneficial impacts related to overall water savings in the Virgin River Watershed and Colorado River system were identified. Environmental impacts are discussed on pages 6 and 7 of the EA.

This page intentionally left blank

Final Environmental Assessment for Washington County Water Conservancy District WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects

**Environmental Assessment
LC-17-27**

**Prepared by:
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Lower Colorado Region
Boulder City, Nevada**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Proposed Federal Action

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) proposes to award Cooperative Agreement R17AP00049 (Agreement) to the Washington County, Utah, Water Conservancy District (WCWCD) for a WaterSMART Small –Scale Water Efficiency Program grant for incentives for water efficiency programs in Washington County (Project). The two incentive programs that would be funded under the Agreement are:

- Rebates to upgrade irrigation systems with water saving devices.
- Water Efficient Technical Assistance Program (WETAP) for commercial properties to implement water efficiency devices and new technology and,

This Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA. The purpose of this EA is to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed action on the physical and human environment and determine if the impacts will be significant thus warranting the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

1.2 Purpose and Need

In 2009, the U.S. Congress passed the SECURE Water Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11, Title IX, Subtitle F), directing the U.S. Department of Interior to develop a sustainable water management policy. In 2010, the Secretary of the Interior established the WaterSMART program, combining existing programs with new initiatives to create a broad framework for managing the Nation’s water supplies. Through WaterSMART grants, Reclamation provides financial assistance to water managers for projects that seek to conserve and use water more efficiently, increase the use of renewable energy and improve energy efficiency, benefit threatened and endangered species, investigate and develop water marketing strategies, prevent any water-related crisis, or otherwise contribute to water supply sustainability in the Western U.S.

Small-Scale Water Efficiency Project Grants are one of the grant categories that Reclamation funds under the WaterSMART program. Through these grants, Reclamation provides 50/50 cost-shared funding for projects with a total cost of up to \$150,000.00. Reclamation’s funding may be up to \$75,000.00 of this total cost. These grants are awarded on a competitive basis to non-Federal partners for small-scale water management projects that have been identified through previous planning efforts. Example projects include, but are not limited to: canal lining/piping, municipal metering, irrigation flow measurement, supervisory control and data acquisition and automation, and landscape irrigation measures.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to further the intent of the SECURE Water Act of 2009 and the goals of the WaterSMART program.

This action is needed because WCWCD, a not-for-profit public agency who manages Washington County, Utah's water needs, has identified a need to conserve its water supply. The WCWCD is charged with conserving, developing, managing and stabilizing water supplies within the county in an ongoing effort to provide a safe, sustainable water supply for current and future generations (WCWCD, 2017). The WCWCD and their municipal partners have a reliable, annual water supply of 52,771 acre-feet per year (afy). Washington County has a growing population and is anticipated to need additional water sources by the year 2020. To prepare for these needs, WCWCD has prepared a Water Conservation Plan (WCWCD, 2015). The Water Conservation Plan documents a per capita daily water use of 435 gallons per day in the year 2000 and includes goals of reducing this water use by 25% by the year 2025 and 35% by the year 2060. Implementation of the incentive programs funded through the Agreement will contribute to these goals by reducing water consumption by up to 34.6 afy.

The water supply managed by WCWCD is obtained from the Virgin River watershed. The Virgin River is a tributary to the Colorado River. Water conservation in the Virgin River watershed contributes to overall water conservation in the Lower Colorado River system.

1.3 Relevant Statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders

- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 USC 4321)
- Endangered Species Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-205)
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-665), as Amended 1992 (P.L. 102-575)
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-341)
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601)
- Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act (P.L. 93-291)
- Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (P.L. 96-95)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-711)
- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Acts (16 U.S.C. 668-668d)
- Clean Air Act (33 USC 7401) and Amendments
- Clean Water Act (33 USC 1251 et seq.), Sections 401, 402, and 404
- Safe Drinking Water Act (42 USC 300f)
- Farmland Protection Policy Act (P.L. 97-98)
- Executive Order (EO) 11514: Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality
- EO 11593 - Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment
- EO 11988 - Floodplain Management
- EO 13690- Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and a Process for Further Soliciting and Considering Stakeholder Input (2015)
- EO 11990 - Protection of Wetlands
- EO 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations

- EO 13007 - Indian Sacred Sites
- EO 13186- Protection of Migratory Birds
- Secretarial Order 3175: Departmental Responsibilities for Indian Trust Resources

2.0 Description of Alternatives

2.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not award the Agreement. WCWCD would not utilize the funds awarded under the Agreement, and would need to find other funds to implement the incentive programs which may delay or prevent implementation.

2.2 Proposed Action Alternative

Under the Proposed Action Reclamation would provide \$75,000.00 to WCWCD for two water efficiency incentive programs which are identified in WCWCD's Water Conservation Plan. The programs are described below.

WaterSMART Irrigation Upgrades Rebates

This existing program provides rebates to residential, commercial, and institutional water users who upgrade their irrigation systems with water saving devices. It provides rebates up to \$500 for residential, up to \$1000 for commercial, and up to \$5,000 for institutional water users. Qualifying devices are Smart Water Application Technologies controllers, which monitor weather and other site conditions and adjust the irrigation system to apply the appropriate amount of water for these conditions; high-efficiency nozzles; pressure reducer valves; conversion of irrigation stations to drip irrigation; and capping irrigation stations.

All of these devices are installed on existing irrigation systems, and involve replacing existing irrigation system components without excavating the underground irrigation lines.

The water savings from Agreement funding for this incentive is estimated between 24.17 afy to 34.52 afy.

WETAP Program

This existing program provides rebates for installation of water saving devices in commercial, industrial, and institutional settings. Agreement funding would be used for two components of this program: 1) Pre-approved water-efficient devices/equipment and 2) innovative water efficient devices where the water savings may not be so established the rebate would be performance-based. Examples of pre-approved water-efficient devices/equipment are:

- Retrofitting plumbing fixtures with WaterSense labeled fixtures which provide water savings and meet the Environmental Protection Agency's specifications for water efficiency and performance.
- Replacing water-cooled machines with air-cooled machines.

- Washing machines with a Water Factor (WF) of 4.5 or better. The WF is measured by the quantity of water used to wash each cubic foot of laundry. The smaller the WF rating, the more efficient the clothes washer.

The second component of this program “innovative water efficient devices” provides rebates for custom technologies based on a performance of the water savings found. Rebates are provided to commercial customers who institute new water-saving processes or install new water-saving projects. The WCWCD has not yet funded any custom technologies. Examples of custom technologies from other water providers are: reducing commercial laundry water usage by installing new tunnel washers that utilize reuse of water, and switching from water-based to waterless bottle washing in industrial operations.

The water savings from Agreement funding for this incentive is estimated between .003 afy to .08 afy

2.2.1 Mitigation Measures/Design Features

The following measures would be implemented as part of the proposed action to reduce or eliminate impacts to resources:

General

The WCWCD would be responsible for obtaining all required Federal, State, County, and City permits for the Project.

Cultural Resources/Traditional Cultural Properties/Sacred Sites

If during the course of any activities associated with the execution of the Project, WCWCD becomes aware of or discovers an architectural and/or archaeological resource, the activity in the vicinity of the resource will cease. The WCWCD will secure and protect the resource, and notify Reclamation. Reclamation will ensure that the stipulations of 36 CFR Part 800.11 are satisfied before activities in the vicinity of the resource can resume.

2.2.2 Alternatives Considered but Not Evaluated in Detail

The rebate programs that would receive funding under the Agreement are identified in WCWCD’s Water Conservation Plan and meet the criteria for funding under a WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Project grant. Because these activities are appropriate for funding, no other alternatives were considered.

3.0 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

3.1 Affected Environment

Washington County is located in southwest Utah and in 2016 had an estimated population of 160,245 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). This reflects a 12.7% increase from its 2010 population of 138,115.

The WCWCD serves as a water wholesaler for eight municipalities in the county. The WCWCD obtains 49 percent of its water from surface sources, 44 percent from ground water, and 7 percent from springs in the Virgin River watershed. The Virgin River is a tributary to the Colorado River and enters the river at the northern end of Lake Mead.

The majority of WCWCD's water is sold to its local municipal partners who manage water resources for their respective constituents. WCWCD's jurisdiction covers all of Washington County and includes the Utah cities of St. George, Washington, Hurricane, Santa Clara, Ivins, Toquerville, La Verkin, and Virgin. Water use is 48% residential, and 52 % commercial, industrial, and institutional.

All activities associated with the incentive programs would involve existing residential, commercial, or institutional irrigation systems in previously disturbed areas, or within buildings. The WETAP program rebates would be for replacement of equipment or modification of plumbing fixtures within existing buildings or facilities.

3.2 Environmental Consequences

3.2.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the incentive programs may not be sufficiently funded to be effective. The water savings projected as a result of the Project may not occur, and WCWCD may not meet its goals for water conservation.

3.2. 2 Proposed Action

The two incentive programs are existing programs which provide rebates for activities taking place on private land. Reclamation does not have discretion over these activities; Reclamation's discretionary action is providing funding for the rebate programs. Because Reclamation funding would be used for rebates, the potential environmental impacts of the activities were considered.

The WaterSMART Irrigation Upgrades would be associated with existing irrigation systems in previously disturbed areas. A very small amount of ground disturbance may be needed to access sprinkler heads or insert moisture sensors. No new vehicle access routes or excavation of irrigation lines are anticipated. The WETAP activities would take place within existing

commercial, industrial, or institutional buildings or facilities and would involve replacement of equipment or retrofitting of plumbing.

Because of this, there would be no direct, indirect or cumulative impacts to Indian Trust Assets, visual resources, floodplains, wetlands, water quality, environmental justice, air quality, cultural resources including traditional cultural properties, Indian sacred sites, or biological resources including threatened and endangered species. There may be minor, inconsequential impacts to soils from installation of irrigation system upgrades. There also may be minor, inconsequential air quality and noise impacts from vehicles delivering new equipment or parts to commercial, industrial, or institutional buildings. All of these impacts would be temporary, occurring only while irrigation system upgrades or new equipment delivery or installation is taking place.

The 34.6 afy of water savings would not have a measurable impact to water quantity but would contribute towards overall goals of water savings from the Virgin River watershed and water conservation within the Colorado River Basin.

4.0 Coordination and Consultation

4.1 Agencies Consulted

WCWCD

4.2 Scoping/Public Involvement

Reclamation conducted internal scoping for the EA.

The draft EA was reviewed by WCWCD. The FONSI and Final EA as well as a press release will be posted on Reclamation's web site. The press release will also be issued to local media to inform the public of the availability of the FONSI and Final EA.

5.0 List of Preparers

Faye Streier
Natural Resource Specialist-National Environmental Policy Act Coordinator
Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado Regional Office

Andrew Trouette
Natural Resource Specialist- Biological Services Coordinator
Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado Regional Office

James Kangas
Archaeologist
Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado Regional Office

6.0 References

Washington County Water Conservancy District (WCWCD). 2017. Information accessed on May 9, 2017 at: <http://www.wcwcd.org/about-us/about-the-district>.

Washington County Water Conservancy District (WCWCD). 2015. Water Conservation Plan.

U.S. Department of the Census. 2017. Quick Facts, Washington County Utah. Information accessed May 9, 2017 at: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/49053>.