



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Upper Colorado Region  
Provo Area Office  
302 East 1860 South  
Provo, Utah 84606-7317

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
PRO-773  
ENV-6.00

SEP 21 2007

To Interested Persons, Organizations, and Agencies

Subject: Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Steinaker Reservoir Normal Water Surface Elevation Increase

The Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Steinaker Reservoir Normal Water Surface Elevation Increase have been completed and signed by the Bureau of Reclamation, Provo Area Office. This EA and FONSI can also be viewed electronically at [www.usbr.gov/uc/provo/index.html](http://www.usbr.gov/uc/provo/index.html) (look under the section "Current Focus" and click on the EA). Paper copies of the final EA and FONSI are being provided with this notice to those who requested them in response to our letter dated August 30, 2007.

The EA describes the effects of the proposed normal water surface elevation increase. The purpose of the proposed action is to increase Steinaker Reservoir's normal water surface elevation from 5,517.8 feet to 5,520.5 feet. This would be an increase of 2.7 feet and would allow the reservoir to be filled to the current spillway crest elevation. This increased elevation would allow for additional carryover water storage above current conditions.

In association with this water elevation increase, relocation or modification of certain recreation facilities in Steinaker State Park will be undertaken as described in the EA. Prior to authorizing a water elevation increase in 2008, consultation with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office must be completed, including any mitigation determined to be necessary as a result of the consultation process.

If you have any questions, or would like a paper copy of these documents, please contact:

Mr. W. Russ Findlay  
Fish and Wildlife Biologist, PRO-773  
Bureau of Reclamation, Provo Area Office  
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Thank you for your interest in this environmental review process.

Sincerely,

  
ACTING FOR  
Bruce C. Barrett  
Area Manager

Enclosure

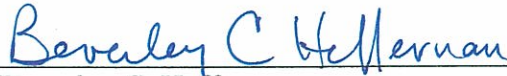
PRO-FONSI-07-001

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Steinaker Reservoir  
Normal Water Surface Elevation Increase  
Draft Environmental Assessment  
Central Utah Project  
Uintah County, Utah


United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Upper Colorado Region  
Provo Area Office  
Provo, Utah

Recommended by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Beverley C. Heffernan  
Chief, Environmental Group

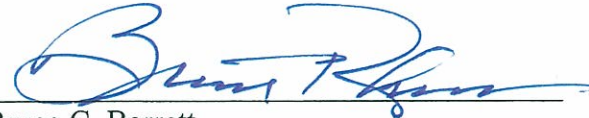
9/20/07  
Date

Concur:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kerry Schwartz  
Manager, Water and Environmental  
Resources Division

9/20/07  
Date

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce C. Barrett  
Area Manager, Provo Area Office

9/20/07  
Date

## **FINDING**

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has determined that authorizing the Uintah Water Conservancy District (UWCD) to increase the normal water surface elevation to 5,520.5 feet above mean sea level will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment and that an environmental impact statement is not required. This decision was based on a thorough review of public comments received during the public review process and the environmental impacts as described in the environmental assessment (EA). This decision is in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-90), as amended; and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508).

## **DECISION**

Reclamation has decided to implement the Proposed Action Alternative as described in the EA. This prescribes an increase of Steinaker Reservoir's normal water surface elevation. This action would not affect normal operations, or environmental aspects mentioned in Chapter 3 of the EA including recreation; water rights; water resources; water quality; system operations; public safety, access, and transportation; visual resources; socioeconomics; cultural resources; paleontological resources; wetlands and vegetation; wildlife resources; threatened, endangered, protected, and sensitive species.

## **REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

A finding of no significant impact is based on the following:

1. The proposed action will have no significant effect on such unique characteristics as cultural resources, wilderness areas, wetlands, and riparian areas.
2. The environmental effects of the proposed action are neither controversial nor do they involve unique or unknown risks.
3. The proposed action would not affect species either currently listed or proposed for listing as candidate, endangered or threatened species, or conservation species; and will not affect designated critical habitat for these species.
4. The proposed action does not threaten to violate a Federal, state or local law, or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

Reclamation has analyzed the environmental effects, public comments, and the alternatives in detail. Reclamation believes that the Proposed Action Alternative best meets the purpose and need described in the EA.



## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

A public scoping period to provide the interested public an opportunity to provide input regarding the scope of this EA was initiated on October 18, 2005, with a scoping letter mailed to over 31 municipalities, organizations, or agencies considered to have an interest in the Proposed Action. The scoping period ended on Friday, November 4, 2005, with three comment letters received. Those comments were given full consideration in defining issues to be analyzed in this EA.

A draft EA was made available for public review and comment from August 30, 2007, to September 14, 2007. Three comments letters were received on the draft EA were fully and carefully considered in preparing the final EA.

Interested parties may receive a copy of the final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by written request to Mr. W. Russ Findlay, Bureau of Reclamation, Provo Area Office. The address is 302 East 1860 South, Provo, Utah 84606-7317, or e-mail, [rfindlay@uc.usbr.gov](mailto:rfindlay@uc.usbr.gov). To view the final EA and FONSI electronically, go to Reclamation's Provo Area office web site at [www.usbr.gov/uc/provo/index.html](http://www.usbr.gov/uc/provo/index.html) (look under the section "Current Focus" and click on the final EA).

The project file in the Provo Area Office contains the comment letters as well as a complete description of all public involvement activities.

## **SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

The expected environmental impacts of the Proposed Alternative are described in Chapter 3 of the EA. The environmental analysis focused on the resources mentioned above. The environmental analysis indicates that the impacts will be temporary, short term, and minor.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION COMMITMENTS**

Reclamation is legally obligated to carry out the environmental mitigation commitments prescribed for impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed action alternative, described in Chapter 4 of the FEA. These commitments have been incorporated by reference into this decision. In particular, commitment number 5 on page 4 of the EA, requiring completion of consultation with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office, must be completed before allowing a higher water elevation, although other components of the proposed action involving modification or relocation of recreation features and facilities may proceed prior to completion of that consultation.

The implementation and effectiveness of these mitigation measures will be closely monitored by Reclamation. This monitoring will ensure incorporation of mitigation requirements in all construction contract specifications, as appropriate, and compliance with mitigation measures recommended by Reclamation or by other agencies.