



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Upper Colorado Region

Western Colorado Area Office

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APR 26 2002

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WCD-RWaldman
ENV-6.00

To: Interested Agencies, Indian Tribes, Organizations, and Individuals

Subject: Finding of No Significant Impact and Final Environmental Assessment Related to Carriage Contracts Between the United States and Three Private Individuals for the Carriage of Non-Project Water through Project Facilities, Mancos Project, Colorado

Enclosed for your information is a copy of the subject Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The FONSI represents final compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act on three proposed contracts between the Bureau of Reclamation, the Mancos Water Conservancy District, and three private individuals. These contracts will allow these individuals to use Reclamation-owned canals and facilities of the Mancos Project in southwestern Colorado to carry private water to continue to irrigate their lands north of Mancos, Colorado.

A Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) was released to the public on March 21, 2002, for public review and comment. No comments were received that suggested changes should be made to the DEA, and only minor changes have been made to the Final Environmental Assessment (FEA); therefore, no FEA will be distributed. A complete document of the FEA may be found on Reclamation's web site at <http://www.uc.usbr.gov/envdoc>, or if needed, a copy of the FEA may be obtained by contacting Rob Waldman at the telephone number shown below, or at e-mail address rwaldman@uc.usbr.gov.

If you have any questions on the FONSI, FEA or the contracting process, please contact Rob Waldman at (970) 385-6567, or Dick Gjere at (970) 385-6531 at our Durango Office.

Sincerely,

Carol DeAngelis
Area Manager

Enclosure

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
WESTERN COLORADO AREA OFFICE

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THREE CONTRACTS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE MANCOS WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT FOR THE CARRIAGE OF NON-PROJECT WATER THROUGH MANCOS PROJECT FACILITIES

Introduction

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and based on the following, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has determined that execution of three contracts between the United States, the Mancos Water Conservancy District, and three water users for the Carriage of Non-Project Water Through Mancos Project Facilities (Carriage Contracts) would not result in any significant impact on the human environment.

Background

These Carriage Contracts are needed to allow the water users and the Mancos Water Conservancy District the ability to carry non-Project water through Reclamation-owned canals and facilities of the Mancos Project in southwestern Colorado. These Carriage Contracts will enable these irrigators to utilize their private, non-project water in a more efficient manner by using Project facilities. The following Carriage Contracts will be executed as a result of this action:

1. Contract with Marilyn Colyer for 0.5 cubic feet per second (cfs) for 30 days per year.
2. Contract with Glen Spencer for 1.0 cfs for 30 days per year.
3. Contract with Robbins Ranches for 2.521 cfs for 75 days per year.

The Mancos Project provides a supplemental irrigation water supply to an established agricultural area and a domestic water supply to Mesa Verde National Park, Mancos Rural Water Company, and the Town of Mancos. Project water is delivered to water users through project facilities and private distribution canals. However, many project water users also own private water rights and use irrigation water from the Mancos Project as a supplementary supply.

A draft and Final Environmental Assessment were completed on the proposed action

Commitments

The following commitments will be followed in the execution and administration of these Carriage Contracts:

1. These proposed carriage contracts only allow historic usage of Non-Project water.
2. Only previously disturbed/cultivated/irrigated properties will receive contract water.
3. No new Project or Non-Project delivery/carriage facilities will be constructed or utilized.
4. These proposed carriage contracts will only utilize excess Mancos Project capacity.

Comments

Only one comment was received on the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for this action. In an April 11, 2002 letter, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) stated that the DEA adequately describes the proposed action, the CWCB supports the findings described on

page 25 of the DEA, and the CWCB supports making the DEA final and entering into the carriage contracts (Attachment A).

Impacts and Agency Conclusions

Because the carriage contracts will not alter existing operations or irrigation practices, there are no impacts projected to fish and wildlife, recreation, land use, or other resources addressed in the DEA.

On April 9, 2002 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) concurred with Reclamation's determination in the DEA that there would be "no effect" on any federally listed species, except the Colorado pikeminnow and the razorback sucker, and that a reasonable and prudent alternative to jeopardy had previously been put in place by the Service and Reclamation (Service, 1998) for those two endangered fish (Attachment B).

On March 29, 2002, the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office concurred with Reclamations determination in the DEA that this federal undertaking has no potential to affect historic properties and that the DEA meets the requirements of 36 CFR 800.3(Attachment C).

Conclusion

Execution of the three Carriage Contracts as described in the Final Environmental Assessment and this FONSI will not have a significant effect on the human environment.

Concur:

Ros Warden
Environmental Specialist, Western Colorado Area Office

4/25/02
Date

Carol DeCangelis
Area Manager, Western Colorado Area Office

4/25/02
Date