

Draft  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
Hunters Hole Restoration Project

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Yuma Area Office

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 implementation of the Proposed Action to issue the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area (YCNHA) a license granting them use of the site for implementing the Hunters Hole Restoration Plan on Reclamation lands would not result in a significant impact on the quality of human health and the environment. The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) provides details on the Proposed Action and an analysis of potential impacts and should be used as a companion document to this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to restore water delivery and maintain riparian, marsh, and open water habitat within the Hunters Hole area in a manner that will sustain wildlife values while providing for border security needs. The need for the project is to offset impacts associated with projects that have limited water delivery and impacted vegetation in the Limitrophe division of the lower Colorado River.

Under the Proposed Action, Reclamation would grant a Contract and License to the YCNHA for the proposed restoration of the Hunters Hole area located on Reclamation lands. The restoration plan would consist of enhancing and restoring riparian, open water, and marsh habitats. In addition, the Proposed Action would make the project compatible with Border Patrol security requirements.

The EA focused on those resource areas identified as potentially impacted by the alternatives considered, including the No Action Alternative. Those resources areas were land use, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, Indian trust assets, energy policy, environmental justice and socioeconomic conditions, fire management, flood plains, hazardous or solid waste, noise, recreation, soils, surface and groundwater quality, visual resources, public health and safety, and travel management. Based on the location and nature of the Proposed Action no negative effects are anticipated to cultural resources, Indian trust assets, energy policy, environmental justice and socioeconomic conditions, fire management, flood plains, recreation, surface and groundwater quality, visual resources, public health and safety, or travel management.

Potential negative effects of the Proposed Action were identified for land use, air quality, biological resources, hazardous or solid waste, noise, and soils. Potential impact to land use includes limited, short term conflicts between heavy equipment used on-site and farming equipment travelling to agricultural fields adjacent to the site. Close coordination between users near and at the site will negate this impact; therefore the

effects are not significant. Air quality will be affected by increasing PM10 emissions during the construction phase of the Proposed Action. Effects are minimal, short term, and localized and therefore do not pose any threat to the overall air quality in the community. Additionally, excavation will not proceed when winds are 20 miles per hour or greater, hence a reduction to the minimal impact that is expected to air quality. Biological resources may be directly or indirectly impacted from the Proposed Action, however since these effects are very short term and localized, there will be no jeopardy to any population of wildlife or vegetation found in the area. To minimize potential negative effects, construction during phases II and III will not occur from March 15 to September 30, which coincides with the breeding seasons for the Yuma clapper rail, Southwestern willow flycatcher and the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. To further minimize potential negative effects to biological resources, native riparian vegetation existing at the site will be avoided to the extent practical. Contamination of the site from hazardous wastes or solid wastes at the site is possible. This potential impact is negated through careful, trained operation of heavy equipment, safe storage of hazardous materials at the site, and careful selection of fueling areas to prevent contamination of surface water, ground water or soils. An increase in noise from the Proposed Action is anticipated only during the construction phase; however the noise is consistent with existing activities and is therefore not significant. Additionally, no sensitive noise receptors are located near the Proposed Action; therefore impacts will not be significant. Temporary, localized, and minor impacts to soils will occur during construction of the project; however the Proposed Action is expected to have an overall net benefit to soils due to the increase in vegetation cover at the site that will likely reduce potential wind and water erosion at the site.

Based on the analysis of the environmental impacts, mitigation measures and other conservation commitments, as presented in the EA, Reclamation finds no significant impact and recommends implementation of the Proposed Action to restore Hunters Hole.

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