

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Sunnyside Division Conservation Project
PN-FONSI-04-09

Introduction

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a conservation project on the Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District (SVID), within the Sunnyside Division of the Yakima Project.

The purpose of the Sunnyside conservation project is to make the Sunnyside system more efficient by implementing water conservation improvements, thereby conserving water for fish benefit. The need for the project will be met by improving the canal system in order to divert less water and provide more water for fish.

Alternatives Considered

Two alternatives were developed and evaluated in the Environmental Assessment (EA), the No Action Alternative (as required by the National Environmental Policy Act) and Main Canal Improvements Alternative. The canal improvements will consist of constructing three re-regulation reservoirs along the Sunnyside main canal and installing automated check structures in the canal in order to make canal operations more efficient and conserve water.

The Recommended Alternative

Reclamation has selected the Main Canal Improvements Alternative as the recommended alternative for implementation.

Proposal

Reclamation proposes to implement the conservation project by issuing a grant to the SVID as part of implementation of the water conservation program provided for as part of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP). YRBWEP was authorized by Title XII of Public Law 103-434.

This project consists of the following:

- Three re-regulation (re-reg) reservoirs constructed within the Sunnyside Main Canal, located at canal miles 23.7, 37.25, and 59.29.
- Replacement of 30 existing drop structures with new, fully automated electrically powered gates.
- Addition of two new checks with fully automated electrically powered gates, to improve the operation of the lower end of the Sunnyside Main Canal.
- A new chute drop spillway at Spring Creek and new hoists and automation of the Sunnyside Diversion, Sulphur Creek, and the new Spring Creek Spillway gate systems
- A Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system communicating by radio between the central office and all automated control sites; 35 in all

Consultation, Coordination, and Public Involvement

Formal consultations under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) have been initiated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries) to address any impacts from this conservation project. NOAA Fisheries has concurred with Reclamation's determination that this project may affect, but not likely to adversely affect Mid-Columbia steelhead, by way of letter dated September 20, 2004.

Summary of Review Comments and Reclamations Responses

No comments on the draft EA, issued July 28, 2004 have been received. Consequently, no substantive modifications to the draft EA were made when the final EA was prepared.

Findings

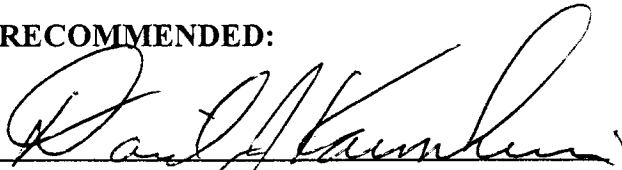
This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based upon the following:

- Impacts to listed fish would be beneficial since less water will be diverted for irrigation and more available for fish.
- No negative impacts to wetlands, terrestrial species, groundwater, surface water, or soils were identified in the EA

Based on the environmental analysis as presented in the final EA, Reclamation concludes that implementation of preferred action and associated environmental commitments would have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment or the natural resources in the affected area.

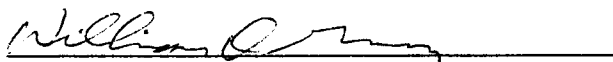
This Finding of No Significant Impact has therefore been prepared and submitted to document environmental review and evaluation in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

RECOMMENDED:


Upper Columbia Area Environmental Manager

9-21-04
Date

APPROVED:


Upper Columbia Office Area Manager

9/21/04
Date