

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
(FONSI)**

LC-10-039

**Repair of Yuma Cove Razorback Sucker Rearing Pond
Mojave County, Arizona**

Based on a thorough review of the analysis of the environmental impacts presented in the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) Reclamation concludes that implementation of the Environmentally Preferred Alternative (Alternative B, referred to as the Management-Preferred Alternative in the EA) will not significantly affect the quality of the human or physical environment within or adjacent to the project area, therefore an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

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

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Recommended: [Signature] Date: 10-22-10
Asking Manager, Environmental Compliance Group

Approved: [Signature] Date: 22 Oct 10
Director, Resources Management Office

BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Lower Colorado Multi-Species Conservation Program (LC MSCP), in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS) is proposing to repair the earthen berm at Yuma Cove, on Lake Mojave within the Lake Meade National Recreation Area. The repair is needed to prevent non-native fish from entering the backwater pond where the razorback suckers, a federally listed endangered species included in the LC MSCP, are reared for stocking in Lake Mojave. The berm is a constructed feature which has been periodically repaired because wave action causes it to deteriorate.

The National Park Service conducted an environmental review of the proposed project under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. A 30-day public scoping period was held between May 23 and June 24, 2010. One comment expressing concern about the impact of lowering the lake level on the fish hatchery on Willow Beach was received from the Nevada Department of Wildlife. It is necessary to lower the lake level to work on the berm. The EA clarified that the lake level will be maintained at a level that allows for normal hatchery operations. The draft EA was made available for a 30-day public review period on August 11, 2010. One comment letter was received from the Fish and Wildlife Service concurring with Alternative B. No changes were made to the EA as a result of public comment. More detail on public involvement can be found in the NPS FONSI and EA, included as Attachment A.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

A No Action Alternative and one other action alternative were considered in detail. Under the No Action Alternative, the Yuma Cove backwater pond would not be repaired. Under Alternative C, "Use of Approved Roads and Shoreline", the earthen berm would be repaired utilizing a bull dozer, front loader, and pick up with a 100 gallon fuel tank. Approximately 760 cubic yards of material would be moved from the shoreline in front of the backwater to restore the berm to a crest width of 12 feet, a crest height of 652 feet above mean sea level and a slope of 3:1. The equipment would be transported along approved roads until reaching the shoreline of Lake Mojave at Arizona Bay, where it would travel north along the shoreline. The No Action Alternative was not selected because it did not meet the purpose and need for the action. Alternative C was not selected due to greater resource impacts from equipment transport.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT DISMISSED

The use of barges or helicranes to transport the heavy equipment from Cottonwood Cove (the closest launching point) to Yuma Cove was given preliminary consideration by NPS and Reclamation but was discarded because these methods were not practical or feasible.

THE RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

Under Alternative B "Re-Use of Restored Roads" the earthen berm would be repaired utilizing a bull dozer, front loader, and pick up with a 100 gallon fuel tank. Approximately 760 cubic yards of material would be moved from the shoreline in front of the backwater to restore the berm to a crest width of 12 feet, a crest height of 652 feet above mean sea level and a slope of 3:1, with a

base width of 42 feet. The work is estimated to take five days to complete with two days to transport equipment to and from the work sites and three days to repair the berm.

The heavy equipment would be transported along approved roads within the Lake Meade National Recreation Area. A previously existing route used to access the berm for repairs in 1999 will be used. The route has been restored by NPS. It will not be bladed but some minor earthwork will take place in areas that have washed out. Unless more preferable options become available in the future, this route will be retained for future administrative access to Yuma Cove. Some restoration will take place to prevent unauthorized use and additional impacts.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND FINDINGS

Implementation of Alternative B "Re-Use of Restored Roads" will not result in significant impacts to any of the resources evaluated in the EA. The reasons for this determination are summarized by resource below.

1. Indian Trust Assets- There are no projected impacts to Indian Trust Assets as none have been identified in the project area.
2. Environmental Justice- There would be no disproportionate high or adverse effects to minority or low income populations as a result of the action.
3. Cultural Resources- There are no cultural resources, historic properties, sacred sites, or historic view sheds identified in the project area; therefore there would be no impacts to these resources
4. Socioeconomic- There would be no potential impacts to employment or tax bases as a result of Alternative B.
5. Wetlands and Floodplains- There would be no potential impacts to wetlands or floodplains.
6. Geology and Soils- There would be some compaction of previously impacted areas as a result of transportation of equipment. These impacts are anticipated to be minor, long-term and localized.
7. Vegetation- There would be some impacts to previously restored vegetation as a result of equipment transfer. These are expected to be minor, long-term, and localized.
8. Wildlife- There could be direct mortality to reptiles and small mammals as a result of equipment transport and construction. These impacts are expected to be minor, short term, and localized.
9. Special Status Species- The construction, operation, and maintenance of the razorback rearing ponds on Lake Mojave is addressed in the Biological Opinion for the LC MSCP. No additional consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is required. Alternative B would have beneficial impacts on the razorback sucker as it would protect habitat. Impacts to other special status species are expected to be negligible.
10. Water Resources- There would be some increase in water turbidity as a result of equipment transport and construction. The impacts are expected to be negligible, short-term, and localized. The Army Corps of Engineers has provided a determination that Nationwide Permit #3 may be used for the construction, providing the project meets the stated criteria.

11. Air Quality- There would be some release of dust and exhaust from transport of equipment and construction. These impacts would be minor, short-term, and localized.
12. Soundscapes- Construction equipment would cause sound disturbance within Yuma Cove for less than a week. There are several other activities taking place in the area that would affect soundscapes; therefore there would be cumulative impacts. However, the impacts would be minor and short term.
13. Visual Resources- There would be some visual impacts from crushed vegetation and vehicle tracks, however these areas are expected to recover after construction. Therefore the impacts would be negligible and localized.
14. Park Operations- Staff from the NPS would be required to ensure environmental compliance and restoration. This would result in short-term, minor impacts to park operations.
15. Safety and Visitor Use and Experience- Equipment use during construction would limit visitor use during the construction period. This would result in minor, short-term impacts.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Alternative B incorporates the following mitigation and monitoring measures to reduce impacts to specific resources.

Geology, Soils, and Vegetation

1. A resource advisor from NPS will be on site to monitor the transport of equipment in to and out of the project area. This will ensure that the equipment follows the designated route to the project site and that there is no undo impact to resources on the ground.
2. Prior to beginning the project, all heavy equipment will be thoroughly pressure washed to remove foreign soil and vegetative matter; this will ensure that non-native plants are not introduced to the project area.
3. Equipment will be inspected daily to ensure there are no leaks of petroleum products or other hazardous materials.
4. Best Management practices will be in place during refueling and other activities that may release hazardous materials into the environment. A hazardous spill plan will be developed prior to beginning the project.
5. To minimize ground disturbance, heavy equipment will be restricted to one mobilization into Yuma Cove and one demobilization out of the park.
6. Heavy equipment will be parked in previously disturbed areas designated by NPS; no new staging areas will be created.

Visual Resources

7. Following the completion of the project, all portions of the route used to transport equipment that are not part of a public road system will be sufficiently restored to prevent unauthorized use.

Safety and Visitor Use and Experience

8. The work will be conducted on weekdays (Monday to Friday) to minimize inconveniences to park visitors, who use the lake in greater numbers on weekends.

