

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Storage of Non-Project Water in Rockport Reservoir - Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

PRO-EA-15-002

**Weber Basin Project, Summit County, Utah
Upper Colorado Region
Provo Area Office**



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Provo Area Office
Provo, Utah**

May 2015

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
PROVO AREA OFFICE

Decision: It is my decision to authorize the Proposed Action identified in EA No. PRO-EA-15-002.

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and an environmental impact statement is not required.

Rationale for Decision: The decision to allow the Proposed Action does not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation.

Recommended by:



Chief, Environmental Group

Date 6/3/15

Concur:



Chief, Water and Environmental Resources Division

Date 6/3/15

Approved by:

for 

Wayne G. Pullan
Area Manager, Provo Area Office

Date 6/5/15

Introduction

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), the Bureau of Reclamation, Provo Area Office, Upper Colorado Region has conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a proposed action to pressurize and store non-project water in Rockport Reservoir. Reclamation is the responsible owner of Wanship Dam and Rockport Reservoir and is the lead agency for the purposes of compliance with the NEPA for this proposed action.

The EA was prepared by Reclamation to address the need to pressurize their irrigation system through Wanship Dam, and to store non-project Weber River water in Rockport Reservoir under conditions of the enclosed contract.

Alternatives

The EA analyzed the No-Action Alternative and the proposed Action Alternative, to allow the North Summit Pressurized Irrigation Company (Company) to pressurize their irrigation system through Wanship Dam, and to store non-project Weber River water in Rockport Reservoir under conditions of the contract. Reclamation's decision is to implement the proposed Action alternative. All mitigation measures and terms and conditions that are integral to the alternative are included in the EA and contract.

Related NEPA Documents

There are no other Environmental Assessments or NEPA documents that are currently being prepared that are related to, but not part of the scope of this EA.

Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon a review of the EA and supporting documents, I have determined that implementing the proposal will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required for this proposed action. This finding is based on consideration of the context and intensity as summarized here from the EA.

Context

The affected locality is Wanship Dam and Rockport Reservoir within the Upper Colorado Region.

Intensity

The following discussion is organized around the 10 significance criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27. These criteria were incorporated into the resource analysis and issues considered in the EA.

- 1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.** The proposed action would not adversely impact resources of the human environment, in the short or long term. None of the environmental effects discussed in the EA are considered significant, nor do the effects rise to the level of needing to complete an EIS.
- 2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety or a minority or low-income population.** The proposal will have no significant impacts on public health or safety. No minority or low income community would be disproportionately affected by the proposed action.
- 3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area.** There are no park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas that would be affected by the proposal.
- 4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** The effects on the proposal on the quality of the human environment are not highly controversial.
- 5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered highly uncertain or that involve unique or unknown risks.
- 6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** This action would not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, because there are no significant effects as a result of this action. This action does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.
- 7. Whether the action is related to other actions which are individually insignificant but cumulatively significant.** Cumulative effects are not predicted, as described in the EA.
- 8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.** A determination of no historic properties affected was made based on the proposed action.
- 9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** There are no endangered or threatened species or critical habitat affected by this action. Therefore, a no effect determination is made.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment.

The project does not violate any federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation, or policy imposed for the protection of the environment. In addition, this project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

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PRO-15-EA-002

**Weber Basin Project
Summit County, Utah
Upper Colorado Region
Provo Area Office**

prepared by

*Beth Reinhart
Provo, Area Office*



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Provo Area Office
Provo, Utah**

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Chapter 1 Need for Proposed Action and Background

1.1 Introduction

This document is an Environmental Assessment (EA) for temporary storage of up to 6,000 acre-feet (AF) of non-project water in Rockport Reservoir, in Summit County, Utah, by carriage contract with the Bureau of Reclamation. The East Hoytsville Ditch Company came together with other local irrigation companies in 2012, to form the North Summit Pressurized Irrigation Company (Company). The Company has enclosed its earth-lined irrigation canals. The primary benefit would be the ability to store up to 6,000 AF of water in Rockport Reservoir, at the discretion of the Weber Basin Water Conservancy District (District) and the United States.

1.2 Background

As early as 1859, settlers began taking up residence along the Weber River in what is now Hoytsville, Utah. These settlers dug irrigation ditches to bring water from the Weber River and other smaller creeks, to irrigate their crops. Earth-lined ditches were used because they were the most inexpensive way to bring water to farmland; however, they were also inefficient and allowed for almost 40 percent of the water lost due to seepage and evapotranspiration (loss of water from the soil both by evaporation and by transpiration from plants growing nearby).

In 1949, the Weber Basin Project was approved to provide an annual water supply for irrigation (160,000 AF) and municipal and industrial (M&I) (60,000 AF) uses, in and around the Weber and Ogden River drainages. The Weber Basin Project was built on top of the previously constructed irrigation infrastructure, and has delivered the non-project water through facilities, based on the senior water rights of the various irrigation and ditch companies in the area since completion. Weber River water owned by the shareholders, now known as the North Summit Pressurized Irrigation Company, has historically been released through Rockport Reservoir's outlet works on a run-of-the river basis since completion of the dam in 1957.

In 2011, the East Hoytsville Ditch Company, one of the founding members of the Company, was awarded a grant under Reclamation's WaterSMART Program to pursue a pressurized irrigation system to replace the current flood irrigation methods. While various options were considered to connect the new system to Rockport Reservoir, the preferred alternative was to install a tee into the existing

24-inch outlet pipe that sits at the base of the dam. That allowed the Company to make use of the associated head created by the dam to pressurize the system, while not disturbing the embankment.

Construction of this pipeline included nearly 20 miles of 4-inch to 36-inch diameter pipelines, about 91 irrigation turnouts, up to 300 residential secondary connections, several pressure reducing stations, and various valves and meters. The pipeline was installed in road rights-of-ways, existing ditches or canals, and active farm fields. Meters were installed on the main pipeline so that the water in the system is accurately measured and efficiently used. The system was designed to optimize the use of irrigation water in the surrounding area and serve as secondary system for many local homeowners. The secondary system in the area minimizes the use of culinary water for watering yards and gardens around Hoytsville, Utah. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance to pipe the privately owned canal and pressurize the system was documented with the signing of a Categorical Exclusion on December 6, 2012 (PRO-CE-11-063).

The carriage of non-project water in Reclamation facilities is authorized by the Warren Act of February 21, 1911 (43 U.S.C. 523; 36 Stat 925). This document analyzes the environmental impacts and effects of entering into a Warren Act Contract with the Company, thereby allowing it to carry and store water.

As the Company's water is Weber River water, no additional sources would be introduced under the proposed carriage contract.

1.3 Purpose of the Proposed Action

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to allow the Company to store non-project Weber River water in Rockport Reservoir under conditions of the carriage contract found in the appendix. Minor quantities of storage would be allowed on a space available basis. The non-project water would be used exclusively during the irrigation season.

1.4 Description of the Project

Wanship Dam, completed in 1957, creates Rockport Reservoir. The reservoir is located on the Weber River south of the town of Wanship. The dam and reservoir are features of the Weber Basin Project. The Weber Basin Project collects and utilizes, for multiple purposes, stream flows in the natural drainage basin of the Weber River, including the basin of the Ogden River, the principal tributary. Construction of the Weber Basin Project was authorized by Congress in 1949.

Rockport Reservoir is owned by the United States and operated by District. The District administers the delivery of water stored in Rockport Reservoir to its shareholders, comprised of irrigators as well as municipal water districts. These

water deliveries add significant benefits to irrigated lands and provide a critical water supply to much of the Wasatch Front.

Rockport Reservoir has 62,120 AF total capacity, and a surface area of 1,077 acres at water elevation 6037 feet. Wanship Dam is a zoned earthfill structure. The dam is 156 feet high, has a crest length of 2,015 feet, and contains 3,183,000 cubic yards of material. The spillway is an uncontrolled open concrete chute with a capacity of 10,800 cubic feet per second (cfs). The outlet works has a capacity of 1,000 cfs and provides for releases to the power plant, to the East Wanship Ditch, the West Wanship Ditch, or directly to the river.

Water resources in the area were extensively developed by individuals and private irrigation companies before initiation of the Weber Basin Project. Prior Federal Reclamation developments include the Weber River Project with Echo Reservoir and the Ogden River Project with Pineview Reservoir, and conveyance facilities on the Ogden River. The Weber River and Provo River Projects diverted water from the high reaches of Weber River for multiple uses on the Weber and Provo Rivers. The Weber Basin Project supplements these earlier undertakings and integrates project operations towards the full development of the area's water resources. In full operation, the project provides an average of 166,000 AF of water annually for irrigation and 50,000 AF for M&I use in a heavily populated and industrialized portion of the State of Utah.

1.5 Authorizing Actions, Permits, and Licenses

Implementation of the Proposed Action would require authorization from Reclamation to allow storage of non-project water in Rockport Reservoir. The proposed carriage contract does not alter nor grant approval to change the Company's water right priority dates, points of diversion, places of use, depletion amounts, etc.

Chapter 2 Proposed Action and No Action Alternative

2.1 No Action Alternative

In the event that a carriage contract is not executed by Reclamation, the Company would not be allowed to carry or store non-project water in Rockport Reservoir. The no action alternative requires no changes to project features. The Company's water would continue to pass through the reservoir and be taken out at historical diversion points.

2.2 Proposed Action

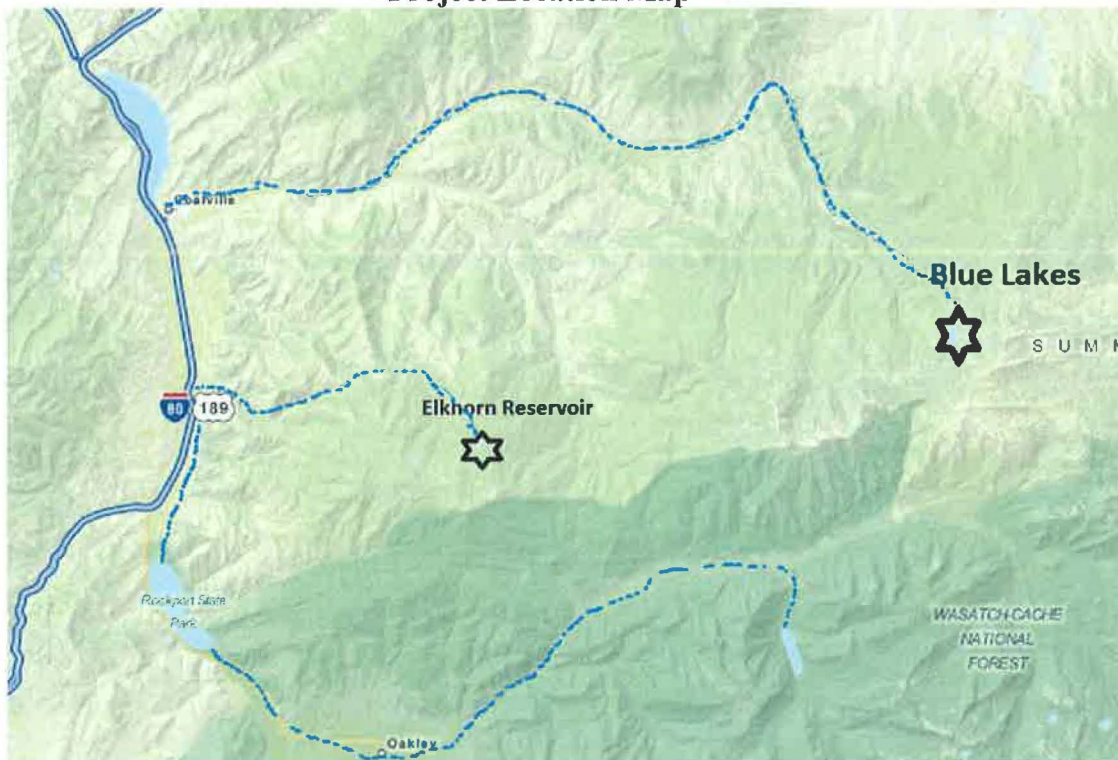
The Company has the rights to approximately 6,000 AF of Weber River water, which is currently released through the outlet works and diverted downstream of Rockport Reservoir for irrigation purposes. The Proposed Action would allow the Company to use Rockport Reservoir to divert its water rights at the outlet works. In addition, the Proposed Action would allow the Company, through a contract between Reclamation, the District, and the Company, the benefit of storing non-project water (up to 6,000 AF) in Rockport Reservoir, during the same water year when there is storage space available in Rockport Reservoir.

The carriage contract is limited to a 40-year term. The quantity and timing of non-project storage is limited to what can be done without negatively impacting the Weber Basin Project water rights and operations. In no case would the storage exceed 6,000 AF, therefore capacity issues are not deemed significant. Storage of non-project water in Rockport Reservoir would not be allowed during times when unused non-project water would have otherwise been left in the Weber River to satisfy downstream senior water rights, meet downstream minimum flow requirements, or have been stored under Weber Basin Project Water Rights, including Willard Bay Reservoir rights. Even when non-project storage is restricted because of potential impairment to the Weber Basin Project, the Company would still be allowed to divert the Weber River flows (without storage) at Rockport Reservoir under the Company's water rights. The amount of Weber River water available for diversion would be determined by the River Commissioner, based on the flows in the river and the priority date of the Company's water rights.

It is anticipated that the Company would exchange water stored in other reservoirs in the Weber River Drainage Basin for stored water in Rockport Reservoir. The Company has indicated it has historically used water in Elkhorn Reservoir, Blue

Lakes, and Echo Reservoir. Through an exchange application, filed with the Division of Water Rights, the Company would make the water in the Elkhorn Reservoir available to the Weber Basin Project in exchange for a like amount of water stored in Rockport Reservoir. Figure 1 is a map that shows location of Blue Lakes and Elkhorn Reservoir in relation to Rockport Reservoir.

**Figure 1
Project Location Map**



The Company's stored water would be used within the area that has historically been served by Elkhorn Ditch Co., Coalville, Hoytsville Irrigation Company, and West Hoytsville Irrigation Company. This area covers the valley and bench areas along the Weber River between Rockport Reservoir and Echo Reservoir.

2.3 System Operations

The operation of Rockport Reservoir is integrated with the entire Weber River system to satisfy the overall project requirements. Water users receive project water directly or by exchange, delivered through Reclamation structures and facilities. Water Exchange Agreements have been executed between the District and downstream direct flow users. Storage and distribution of project waters are regulated in accordance with the Weber Basin Project Operating Criteria. Under the provision of these agreements and criteria and in accordance with the Army Corps of Engineers Flood Control plan, storage and releases are made under the direction of the State Engineer through the River Commissioner. The River

Commissioner determines the annual storage amounts and monitors all reservoir exchanges and releases, to ensure they are consistent with the underlying storage rights.

Releases are generally determined in the following manner:

1. The District provides authorization for water deliveries of its storage rights prior to the irrigation season, or whenever changes are required pursuant to its contract obligations.
2. The River Commissioner takes delivery orders on a demand basis.
3. The River Commissioner ascertains the maximum anticipated needs, including the minimum release requirement of 25 cfs from Rockport Reservoir on a demand basis, and directs these releases to be made accordingly.

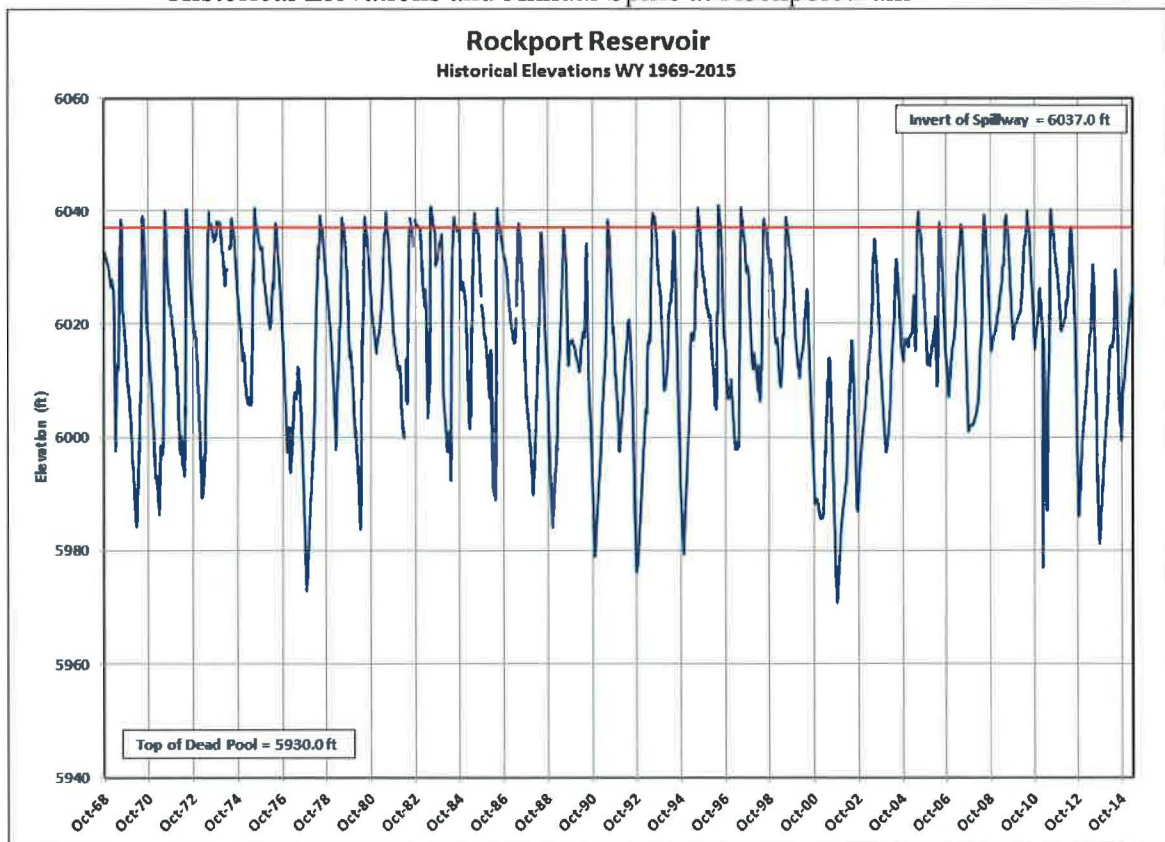
Rockport Reservoir has a right to store water year round under a 1958 priority date. However, because of this junior priority date the storage typically occurs during the high runoff in the spring, after downstream prior rights have been satisfied. Although Echo Reservoir which is downstream, has an earlier storage right through an agreement, Rockport Reservoir is allowed to store water ahead of Echo Reservoir. The River Commissioner tracks the out-of-priority storage at Rockport Reservoir and makes this water available to the Weber River Water Users Association if Echo fails to fill. The District project water storage usually begins in the spring and continues until Rockport Reservoir is either full or the flood control criteria dictates the bypassing of inflow and a late filling from spring runoff.

Flood control regulations for Rockport Reservoir have been developed by Reclamation and approved and issued by the Army Corps of Engineers, as a comprehensive plan for flood control operation of the Weber Basin. Rockport Reservoir operated jointly with Echo Reservoir, has a maximum flood control reservation of 135,000 AF. When water is stored within the portion of the joint-use flood control pool that the Flood Control Diagram indicates is required for flood control, releases would be made from one or both reservoirs as rapidly as possible without causing flows in Weber River at Coalville to exceed 1,500 cfs, or the flows below Echo Dam to exceed 2,000 cfs.

Inflow forecasts are provided by the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center in Salt Lake City. The forecasts are published as of the first of each month from January to June, for expected unregulated inflow volumes occurring in April through July. The forecast numbers provide a basis for planning reservoir and project operations prior to and during the flood season and permit optimization and coordination of water supply and other reservoir functions. The forecasts also

assist in planning operating procedures consistent with the operating criteria to protect the dams against failure caused by excessive reservoir levels and releases. Normal operations at Rockport Reservoir fill the reservoir annually and commonly generate spillway releases. Historical elevations and annual spills are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Historical Elevations and Annual Spills at Rockport Dam



Chapter 3 Affected Environment

3.1 Environmental Consequences

The Proposed Action would not require new water delivery facilities to be constructed or any change in the use of project water. There would be no ground-disturbing activities that have not been analyzed in previous NEPA documentation. No additional analysis of these impacts is needed. No change in the use of project water would occur under this proposal. Conveyance of non-project water would not interfere with conveyance of project water through the project facilities.

Any storage of non-project water in Rockport Reservoir would be in addition to the existing Weber Project water storage. Therefore, the only change to the reservoir operations is the occasional temporary storage of up to 6,000 AF, or more when space is available. This additional non-project storage would still come from Weber River water which already flows through the reservoir, so it would not impact water quality in the reservoir. Additionally, fish species impacts usually arise from low reservoir elevations. Since the proposed action would slightly increase the water carried in Rockport Reservoir, it should have no negative impacts on fish populations or recreational fishing and boating.

There are no anticipated impacts to any of the following resources as a result of the Proposed Action: threatened and endangered species, farmlands, flood plains, water quality, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, hazardous or solid wastes, air quality, cultural resources, and Native American concerns. A no effect determination was made by the resource specialists on each of the following environmental issues as well as no adverse cumulative impacts (see Table 1). As a result of the analysis presented in this EA, Reclamation considers the Proposed Action alternative to be the preferred action alternative.

Table 1
Environmental Consequences

EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANT CRITERIA		No	Yes	Uncertain
1.	This action or group of actions would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.	X		
2.	This action or group of actions would involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.	X		
EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES				
1.	This action would have significant adverse effects on public health or safety.	X		
2.	This action would have an adverse effect on unique geographical features such as: wetlands, Wild or Scenic Rivers, refuges, floodplains, rivers placed on the Nationwide River Inventory, or prime or unique farmlands.	X		
3.	This action will have highly controversial environmental effects.	X		
4.	This action will have highly uncertain environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risk.	X		
5.	This action will establish a precedent for future actions.	X		
6.	This action is related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant effects.	X		
7.	This action will affect properties listed, or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.	X		
8.	This action will adversely affect a species listed, or proposed to be listed, as endangered or threatened.	X		
9.	This action threatens to violate Federal, state, local or Tribal law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.	X		
10.	This action will affect Indian Trust Assets.	X		
11.	This action will not accommodate access to or allow ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners to the extent practicable. Neither will it avoid adversely affect, to any practicable extent, the physical integrity of such sacred sites (E.O. 13007).	X		
12.	This action will disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations (E.O. 12898).	X		

3.2 Indian Trust Assets

Indian Trust Assets are legal interests in property held in trust by the United States for Federally recognized Indian tribes or Indian individuals. Assets can be real property, physical assets, or intangible property rights, such as lands, minerals, hunting and fishing rights, and water rights. The United States has an Indian trust responsibility to protect and maintain rights reserved by or granted to such tribes or individuals by treaties, statutes, and executive orders. These rights are sometimes further interpreted through court decisions and regulations. This trust responsibility requires that all Federal agencies take all actions reasonably necessary to protect trust assets. Reclamation would carry out its activities in a manner which protects these assets and avoids adverse impacts when possible. When impacts cannot be avoided, Reclamation would provide appropriate mitigation or compensation. Implementation of the Proposed Action would have no foreseeable negative impacts on Indian Trust Assets.

3.3 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, established Environmental Justice as a Federal agency priority to ensure that minority and low-income groups are not disproportionately affected by Federal actions.

Rockport Reservoir is located in Summit County. As of 2000, the population of Summit County was 29,736, consisting of 1,609 individuals living below poverty level and 3,128 individuals belonging to various minority groups (Utah Governor's Office of Planning and Budget). The proposed project would not involve major facility construction, population relocation, health hazards, hazardous waste, property takings, or substantial economic impacts. This action would therefore have no adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations as defined by environmental justice policies and directives.

3.4 Cumulative Effects

Due to the nature of the proposed action alternative, the pressurization of the water in the carriage system and temporary storage of up to 6,000 AF of non-project water in existing facilities, there would be no individually minor or collectively significant effects. Therefore, there are no foreseeable cumulative environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action.