

SUPPLEMENTAL FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Hunters Hole Restoration Project

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

BACKGROUND

The Hunters Hole Restoration project proposes to restore riparian, marsh, and open water habitats within the Hunters Hole area in a manner that will sustain wildlife values while providing for border security needs. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Hunters Hole Restoration project dated June 9, 2009 are available at http://www.usbr.gov/lc/yuma/environmental_docs/enviro_nocs.html.

The 2009 EA evaluated two alternatives, the proposed action and the no action. The proposed action consisted of restoring 95 acres of wetland, aquatic, riparian and upland habitat within the 435-acre Hunters Hole area. However, recent results from site studies conducted by the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area (YCNHA) indicate that the project area will restrict the ability to sustain large open water and aquatic habitat areas at the project area. In addition, attempts to acquire consent from private land owners for accessing portions of the Hunters Hole project area were unsuccessful, further restricting the ability to use the total project area. A new 35-acre restoration alternative being proposed under the Supplemental EA calls for a change in the habitat type and an adjustment in the acres proposed for restoration.

Under the Proposed Action, the Bureau of Reclamation would grant a Contract and License to the YCNHA for the proposed restoration of the Hunters Hole area located on Reclamation lands. The new alternative would still meet the projects purpose and need by enhancing and restoring riparian, open water, and marsh habitats in a smaller area, while still meeting Border Patrol security requirements.

Resource Analysis

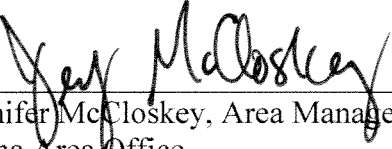
Reclamation has prepared a supplemental EA and FONSI to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the new 35 acre restoration alternative. The supplemental EA is attached for referenced.

The new alternative would not affect the following resources beyond what was analyzed and disclosed in the 2009 EA: land use, air quality, Indian trust assets, energy policy, environmental justice and socio-economic conditions, fire management, floodplain, hazardous or solid waste, noise, recreation and visitor services, soils, visual resources, public health and safety, and travel management. The proposed action would not have any cumulative effects beyond what was analyzed in the 2009 EA. Therefore, these resource categories are not analyzed in further detail.

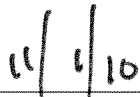
1. Implementation of this alternative would occur throughout the year to include migrating and nesting seasons of the southwestern willow flycatcher and Yuma clapper rail because of the lack of wildlife habitat currently at the site. In addition, native riparian vegetation existing at the site would be avoided to the extent practical.
2. The same Best Management Practices recommended in the 2009 EA to mitigate any potential effects to cultural resources from the project shall apply to the new 35-acre alternative. An archaeological monitor would be present for any excavation activities proposed in the two parcels that were not surveyed for cultural resources. If previously unidentified archaeological or historical resources are discovered during the restoration project, work will stop and the Reclamation Environmental Manager and project archaeologist will be notified immediately. The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office provided a concurrence with a "no effect determination" for the larger 95-acre alternative. The new alternative lies within the previously consulted APE.
3. Operation of the existing groundwater located at the site well would be monitored by Reclamation in order to ensure compliance with international agreements and obligations.

NEPA Finding

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and based on the analysis of the environmental impacts, and mitigation measures as presented in the supplemental EA. Reclamation finds no significant impact and recommends implementation of the new 35 acre Alternative.



Jennifer McCloskey, Area Manager
Yuma Area Office



Date