

PRO-FONSI-10-004

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
And Decision Document**

**Peoples Canal Salinity Control Project
Daggett County, Utah and Sweetwater County, Wyoming**

**Bureau of Reclamation
Upper Colorado Region
Provo Area Office
Provo, Utah**

Recommended by:

Beverley C. Heffernan
Beverley C. Heffernan
Chief, Environmental Group

1/5/10
Date

Concur:

Kerry Schwartz
Kerry L. Schwartz
Manager, Water and Environmental
Resources Division

1-5-10
Date

Approved by:

Bruce C. Barrett
Bruce C. Barrett
Area Manager, Provo Area Office

1/5/10
Date

FINDING

The Bureau of Reclamation, Provo Area Office (Reclamation) has determined that providing funds to implement the proposed action analyzed in the Peoples Canal Salinity Control Project Environmental Assessment (EA) would not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment and that an environmental impact statement is not required. This decision was based on a thorough review of the EA and public comments received from the scoping letter. This decision is in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-90), as amended, and the Council of Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508). The Bureau of Land Management, Rock Springs Office in Wyoming was a cooperating agency in preparing the EA.

DECISION

Reclamation has decided to provide funding authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 to implement the Action Alternative described in the EA. About 8.0 miles of pipeline would replace about 9.1 miles of existing Peoples Canal. The construction of the pipeline would originate at the head of the Canal near Washam, Wyoming. The first 4.8 miles of pipeline would traverse through public and private land located west of the Henrys Fork River in Wyoming. The remaining 3.2 miles of pipeline would continue into Utah on private land with its terminus east of the Town of Manila, Utah. The proposed project would allow replacing the existing Canal with a pipeline while protecting environmental resources described in Chapter 3 of the EA (i.e. air quality; water quality; upland vegetation; wetlands; fish and wildlife resources; threatened, endangered, candidate, and state sensitive species; paleontological resources; public health and safety; soundscape; transportation; visual resources; recreation; prime and unique farmland; urban quality; and hydrology. Approximately 30 acres of riparian vegetation including open water habitat along the Canal prism would be lost once the pipeline is placed and the Canal is buried. A habitat replacement plan to replace wildlife values foregone must be prepared and finalized by the Peoples Canal Company and approved by Reclamation. There would be an adverse effect to cultural resources. The existing unlined earthen irrigation Canal would be replaced with a pipeline and would be buried. Mitigation measures for the adverse effect to the Peoples Canal would be outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in accordance with 36 CFR 800.6(c).

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The finding of no significant impact and decision to authorize funding for the project are based on the following:

1. The proposed action would have no significant effect on such unique characteristics as wilderness areas, and wetlands.

2. The environmental effects of the proposed action are neither controversial nor do they involve unique or unknown risks.
3. The proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, species either currently listed or proposed for listing as candidate, endangered or threatened species and would not affect designated critical habitat for these species.
4. The proposed action would have an adverse effect to cultural resources, however a Memorandum of Agreement has been executed to mitigate for the adverse effect to the Peoples Canal.
5. The proposed action does not threaten to violate Federal, State or local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

Reclamation has analyzed the environmental effects, public scoping comments, and the Action Alternative in detail. Reclamation believes that the Action Alternative best meets the purpose and need described in the EA.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

On September 14, 2009, Reclamation sent a scoping letter to interested individuals, groups, stakeholders, municipalities, organizations, and agencies, in order to make them aware of the proposed project and solicit public input. Six responses to the Scoping Letter were received during the public scoping period. The scoping comments were considered in preparing the EA.

Coordination between the Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Land Management has been ongoing to discuss right-of-way issues pipeline alignment, cultural resource impacts, and biological resource impacts. The Utah and Wyoming State Historic Preservation Offices and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were consulted pursuant to applicable laws and are involved with all relevant processes. Daggett and Sweetwater Counties in Utah and Wyoming, respectively, have also been made aware of the proposed project.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The expected environmental impacts of the Action Alternative are described in Chapter 3 of the EA. The environmental analysis was focused on the resources mentioned above. The environmental analysis indicates under the Action Alternative there would be an adverse effect to the Peoples Canal. The existing unlined earthen irrigation Canal would be replaced with a pipeline and buried.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

The environmental commitments described in Chapter 4 of the EA must be implemented as an integral part of the proposed action.