

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## **Carriage of Non-Project Water in Emery County Project Facilities Environmental Assessment**

**Provo Area Office  
Upper Colorado Region  
Provo, Utah**



**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Upper Colorado Region**

**June 2008**

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## **Purpose and Need for Action**

The purpose of the proposed action is to allow the Cottonwood Creek Consolidated Irrigation Company (Company) to convey non-project water through the Swasey Diversion Dam and Cottonwood Creek-Huntington Canal. This environmental assessment analyzes the impacts resulting from the conveyance of non-project through Emery County Project facilities.

## **Proposed Action**

The proposed action is to allow carriage of non-project water through Emery County Project facilities by a contract between the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), Emery Water Conservancy District (District), and Company. The contract would allow conveyance of non-project water, not to exceed 5,600 acre-feet, primarily during the irrigation season. This water would be used for irrigation and stock-watering purposes within the Company service area and the Emery County Project boundaries. Conveyance of non-project water will be allowed only at times and in amounts when excess capacity is available in the Project facilities. Project water deliveries will have first priority for the use of the Project facilities.

The Company is pursuing a pressurized irrigation system with the help of the National Resource Conservation Service. The preliminary plan proposes to pressurize the system by connecting to the Cottonwood Creek-Huntington Canal, thereby providing the needed elevation and avoiding the necessity to pump water into the system. Non-project water would be diverted from Cottonwood Creek at the Swasey Diversion Dam and conveyed about 5.7 miles in the Cottonwood Creek-Huntington Canal (CCH Canal) to the point of delivery. At the point of delivery a diversion structure would be built to feed the Company's pressurized irrigation system. The diversion structure will require minor construction on less than one half of acre on previously disturbed areas within the Federal easement of the CCH Canal. All capital outlays related to the diversion structure and related works will be the sole responsibility of the Company.

The District is responsible for operation, maintenance, and replacement (OM&R) of the Project facilities. The proposed contract will require the Company to contract with and directly pay the District for reasonable OM&R costs associated with the carriage of non-project water through 5.7 miles of the CCH Canal. Reclamation will, within its capacity, ensure that the OM&R charges are reasonable.

The District has determined that the carriage of additional irrigation water would not impair the efficiency of the Emery County Project for irrigation purposes, nor would it be incompatible with the use and purpose for which the facilities were constructed.

## **No Action Alternative**

The water conveyance contract would not be initiated and the Company would not be allowed to convey non-project water through the facilities.

## **Description of Project and Facilities**

The Emery County Project is in east-central Utah in the Green River Basin. In order to assist in meeting the growing water needs for the arid west, Congress passed the Colorado River Storage Project Act on April 11, 1956. The Emery County Project was authorized as one of the initial participating projects as this legislation. Construction of the Emery County Project started in 1963 and finished in 1966. The first irrigation water was delivered that year. Water for municipal and industrial purposes was first made available in 1973.

The project, which includes supplemental irrigation water supply to an estimated agriculture area of 14,170 acres, a municipal water supply to the cities of Huntington, Castle Dale, and Orangeville, and an industrial water supply to Utah Power & Light Company (UP&L). The Project was constructed for the diversion, storage, and distribution of water of the Cottonwood Creek and Huntington Creek watersheds for irrigation, municipal and industrial (M&I), fish and wildlife, and recreational purposes.

Principal features include Joes Valley Dam and Reservoir; Swasey Diversion Dam; Cottonwood Creek-Huntington Canal; Huntington North Service Canal; and Huntington North Dam and East and West Dikes, which form Huntington North Reservoir.

Joes Valley Dam is located on Seely Creek, a tributary of Cottonwood Creek, about 15 miles northwest of Castle Dale. Water stored in Joes Valley reservoir is released down Seely Creek to Cottonwood Creek and diverted from Cottonwood Creek at Swasey Diversion Dam, about 10 miles downstream from Joes Valley Dam. From Swasey Diversion Dam, water flows through existing canals and ditches (to serve lands in the Castle Dale area) and north through Cottonwood Creek-Huntington Canal for just over 16 miles before it is discharged into the North Ditch, which also diverts water from Huntington Creek. Water stored in

Huntington North Reservoir is released through pressurized outlet works. It is then delivered through a private distribution system to Project lands.

## **Environmental Consequences**

### **Proposed Action**

The proposed action would require minor ground-disturbing activities. At the point of delivery along the CCH Canal, a diversion structure would be built to feed the Company's pressurized irrigation system. 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.

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 on each of the following environmental issues as well as no significant adverse cumulative impacts (see table below).

<b>EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANT CRITERIA</b>		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		
<b>EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES</b>				
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, 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		

## **No Action Alternative**

In the event that a carriage contract is not executed, the Company would not be allowed to convey 5,600 acre-feet of non-project water through Project facilities as proposed. The Company would likely continue deliveries of non-project water through existing infrastructure. The needed elevation to feed the planned pressurized irrigation system would not be available and extra pumping would be required to introduce water into the system. This would increase the cost of the Companies pressurized system.

**COMBINED FONSI/DECISION RECORD  
PROVO AREA OFFICE**

Decision: It is my decision to authorize the proposed action identified in EA No. PRO-EA-08-001.

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

Concur:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Water and Environmental  
Resources Division

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce C. Barrett  
Area Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date