



**United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

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**Finding of No Significant Impact
Little Alkali Spring Restoration
(DOI-BLM-CAC-070-2013-0016-EA)**

One of the primary purposes for preparing an environmental assessment (EA) is to determine whether or not a proposed action will have a significant impact on the human environment and therefore require the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). As defined in 40 CFR 1508.13, a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) is a document that briefly presents the reasons why a federal agency action will not have a significant effect on the human environment and for which an EIS will therefore not be prepared. The regulations specify that both the context and intensity of effects be considered when determining significance (40 CFR 1508.27).

This document presents the findings of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bishop Field Manager concerning the proposed action to install a fish barrier and remove non-native mosquito fish from the headwaters of Little Alkali Spring in Mono County, California, as described and analyzed in EA DOI-BLM-CAC-070-2013-0016-EA.

Finding of No Significant Impact and Land Use Plan Conformance Determination

I have reviewed EA DOI-BLM-CAC-070-2013-0016-EA which includes the identification and explanation of any potentially significant effects on the human environment that would result from implementation of the proposed action to install a fish barrier and remove non-native mosquito fish from the headwaters of Little Alkali Spring in Mono County, California. Based on my review of the environmental analyses and recommendations from staff, I have determined that implementation of the proposed action as described and analyzed in the EA does not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. None of the effects identified, including the direct, indirect and cumulative effects, in the environmental analyses meet the definition of significance either in context or intensity as outlined in 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, an EIS is not required and will not be prepared.

I have also reviewed the *Bishop Resource Management Plan Record of Decision* (Bishop RMP) and determined that the proposed action does conform to the terms and conditions of the applicable land use plan as defined at 43 CFR 1601.0-5(b) and as required by 43 CFR 1610.5-3(b). Specifically, the proposed action would implement the following Bishop RMP Decisions:

1. Protect and enhance unique or important vegetation communities and wildlife habitats (Area-Wide Decisions, p. 17).

2. Develop new habitats for Owens tui chub and Owens speckled dace (Long Valley Management Area Decisions, p. 39). Long Valley speckled dace in the upper Owens River system were classified as Owens speckled dace at the time the RMP was written.

The proposed action also conforms to, and is consistent with, the following RMP direction:

1. Consult with the California Department of Fish and Game [now the California Department of Wildlife] prior to design and accomplishment of wildlife habitat improvement projects (Standard Operating Procedures, p. 12).
2. Manage candidate species, sensitive species and other species of management concern in a manner to avoid the need for listing as state or federal endangered or threatened species (Standard Operating Procedures - Wildlife, p. 12).
3. An inventory for candidate species and other species of management concern will be completed prior to authorizing any activity that may impact a stream with a thermal source (Standard Operating Procedures - Wildlife, p. 12).
4. Enforcement emphasis for Visual Resource Management (VRM) classes 2-4 will be along key observation points. Outside key observation points, the Bureau will apply designated VRM class prescriptions but the Area Manager may allow development to exceed the VRM class for reasons such as technological infeasibility or low visitor use (Area Manager's Guidelines - Visual, p 14).
5. The Area Manager may allow temporary projects to exceed Visual Resource Management (VRM) standards in class 2-4 areas, if the project will terminate within two years of initiation (Area Manager's Guidelines - Visual, p 14).

Therefore, I will issue a decision to implement the proposed Little Alkali Spring Restoration project as described and analyzed in EA DOI-BLM-CAC-070-2013-0016-EA. The decision record will include a description of administrative remedies and appeal procedures that may be available to those who believe they will be adversely affected by my decision to implement the project as proposed.

Rationale for Finding of No Significant Impact

My finding is based on consideration of both the context (40 CFR 1508.27(a)) and intensity (40 CFR 1508.27(b)) of the effects identified in EA DOI-BLM-CAC-070-2013-0016-EA as summarized below:

Context

The proposed project will occur at Little Alkali Spring in Long Valley, California. This is a site-specific action; the locale subject to effects is limited to the spring channel and its immediate vicinity, with some potential for minor temporary effects related to travel to and from the project

site. None of the effects associated with the proposed action are considered measureable at the regional, state-wide, national, or international scale.

Intensity

I have considered the intensity and severity of potential effects anticipated from implementation of the proposed Little Alkali Spring Restoration project in Mono County, California. My consideration of the ten “significance” criteria identified in 40 CFR 1508.27(b) is summarized below:

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The EA provides a description of both beneficial and adverse effects expected from implementation of the proposed action. The primary beneficial effects will accrue from the removal of non-native mosquito fish which will improve habitat suitability for Long Valley speckled dace. Potential adverse impacts include minor soil disturbance from barrier installation, minor visual effects from placement of the temporary plastic pipe and the permanent fish barrier, and minor vehicle dust and emissions from transport to and from the project site.

Overall, the magnitude of both the predicted beneficial effects and the predicted adverse effects of the proposed action are minimal and restricted to the local scale. None of the direct, indirect, or cumulative effects associated with the proposed action are considered significant, either individually or cumulatively, based on the analyses provided in the EA. In addition, none of the predicted adverse effects are considered significant, even when evaluated independent of the beneficial effects that will occur from implementation of the proposed action.

2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

No aspect of the proposed project has been identified as having the potential to adversely affect public health or safety.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The project is designed to avoid impacts to cultural resources and will enhance the overall ecological value of the spring associated wetlands. There are no parklands, prime farmlands, or wild and scenic rivers in the vicinity. Implementation of the proposed action will have no adverse effect on any historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas in the surrounding geographic area.

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

None of the anticipated effects identified in the EA are considered highly controversial.

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The proposed action is not unique or unusual. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or 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.

Any similar action must be evaluated through an appropriate site-specific environmental review and decision making process consistent with applicable law, regulation, policy, and land use plan guidance. Implementation of the proposed action will not set a precedent for future actions that may have significant effects, nor does it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

No individually significant or cumulatively significant effects are identified in the EA. Implementation of the proposed action will not contribute to significant cumulative effects on the human environment at either the local, regional, state-wide, national, or international scale.

8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

Multiple cultural resource inventories have been completed in the proposed project area and no districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects currently listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places were identified. In addition, a project specific intensive archeological survey was completed and no cultural resources were identified in the potential area of effect. Implementation of the proposed action will not adversely affect any cultural properties currently listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

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.

No threatened or endangered species are known or likely to occur within the proposed project area based on historical records, field monitoring, and/or habitat suitability. In addition, there is no designated critical habitat for any listed species within or immediately adjacent to the proposed project site. Implementation of the proposed action will have no effect on any threatened or endangered species, nor will it result in the destruction or adverse modification of any designated critical habitat for any listed species.

The Bi-State distinct population segment (DPS) of greater sage-grouse is currently proposed for listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The Bi-State DPS occurs within the

proposed action area and the proposed project site is within proposed designated critical habitat for the DPS. The proposed action will have no measureable effect on greater sage-grouse or on proposed critical habitat for the Bi-State DPS.

10) Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The EA included consideration of applicable federal, state, and local laws and requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. Federal, state, local, and tribal interests were consulted and/or considered during the environmental review process and no potential violations or inconsistencies with existing laws or policies were identified or left unresolved.

Implementation of the proposed action does not threaten a violation of any known federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Authorized Official

/s/ Steven Nelson

Steven Nelson
Bishop Field Manager

6/12/2014

Date: _____