

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

# **Nye County Water Well and Pipeline Project**

## **Finding of No Significant Impact**

DOI-BLM-NV-C010-2012-0032-EA

**February 1, 2012**



## **BACKGROUND**

The Proposed Action Alternative evaluated under Environmental Assessment (EA) # DOI-BLM-NV-C010-2012-0032 is to allow for the construction and maintenance of a water production well with ancillary facilities and an underground pipeline that meets current health and safety water standards, in Nye County, Nevada. The current potable water supply for the Town of Gabbs in Northwestern Nye County exceeds Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (NDEP) standards for the mineral fluoride. The project consists of a 209' by 209' production well area and a 2000' by 20' distribution pipeline and use of an existing access road, for a total project area of 1.92 acres.

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Based upon the review of the Nye County Water Well and Pipeline Project DOI-BLM-NV-C010-2012-0032-EA and its associated administrative record, it is my determination that the implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in EA # DOI-BLM-NV-C010-2012-0032 and that the Proposed Action Alternative is in conformance with the Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resources Management Plan (CRMP) adopted in 2001. I have determined that the proposed Action is not a major federal action, and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) or a supplement to the existing environmental assessment does not need to be prepared.

## **CONTEXT AND INTENSITY**

This finding and conclusion is based on the consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the *context* and the *intensity* of impacts described in the EA or as articulated in the letters of comment.

**Context:** The Proposed Action Alternative is a site-specific action located on public lands administered by the BLM Carson City District Office (CCDO) in Nye County, Nevada which by itself does not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

**Intensity:** The following discussion is based on the relevant factors that should be considered in evaluating intensity as described in 40 CFR 1508.27:

***1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant affect may exist even if the Federal agency as described believes that on balance the affect will be beneficial.***

I have determined that none of the direct, indirect or cumulative impacts associated with the Proposed Action Alternative are significant, individually or combined. The EA evaluated both beneficial and adverse impacts of the Nye County Water Well and Pipeline Project. Potential impacts include spread of the invasive, non-native weed cheatgrass, possible threat of noxious weed infestation due to construction activity disturbance, temporary restricted access to rights-of-way in the area, possible contamination of groundwater, and discovery of cultural resources.

The Proposed Action Alternative, constructing and maintaining a water production well and distribution pipeline, in Nye County, Nevada would be consistent with the CRMP, and is a mitigation measure mandated by NDEP for the current potable water supply in the Town of Gabbs, Nye County, Nevada, exceeding dangerous fluoride levels. Implementation of the

Proposed Action is expected to be beneficial for residents (improved health and safety) and local government (compliance with law and regulation).

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

The proposed action will have a beneficial effect on public health and safety due to bringing the local population's potable water supply under current state environmental mandates for health and 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 BLM Interdisciplinary Team (ID) identified the following Supplemental Authorities as being not present and present/not affected: Air Quality, ACECs, Cultural Resources, Environmental Justice, Farm Lands, Forest and Rangelands (HFRA projects only), Human Health and Safety (Herbicide Projects), Floodplains, Migratory Birds, Native American Religious Concerns, Threatened and/or Endangered Species, Wastes Hazardous or Solid, Water Quality, Wetlands/Riparian Zones, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness/WSA. The ID team identified the following Supplemental Authority as being present/may be affected: Invasive, Non-native and Noxious Species. Resources other than Supplemental Authorities identified as being present/may be affected include: Lands and Realty and Visual Resource Management. The Supplemental Authorities and Resources other than Supplemental Authorities that may be present and may be affected were evaluated in EA # DOI-BLM-NV-C010-2012-0032.

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

The effects of the Proposed Action on the human or natural environment were determined to be negligible. Based on our review of public comments and the project analysis, we do not find any highly controversial effects to the human environment.

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

The analysis is based on our best use of available research and data. The level of risk associated with the implementation and results of this project are recognized and acceptable.

***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.***

There has been no indication that a precedent for future actions with significant effects will be established by implementation of the Proposed Action.

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

All resource values were evaluated for cumulative impacts and determined that cumulative impacts will be negligible.

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

A Class III cultural resource inventory has been performed in all areas where surface disturbance is proposed, and no sites were observed. However, if potential historic properties are discovered in the project area during construction and operation of the Proposed Action, all resources will be avoided in accordance with the State Protocol Agreement between the BLM and the State Historic Preservation Office for Implementing the NHPA, 2009, Appendix G, Sections A and B (BLM and State Historic Preservation Office 2009). The contractor would establish a 100-foot buffer zone around cultural sites where construction would be avoided. In the event that construction must encroach on this buffer, an archaeological monitor would be present while those construction activities are performed.

Based on the lack of known historic properties and the established protocol for the discovery of any new site described in this Section, there would be no impact on cultural resources discovered during operation of the proposed project.

**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 ESA of 1973.**

As described in the EA, no known threatened/ endangered species (plant or animal), or critical habitat has been identified in the project area considered in the EA.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

The Proposed Action Alternative is in compliance with the CRMP. The Proposed Action is consistent with Statutes, regulations and policies of neighboring local, county, State, Tribal governments and other federal agencies. The Proposed Action Alternative does not violate or threaten to violate any federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.



Teresa J. Knutson  
Field Manager  
Stillwater Field Office

  
Date