

United States
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Hassayampa Field Office

City of Peoria Bank Stabilization and Pedestrian Trail
AZA-35833
DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2013-0036-EA

Finding of No Significant Impact

I, the undersigned authorized officer, considering the criteria provided by 40 CFR 1508.27 and the information contained in the attached environmental assessment (DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2013-0036-EA), and as explained further below, find that the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared.

Context

The City of Peoria (herein referred to as the City) filed a right-of-way application, with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Hassayampa Field Office (HFO), on November 16, 2011. The application requests authorization to build bank stabilization and a pedestrian trail. The application was assigned right-of-way number AZA-35833. The National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Assessment number is DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2013-0036. The project location is the Gila & Salt River Meridian, Maricopa County, T. 4 N., R. 1 E., Section 23 NW¹/₄SE¹/₄ (see map Exhibits B and C). Access is achieved by way of 75th Avenue and Deer Valley Roads and the main cross streets are United States (U.S.) Highway 101 and Beardsley Road.

The City of Peoria's proposed action is to obtain a right-of-way that will allow for the addition of bank stabilization and a pedestrian trail connection along New River. The request is consistent with the Bradshaw-Harquahala Resource Management Plan.

Intensity

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse

The environmental analysis (documented in DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2013-0036-EA) identified a limit to the lateral flow of floodwater and protection of the vegetation and structures (located adjacent to the area of the proposed action) as a result of the rock filled wire baskets, used for bank stabilization. Once both banks are stabilized, the area would be completely in conformance with the Middle New River Watercourse Master Plan (MNRWMP) and the velocity of any water flow would be increased by the bank restrictions on either side. This could lead to accelerated downward erosion of the main channel and a possible realignment of the main channel centerline to be parallel with the bank stabilization. With regards to the pedestrian trail, the proposed 8 foot wide concrete path would provide a reduction in dust produced from the use of this popular

route. The connection of the trail to existing concrete paths would provide visual continuity to the area and promote people to stay on the designated path.

2. Degree of effect on public health and safety

The environmental analysis identified stream flow and erosion as present in the project vicinity and potentially affecting the natural and human environment. The channel bed, of the proposed location, is designated a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Floodway in the National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) dataset published October 15, 2013. The proposed bank stabilization would provide channel protection bringing this stretch of the New River, in the City of Peoria, in compliance with the MNRWMP. It would also allow the City of Peoria to maintain a previously agreed upon floodwater conveyance, for the New River, in accordance with their U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permit number SPL-1999-16449-SDM. Study recommendations include: bank armoring, grade control structures, and delineation of an erosion hazard setback zone. The proposed bank stabilization would shield against a major storm event to prevent possible loss of land without structures. Furthermore, low level flooding would be maintained within a bank stabilized channel and would protect existing adjacent structures and roadways. Due to the very low slope of the affected area (0.05%), the possible impacts from channel bank stabilization would be very small. The improvement to this approximately 400 foot long section of BLM land would not significantly alter the downstream flow velocity in a major precipitation event. The effects of the overall constraint of the New River channel are examined in the MNRWMP and in the USACE analysis of the permit application. Without the bank stabilization, this isolated parcel is not in conformance with the Watercourse Master Plan.

With regards to the pedestrian trail, dust abatement would encourage particulate matter (PM) levels to stay within appropriately identified city levels thereby benefitting the health of the surrounding residents.

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:

There are no unique characteristics of the geographic area that would be impacted by the proposed action. A cultural resource survey was completed within the subject parcel and no resource eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places was identified. Topographically, the project area has no special Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications or special use areas. Specifically, it is considered a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Urban Class.

4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial:

External scoping was conducted by soliciting comments from the public (neighbors and adjacent land owners), through a direct mailing sent through the U.S. Postal Service, within an approximate half mile radius of the proposed action. Comments were accepted by both email and the U.S. Postal Service, for a period of 30 days. No comments were received indicating the

action is not controversial. No significant individual or cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of this action.

5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk.

The analysis did not identify possible effects on the quality of the human environment that are uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk. Similar structures and improvements are commonly used and the effects are well understood.

6. 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:

The analysis did not reveal that the Proposed Action would establish a precedent for any future actions with significant effects, and the activities are not connected to any other future actions. Implementation of this decision would not trigger other actions, nor is it a part of a larger action in the project area encompassed by this decision. The action is in conformance with the Bradshaw-Harquahala Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (April 2010) which identifies the isolated parcel as suitable for disposal.

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

In this case, past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions were considered in the analysis however none were identified as potentially significant when combined with the proposed action.

8. Degree to which the action may adversely affect district, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources:

A cultural resource survey was completed within the subject parcel. No cultural resources were identified during the Class III Survey. Specifically, no resources were identified within the parcel as being eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

9. Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat:

No endangered or threatened species or critical habitats were identified in the environmental analysis.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law:

The analysis showed that the Proposed Action is consistent with federal, state, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment. Although clearing trees during the breeding season (approximately Feb 15 – August 1 in this area) could destroy active migratory

bird nests (prohibited under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act), stipulations were incorporated into the grant in order to mitigate the possibility of such identified impacts.

_____/S/_____

Rem Hawes, Hassayampa Field Manager

_____3/20/2014_____

Date