



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825-1898

IN REPLY REFER TO:

MP-170  
ENV-7.00

OCT 03 2012

## MEMORANDUM

To: Assistant Field Supervisor Endangered Species  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

From: Alicia Forsythe  
Program Manager  
San Joaquin River Restoration Program

Subject: Clarification Regarding Recommendation of the Preferred Alternative, Alternative C1, for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) Biological Opinion (BO)

On November 30, 2011, the Bureau of Reclamation requested consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) pursuant to Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for the SJRRP. This request included the evaluation of Alternative A1 in the *SJRRP Programmatic Biological Assessment* (BA). On July 31, 2012, the *Final SJRRP Program Environmental Impact Statement/Report* (PEIS/R) was released. Alternative C1 was selected as the Preferred Alternative in the Final PEIS/R. On August 21, 2012, your office issued the BO for Alternative A1, including a project-level determination of not likely to adversely affect for species and critical habitats under Service jurisdiction for flow releases up to 1,660 cubic feet per second (cfs) from Friant Dam. For flows releases greater than 1,660 cfs, physical channel improvements and additional environmental documentation, including future ESA consultations, would be required.

Alternative A1 and C1 are similar; however, Alternative C1 includes additional recapture locations to implement the SJRRP Water Management Goal. Alternative A1 actions assessed in the BA and BO include the recapture of Interim and Restoration flows in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta). Alternative C1 actions include recapture of Interim and Restoration flows in the Delta, recapture at locations along the San Joaquin River between the Merced River and the Delta using existing facilities, and recapture at locations along the San Joaquin River between the Merced River and the Delta using modifications to existing facilities or newly constructed facilities. At this time, the use of diversion facilities and the modifications to existing facilities or the construction of new facilities between the Merced River and the Delta for the SJRRP is unknown. These activities would require additional site-specific environmental documentation including an ESA analysis once the additional information is known.

All other project- and program-level activities, including the release of Interim and Restoration flows and construction of channel improvement projects, are the same as that assessed in the BA and BO. Additionally, the language in the BO anticipates possible future changes related to program-level actions and that those actions would need additional ESA analysis. Therefore, no changes to the BO are requested at this time, as an ESA analysis would be needed on the additional Water Management Goal actions in Alternative C1 to quantify effects for species at a future date. The effects determinations made in the BO would be valid for project-level actions, regardless of the alternative selected.

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Michelle Banonis, Natural Resources Specialist, at 916-978-5457 or [mbanonis@usbr.gov](mailto:mbanonis@usbr.gov).

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