

ATTACHMENT TO SCOPING NOTICE

Brief Description of the Proposed Community Water Company of Green Valley Central Arizona Project Water Delivery System Project

BACKGROUND

On May 17, 1985, Community Water Company of Green Valley (CWC) entered into a Central Arizona Project (CAP) water service subcontract for 1,100 acre-feet (AF) of CAP water annually, with Reclamation and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, which operates the CAP. This CAP water service subcontract was later amended in 1997 when New Pueblo Water Company transferred 337 AF annually to CWC. CWC also was allocated 1,521 AF annually as a result of the 2005 Arizona Water Settlements Act, making CWC's total CAP water allocation 2,858 AF annually.

Reclamation must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act prior to approving CWC's plans for taking and using its CAP water allocation. Reclamation has determined an environmental assessment (EA) is necessary. Based upon the EA, Reclamation will determine whether a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate, or an environmental impact statement must be prepared prior to approving CWC's plans. The impacts currently anticipated to be addressed in the EA include, but are not limited to, biological resources, cultural resources, land ownership and use, water quality and quantity,¹ air quality, and socioeconomic resources.

Proposed Action - Pipeline and New Recharge Site

CWC has been working for a number of years to ensure the future water supply for residents of the Green Valley area. The service area of CWC covers approximately eight square miles (Figure 1). A 2007 report completed by Pima County states "the water table in Green Valley has been declining in past years and expected to continue to decline as water demands increase." Drawdown of the local aquifer has caused concerns regarding quantity of available water in the future. Despite the current slowdown in the economy, future residential development is likely to occur, as evidenced by the interest in large master planned communities in this region in recent years. In addition, CWC is concerned about the presence of a sulfate plume from the Phelps Dodge Sierrita tailing impoundment (now owned by Freeport McMoRan Sierrita, Inc.) and its potential impact to CWC's operating wells, underscoring the need for an alternative water source.

CWC plans to construct and operate a raw water delivery pipeline and underground storage facility (recharge site) to deliver and recharge Central Arizona Project (CAP) water in the Green Valley area (Figure 2). Under the proposed project, the pipeline would be sized to provide additional flow capacity, should other water users make arrangements with CWC to utilize the system for delivery of CAP water.

¹ Although the recharge location is distant from most existing wells and other development, the potential effects, if any, of underground mounding of the water to be recharged in this area will be evaluated.

A proposed 36-inch, raw water pipeline would begin at the existing CAP pipeline terminus, which is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Interstate 19 and Pima Mine Road (Figure 2). It would proceed east along Pima Mine Road until turning south along Nogales Highway. At the intersection of the Nogales and Old Nogales Highways, the pipeline alignment would continue south along Old Nogales Highway approximately 0.9 miles. At this point, the pipeline size would be reduced to 20-inch pipe and would proceed easterly along the section line of Sections 31 and 32 of Township 17S, Range 14E (the extended alignment for El Corto Road) to a proposed 20-acre recharge site located in Section 29, T17S, R14E. Along this same alignment, a second 20-inch transmission pipeline from the recharge site would be constructed heading in a westerly direction along the section line to CWC's existing Well #11. Two booster stations would be constructed. The new pipeline would deliver up to 7,000 AF of CAP water per year to the recharge site for the first 15 years of operation (a total of 105,000 AF). After that, the rate of recharge may be reduced. Recovery wells would be constructed at the recharge site to recover CAP water after the first 15 years of operation, or sooner if the existing CWC wells become unusable due to sulfate contamination.

An agreement between CWC and Rosemont Copper Company (RCC) would provide the funding mechanism for the pipeline construction. The agreement would allow RCC to recharge CWC's CAP water allocation for a period of 15 years. RCC has made a commitment to the Green Valley community to recharge a total of 105% of any ground water withdrawn for the operation of its facilities. It is anticipated that this commitment, supplemented by additional sources, could result in a recharge volume of as much as 7,000 AF per year. Utilization of the CAP water supply for this recharge would help maintain the local aquifer and utilize renewable water sources.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would mean that no pipeline would be constructed in the near future for water conveyance and recharge of the aquifer. CWC is a member of a regional water planning group, the Upper Santa Cruz/Providers and Users Group. This group, formed in October 2007, has been studying ways to bring CAP and other renewable water resources to the greater Green Valley/Sahuarita region to address long-term water supply needs. It is anticipated CWC would continue to investigate ways to deliver its CAP water allocation for use within its water service area, either as part of a regional system, or as a discrete system. In the foreseeable future, however, CWC would continue to rely solely on pumped ground water for delivery to its customers. CWC's annual CAP water allocation of 2,858 AF would continue to be available for purchase as excess CAP water.

Without the delivery and use of its CAP water allocation—either directly or by recharge and recovery—CWC would not have an alternative potable water supply should its existing wells become contaminated by the sulfate plume from the mine tailing impoundment. In addition, without introducing a renewable water supply to the area, ground-water levels would continue to decline.