

LOCATION OF CVP SERVICE AREAS

The CVP service area extends for approximately 430 miles through much of California's Central Valley, from Clair Engle and Shasta Reservoirs in the north to Bakersfield in the south (Figure 1-1). The CVP service area also includes the San Felipe Unit, which is located in the adjacent coastal valleys.

The CVP service area has been divided into three separate service areas for purposes of the water contracting programs. The SRSA encompasses the northern portion of the CVP service area and includes the Shasta/Clair Engle Reservoir area and much the Sacramento Valley. Water contracting within the SRSA would affect portions or all of the counties of Shasta, Tehama, Glenn, Colusa, Yolo, and Solano.

The ARSA includes Folsom Reservoir and all of Sacramento and San Joaquin Counties. Water contracting within the ARSA would affect Sacramento and San Joaquin counties and a portion of Placer County.

The DESA includes all of the CVP service area located south and west of the Delta. It begins just south of the Delta, extends through the San Joaquin Valley to near Bakersfield, and includes the San Felipe Unit. Water contracting within the DESA would affect Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Tulare, Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties.

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR WATER CONTRACTING

Background

Reclamation has contracted to provide water service to California's Central Valley for multiple use purposes since completion of the initial features of the CVP in the 1940s. Contracts have been executed for the sale of agricultural and M&I water throughout the CVP service area. In addition, the project controls flood flows, generates hydropower, and provides water for fisheries, wildlife, and recreation.

Reclamation's multipurpose water development projects have played an indispensable role in the state's development, making California the nation's premier agricultural state. The CVP alone provides water to over 2.8 million acres in the vast Central Valley Basin. Crops grown on California lands irrigated by the CVP had a gross value of approximately \$2.9 billion in 1986. The cumulative gross value of California crops produced on Reclamation-irrigated lands since Reclamation's first irrigation water was delivered to California farms 80 years ago is nearly \$54 billion.

In addition to irrigation water, the CVP provides large volumes of water to meet demands for M&I water. In 1986, nearly 536,000 acre-feet (af) of water was delivered for domestic and M&I uses.

Historically, Reclamation constructed CVP facilities to meet demands projected during the planning of these facilities. Today, however, the available remaining CVP yield of approximately 1.5 million af/yr is insufficient to meet the 3.4 million af/yr of estimated needs.

Adding to the water supply problem are concerns about water quality in the Delta that may ultimately affect the amount of water that can be delivered CVP-wide. In 1979, in response to environmental and water quality concerns, the U. S. Department of Interior (DOI) deferred contracting for additional long-term CVP water supplies until federal responsibility for water quality in the Delta could be determined. Studies by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and Reclamation to clarify joint responsibility of the CVP and DWR's State Water Project (SWP) in meeting water quality standards in the Delta resulted in a proposed Coordinated Operation Agreement (COA). Public Law (PL) 99-546 authorized Reclamation to execute the proposed COA, and in 1986 the state and federal governments signed the agreement. Under the agreement, the operational efficiency of both projects can be improved by joint use of facilities. Both parties are required to meet a specified set of water quality standards based on State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Decision 1485. Provisions are made for the state to purchase interim CVP water, and for Reclamation to convey CVP water to federal contractors through the California Aqueduct. With signing of the COA and lifting of the moratorium by the Secretary of the Interior, Reclamation can resume long-term contracting of available and uncommitted water from the CVP.

Purpose of Water Contracting

Reclamation's long-term water contracting program would, in compliance with state and federal law, meet a combination of the objectives listed below. The program's purpose is not to optimally achieve one or more of these objectives at the expense of others, nor to achieve all objectives equally, but rather to provide a balanced water allocation which as a whole, best meets project, institutional, environmental, and human needs.

- o equitably allocate remaining CVP yield, considering original congressional legislation, other authorized project functions, and California water rights law and area of origin policies;
- o optimize the amount of water available for beneficial use, considering conjunctive use of surface water and groundwater for agricultural, M&I, and refuge use, and offstream storage at wildlife refuges;
- o increase the amount of water available for beneficial uses within California's Central Valley; and
- o optimize economic returns at the local, regional, and national levels.

Need for Water Contracting

In 1986 and 1987, Reclamation sent letters to potential water contractors in the SRSA, ARSA, and DESA asking them to identify how much new or additional water they wished to contract for from the CVP. Potential contractors were also asked to submit information substantiating their need for water and to submit site-specific data useful for EIS preparation.

Reclamation subsequently received requests from 84 agencies, totaling approximately 4 million af/yr. In accordance with Reclamation policy, these requests were evaluated to determine each of the requestor's actual water requirements based on acreage, cropping patterns, groundwater availability, population estimates, and other factors. It was determined that CVP water needs for agriculture, M&I, and refuges were about 3.4 million af/yr. In addition, requests for maintaining instream flows and satisfying recreational requirements have been received and are described in this EIS. Reclamation intends to use the water needs estimated during the EIS process as the basis for allocating the available and uncommitted yield of the CVP.

SCOPE OF EIS

Scoping Process

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508) require "an early and open process for determining the scope of issues related to a proposed action." The CEQ regulations define this process as "scoping." Scoping is designed to explore issues for environmental assessment, to ensure that important considerations are not overlooked, and to discover concerns that might otherwise go unrecognized.

Reclamation held six scoping and numerous other public and agency meetings to gather public input on the scope, content, and appropriate alternatives for each EIS. Notice of these meetings was published in the Federal Register and sent to over 300 federal, regional, state, and local agencies, organizations, and interest groups. Legal notices were also published in local papers circulated in the various service areas. Reclamation also sent letters explaining the status, scope, and alternatives to interested persons, districts, and agencies. See Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion of the scoping process.

Reclamation used input received during the scoping process to prepare scoping reports for each EIS. These reports present the concerns that arose during the scoping process and describe in detail how Reclamation would address these concerns in each EIS. The scoping reports were distributed to the public, and Reclamation has considered the comments received in response to the information presented in the reports. Where appropriate, Reclamation has modified its approach to preparing the EIS's, the alternatives analyzed in the EIS's, and its methodologies for addressing impacts.