



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Western Colorado Area Office
Durango Field Office
835 East Second Avenue, Suite 300
Durango, CO 81301-5475

IN REPLY REFER TO:

WCG-SMcCall
ENV-6.00

NOV 18 2011

To: Interested Agencies, Individuals, and Organizations

Subject: Request for Input Concerning Paradox Valley Salinity Control: Development of a Paradox Evaporation Pond Pilot Study, Montrose County, Colorado

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Paradox Valley Salinity Control Unit is located near Bedrock, Colorado, about 10 miles east of the Colorado-Utah State line in Montrose County. Historically, the Dolores River picked up an estimated 205,000 tons of salt annually as it passed through the Paradox Valley. Since the mid-1990's much of this salt has been collected by shallow wells and then injected into deep subsurface geologic formations. The deep well injection program has removed about 110,000 tons of salt annually from the Dolores and Colorado Rivers.

The existing deep well injection facility may be approaching the end of its useful life and alternatives are being considered to continue the successful efforts to prevent salt from entering the river. One initial alternative is to collect brine from shallow wells along the Dolores River and evaporate the brine and encapsulate the produced salts in surface evaporation ponds. The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum¹, representing the seven basin states, has recommended that an evaporation pond pilot study be conducted in order to better evaluate potential future large scale evaporation ponds as an alternative to deep well injection.

The Bureau of Reclamation will host public scoping meetings to discuss the pilot study. The project will be described and questions will be answered at the meetings; input can be provided at the meetings or later by email or letter. Input can include:

- Questions or concerns you have with the proposed pilot study
- Most significant issues to be addressed
- Information or data that could help in review of the proposal

¹ In 1973, the Colorado River Basin states established the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum for interstate cooperation and to provide the information needed to comply with the Clean Water Act. Governors from each of the seven Basin states appoint representatives to the Forum.

The public scoping meetings will be held:

1. Paradox Community Center, 21665 6.00 Road (basement of the red church in Paradox) on December 6 2011, presentation at 6 PM, with an open house from 5 to 7 PM.
2. Holiday Inn Express, 1391 S Townsend Ave, Montrose, December 8 2011, presentation at 6 PM, followed by a question and answer session.

A summary sheet concerning the pilot study is attached.

Reclamation will prepare an environmental assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act to evaluate the environmental effects of the pilot study. In order for your input to be considered in preparing the draft assessment, we request written comments by January 30, 2012. Comments may be provided at the scoping meeting, emailed to TStroh@usbr.gov or mailed to

Carol DeAngelis
Area Manager
Bureau of Reclamation
2764 Compass Drive, Suite 106
Grand Junction CO 81506

If you have any questions, or need more information please contact Terry Stroh, of the Grand Junction Office at 970-248-0638, by email at TStroh@usbr.gov or Andy Nicholas, Paradox Office at 970-859-7214, by email at ANicholas@usbr.gov

Sincerely,



Carol DeAngelis
Area Manager

Enclosure