



**STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA)
MITIGATED DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (MDNS)
METHOW VALLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT FLOW IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

Description of proposal:

The Methow Valley Irrigation District Flow Improvement Project (MVID Project) is intended to improve the MVID delivery system near Twisp, Washington, with resulting benefits to instream flows and fish habitat in the Twisp River, Methow River, and Alder Creek; to provide more reliable and efficient service for MVID members; and to assist in meeting the public water supply needs of the Town of Twisp. A comprehensive description of the MVID Project is provided in Alternative 5 of the *Methow Valley Irrigation District Alternatives Evaluation Report*, Anchor QEA (August 2013). The MVID Project involves converting portions of largely unlined, earthen irrigation canals to buried, pressurized piped conveyance systems as well as converting a number of parcels currently served by the canal system to individual wells.

The MVID diverts water from the Twisp and Methow Rivers and utilizes two canals to transport water to serve 1,368 acres of assessed lands within the district, all located within Okanogan County. The West Canal diverts water from the Twisp River at River Mile (RM) 4.3 and serves lands lying west of the Methow River. The East Canal diverts water from the Methow River at RM 44.8 and serves lands lying east of the Methow River. Historically, MVID has experienced difficulties in providing reliable service to all of its members each year, particularly those at the south end of two existing irrigation canals.

The MVID Project involves four principal elements:

- West Canal: The existing West Canal diversion structure on the Twisp River will be abandoned. The West Canal will be reconfigured into a shorter, pressurized pipe system (North Satellite System) designed to deliver 2.8 cubic feet per second (cfs) to approximately 141 assessed acres from MVID production well or wells located on the Schulz property within the Town of Twisp. Withdrawal rates from the well or wells will be approximately 900 gallons per minute (gpm). The remaining 420 acres of land currently served by the West Canal will be served by individual or group wells.
- East Canal: Portions of the East Canal will be converted to a largely pressurized pipe system, with several individual or group well conversions. The East Canal system will serve approximately 617 assessed acres. Some laterals will be rehabilitated to improve efficiency. New East Canal spills will be created at the end of the system and near the canal/pipe interchange to route operational water (for example, Barkley Ditch spill that currently enters the MVID East Canal) to the Methow River.
- Alder Creek: The Alder Creek diversion structure will be abandoned and formerly-diverted quantities will remain in the creek.
- Town of Twisp: Use of 262 acre-feet of is currently authorized under a change to water right CS4-SWC945 for use for irrigation in the Town of Twisp. This quantity will continue to be conveyed through the new system by MVID for irrigation in Twisp, subject to a lease between MVID and Twisp. Use of 138 acre-feet is currently authorized under change to water right CS4-WRC003935 for irrigation in Twisp. This quantity is subject to a Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA) between MVID and Twisp.

Proponent:

The project proponents are the Methow Valley Irrigation District and the Department of Ecology, Office of Columbia River

Location of proposal, including street address, if any:

The project site is located in the Methow River Valley of Okanogan County, Washington (See Figure 1). The MVID service area includes about 1,300 acres of land extending from the Town of Twisp to the unincorporated community of Carlton. Ground water wells will be constructed along the Twisp River in the Town of Twisp, the Methow River in the Town of Twisp, and the Methow River in the vicinity of Alder Creek. The locations of major project features are identified in Figure 2.

Availability of documents for review:

The SEPA Environmental Checklist and supporting documents, including the *Methow Valley Irrigation District Alternatives Evaluation Report*, Anchor QEA (August 2013), can be viewed online at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/projects.html>

Project documents can also be viewed at:

Department of Ecology's Central Regional Office
15 W Yakima Avenue, Suite 200
Yakima, WA 98902

Okanogan County Planning Department
123 5th Avenue North, Suite 130
Okanogan, WA 98840

SEPA Lead agency:

The Washington State Department of Ecology, Office of Columbia River, and the Okanogan County Planning Department are Co-Lead Agencies for this project. The Washington State Department of Ecology, Office of Columbia River is serving as the nominal lead agency pursuant to provisions of 197-11-944 WAC.

Responsible officials:

Derek I. Sandison, Director, Office of Columbia River, Washington State Department of Ecology

Perry Huston, Director of Planning, Okanogan County

Threshold determination:

The lead agencies have determined that this proposal, as mitigated, will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c).

This MDNS is issued under provisions of WAC 197-11-340 and WAC 197-11-350; the lead agency will not act on this proposal for at least 14 days from May 21, 2014. Comments must be submitted to the Responsible Officials at the address provided below by June 4, 2014.

Address:

Derek I. Sandison
15 W Yakima Ave., Ste. 200
Yakima, WA 98902-3452

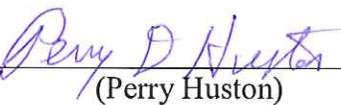
Email:

ocr@ecy.wa.gov

Date:

May 21, 2014

Signature of Responsible Official:  5/9/14
(Derek I. Sandison) (Date)

Signature of Responsible Official:  5-15-14
(Perry Huston) (Date)

Mitigation Measures –MDNS

Project Name: Methow Valley Irrigation District Flow Improvement Project

Review of the proposal indicates that there may be potential for significant adverse environmental impacts. The impacts may be mitigated by conditioning the proposal. Mitigation measures are intended to address and mitigate the environmental impacts to a point of non-significance.

Mitigation Measures

- Approximately 11 cfs of water rights shall be obtained and put into the State Trust Water Program in perpetuity for in-stream flow purposes on the lower 4.5 miles of the flow-impaired Twisp River.
- Up to 2 cfs of water rights shall be obtained and put into the State Trust Water Program in perpetuity for in-stream flow purposes on Alder Creek.
- Use of the MVID Twisp River and Alder Creek points of diversion will discontinue.

Figure 2

MVID
Instream Flow Improvement Project
Overview Map

- Lands Served by East Pipe System
- Lands Served by West Pipe System
- Lands Served by Wells
- New Piped Sections
- Existing Canals

