

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report

Independent analysis of impacts by the US Fish and Wildlife Service

Report Results:

Impacts –

- Close agreement with the Draft EIS
- Viewed all changes as impacts, including conversion of agricultural lands, desert lands and exposed bottom of the Rio Grande in winter
- All impacts require mitigation
- Didn't see the proposed environmental enhancements as a commitment

Recommendations –

- 16 items recommended

Mitigation:

- Widen the Rio Grande and levees for 3 miles (additional 1 mile for aqueduct alternatives) and create aquatic and riparian habitat
- Remove 2 miles of rip-rap and lower tops of banks and create habitat (add 1 mile for Aqueduct alternatives and 2 miles for Lower Plant alternative)
- Plant native vegetation on 1000 acres of converted ag lands
- Monitor diversion structures for fish passage

- Install fish screens on diversion structures
- Monitor mitigation and enhancement measures
- Work with the Watershed Council to coordinate enhancements
- Institute water quality BMPs during construction
- Revegetate disturbed areas
- Avoid impacting Bald Eagles and coordinate with USF&WS

Improve habitat:

- Manage riparian habitat for Southwest willow flycatchers (Includes cowbird trapping)
- Commit 2 percent of project budgets for proposed enhancements
- Develop a monitoring plan and coordinate with others doing environmental studies of the Rio Grande to provide consistency in data collection.