

*Rio Grande Project 2001
Implementing Third-Party Contract
Environmental Assessment*

***Status Report
April 19, 2001***

Proposed Action

Approval and signing of a contract to:

- ▶ **Convert Rio Grande Project Water from Agricultural to Municipal and Industrial Use**
- ▶ **Delivery of District Water to the Jonathan Rogers Water Treatment Plant**
- ▶ **Delivery by City of El Paso of Usable Wastewater Effluent to the District**

Proposed Action

Purposes of the Contract:

- ▶ **Contract water sources for treatment at expanded Jonathan Rogers WTP**
- ▶ **Keep pace with area's rapid growth and M&I water needs**
- ▶ **Address public health concern in colonias**
- ▶ **Reduce reliance on dwindling ground water supplies**

Parties to the Contract

- **US Bureau of Reclamation**
- **El Paso County Water Improvement District No.1**
- **City of El Paso/Public Service Board**

Key Contract Features

- Leaves prior contracts (1941, 1944, and 1962) unchanged
- No new facilities
- Delivery of water to Jonathan Rogers WTP, including the current expansion (maximum of 28,116 acre-feet per year)
- The water will come from savings from the recent lining and extension of the American Canal

Key Contract Features (cont.)

- Exchange of City wastewater with District water at a 2 to 1 rate
- Allows the purchase of surplus District water
- Credit the District for underflow water drawn by the City's well field near Canutillo at a 1.6 to 1 rate
- Establish a price schedule for delivered water

Environmental Assessment Purposes

- **Bureau compliance with NEPA**
- **Determine environmental effects of the contract features**
- **Consider effects of the No-action Alternative**
- **Use prior environmental documents**
 - **Sustainable Water Project EIS**
 - **Jonathan Rogers WTP Expansion EA**
 - **American Canal Extension EA**

Environmental Assessment Findings

- Assessed the effects on:
 - Climate, Geophysical, and Land Use
 - Water Resources
 - Biological Resources
 - Cultural Resources
 - Socioeconomic Resources
 - Health and Safety
- Conclusion:
 - No significant effects on any of these resources

Environmental Assessment Schedule

- Draft EA Released to Public - March 9, 2001**
- Public Meeting - March 21, 2001**
- Public Comment Period Ended - April 9, 2001**
- Final EA Completed - May 2, 2001**
- FONSI - May 2, 2001**
- Contract Signed - May 3, 2001**

Environmental Assessment Public Comments

- Received 4 Comment Letters
 - Texas SHPO
 - Tigua Tribe
 - CERM
 - Forest Guardians
- Responses to Letters Being Prepared
- Responses to Draft Contract Comments Being Prepared
- Incorporate Responses in Final EA and FONSI