

*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