United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
P.O. Box 1306
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/R2/WSFRP/052114

JUL 19 2012

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Boating Access Facilities Improvements, Agua Fria Conservation Area, Lake Pleasant Maricopa and Yavapai Counties, Arizona

The Arizona Game and Fish Department, in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and other partners, proposes boating access improvements in the Agua Fria Conservation Area of Lake Pleasant. These improvements include construction of one primary boat ramp, three primitive boat ramps, parking lots, an access road, and associated small structures. These improvements are part of the larger effort to enhance both recreation and protection of natural and cultural resources under the Agua Fria Conservation Area Management Plan. Boaters, fisherman, hikers, and others will benefit from these enhancements.

This FONSI largely mirrors and accepts the corresponding 2010 FONSI and environmental assessment written by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. These documents are entitled, "Environmental Assessment (or, FONSI); Lake Pleasant Regional Park; Agua Fria Conservation Area Management Plan; Maricopa and Yavapai Counties, Arizona." The Proposed Action, a Partners Consensus Plan, will result in neutral or beneficial affects to public access and safety and to cultural and natural resources, including species.

Proposed boating access improvements in the Agua Fria Conservation Area fall below thresholds of concern normally considered under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The proposed improvements and associated grant represent enhancements that will not adversely affect historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, nor ecologically critical areas. The proposed improvements are not controversial, not uncertain, and do not involve unique nor unknown risk. The proposed improvements do not establish precedent and do not predetermine future decisions by the agencies and partners involved. Effects from the improvements are strictly local, and cumulative impacts are minimal to none. These actions comply with Federal, State and local laws.

The proposed improvements are in compliance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA). The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation informally consulted with us in 2009 under ESA Section 7. We issued a letter dated June 10, 2009, which concludes not likely to adversely affect for the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*). The Sonoran desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii;* proposed to be

G. morafkai) is a Federal candidate species as of October 26, 2010. Our review of the proposed improvements, data, and associated protections for cultural and natural resources, leads us to conclude the tortoise will benefit and not be jeopardized.

Based upon our grant-oriented ESA Section 7 informal consultation, our June 2009 letter, and the 2010 Environmental Assessment and FONSI written by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, I have determined the proposed improvements do not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, as described in Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. As such, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required. The environmental assessment prepared for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is adopted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Sincerely,

Acting Joy E Nicholopoulos

Regional Director

Enclosures