

United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003

IN REPLY REFER TO:
PAS 2953.4680.6105

July 31, 2006

Sandro Amaglio
Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
1111 Broadway, Suite 1200
Oakland, California 94607

Subject: Mojave Water Agency Groundwater Monitoring Wells Replacement Project,
Mojave River, San Bernardino County, California (FEMA-1577-DR-CA, Project
Worksheet #560)

Dear Mr. Amaglio:

We are responding to your September 7, 2005 letter requesting our concurrence that the proposed groundwater monitoring wells replacement project is not likely to adversely affect the federally endangered least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), southwestern willow flycatcher (*Pempidonax traillii extimus*), or arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*). Your request and our response are made pursuant to section 7(u)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The proposed project is not located within critical habitat for these species.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is proposing to fund the Mojave Water Agency's (MWA) installation of seven groundwater monitoring wells at five locations along the Mojave River between Hesperia and Lenwood. MWA would use a well drilling rig and other equipment to drill each well on previously disturbed sites that do not contain riparian vegetation. Above ground, each finished well would consist of a 3-foot by 3-foot by 1-foot concrete pad with a 16-inch diameter by 3-foot long protective casing. Equipment would access the site along existing roads and across disturbed sites. Periodic maintenance may be required, but would not result in disturbance of riparian habitat. FEMA has proposed to restrict well installation to the non-breeding season for the least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher (September 1 to March 1).

We concur that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect the southwestern willow flycatcher or least Bell's vireo for the following reasons: 1) well installation will not result in impacts to habitat for these species; 2) well installation will occur during the non-breeding season for both species; and 3) periodic maintenance activities will not result in impacts to habitat for these species.

TAKE PRIDE
IN AMERICA 

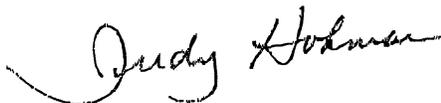
Sandro Amaglio

2

We concur that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect the arroyo toad because it is unlikely to occur within areas proposed for ground disturbance. Although arroyo toads historically occurred within the portion of the Mojave River drainage where some well installation would occur, they are currently restricted to the West Fork of the Mojave River, Horsethief Creek, Little Horsethief Creek, and the lower and middle portions of Deep Creek in this portion of their range.

If the proposed action changes in a manner that may cause effects that we have not analyzed, FIDMA should contact us to determine whether the changes require additional consultation. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Brian Croft of my staff at (805) 644-1766, extension 302.

Sincerely,



Acting Carl T. Benz
Acting Assistant Field Supervisor
Mojave/Great Basin Deserts Division