Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Shaw --202 343-7445
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The Department of the Interior has approved a contract between three New Mexico Pueblos and the Pojoaque Valley Irrigation District to operate and maintain a proposed dam and reservoir in northern New Mexico, Marvin L Franklin, Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, announced today.

“Approximate1y 1,000 Indians from San Ildefonso, Nambe, and Pojoaque Pueblos and 750 non-Indian land owners with a total of almost 3,000 acres of irrigab1e land will benefit from the water stored in the reservoir" Franklin said. "The contract approval culminates several years of community efforts between the Indians and non-Indians in the area to join together to solve mutual water shortage problems," he added.

The Pojoaque Valley Irrigation District will operate the Pojoaque Tributary Unit --dam and reservoir -- which will be located on the Nambe Indian Reservation.

This project, through the use of controlled storage, will bring into full productivity the irrigable Indian and non-Indian lands using the limited water supply available. By storing excess flows of the Rio Nambe during non-irrigation periods, releases can be made during the periods of low flow to meet irrigation needs. The Pojoaque Tributary Unit will also enhance fishery resources and will provide additional recreation opportunities.

Construction of the dam and reservoir is expected to begin this fiscal year following an election by the Pojoaque Valley Irrigation District to vote approval of the contract.

The Pojoaque Tributary Unit is the first of four planned tributary units in the San Juan-Chama Project. Largely a cooperative effort between the pueblos and the non-Indian Pojoaque Valley Irrigation District, the project has received technical assistance from the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the State of New Mexico.