

Work Task E21: Planet Ranch, Bill Williams River

FY09 Estimates	FY09 Actual	Cumulative Accomplishment Through FY09	FY10 Approved Estimate	FY11 Proposed Estimate	FY12 Proposed Estimate	FY13 Proposed Estimate
\$50,000	\$83,869.06	\$103,066.68	\$100,000	\$8,900,000	\$1,500,000	\$750,000

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Start Date: FY05

Expected Duration: FY55

Long-term Goal: Habitat creation

Conservation Measures: CLRA1, WIFL1, WIFL2, WRBA2, WYBA3, CRCR2, LEB1, YBCU1, YBCU2, ELOW1, GIFL1, GIWO1, VEFL1, BEVI1, YWAR1, SUTA1, MNSW2, CLNB2, PTBB2

Location: Reach 3, Bill Williams River, 11 miles east of River Mile 190, Arizona

Purpose: Create and manage a mosaic of native land cover types for LCR MSCP covered species.

Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future): This work task was previously included in the Draft FY05 Work Tasks as Planet Ranch, Bill Williams River (E4). Costs associated with a federal land and water appraisal conducted in FY08 were captured under work task Conservation Area Site Selection (E16). E21 was closed at the end of FY05, but is being reopened in FY09.

Project Description: Planet Ranch (currently owned by the City of Scottsdale), encompasses approximately 8,400 acres, of which approximately 2,400 acres had previously been farmed for alfalfa. In 2008, the LCR MSCP Steering Committee approved a land and water resolution, which authorizes Reclamation to enter into negotiations to secure approximately 3,418 acres of land and 4,668 acre-feet of water per year. The sum of \$8,300,000 to secure this land and water was determined through the federal appraisal process. Negotiations are also underway to allow the Bureau of Land Management to secure the remaining acreage, which has no water entitlement from the Bill Williams River. Once finalized, the terms and conditions to secure the land and water resources will be brought back to the Steering Committee.

An estimated 550 acres of primarily cottonwood-willow land cover type is anticipated to be developed on Planet Ranch. In addition, another 396 acres of cottonwood-willow land

cover type on the Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge is afforded protection by securing the Planet Ranch property.

Previous Activities: Reclamation evaluated Planet Ranch and developed a conceptual design, assuming the entire ranch and water entitlement were secured for the program. This information is posted on the LCR MSCP Web site as *Planet Ranch: Potential Restoration Site, Preliminary Site Analysis and Conceptual Design*. A federal appraisal was conducted in FY08 and established the fair market value of the land and water resources.

FY09 Accomplishments: Negotiations to secure the land and water resources for the project continued. A lease with Freeport MacMoran was drafted, which included the donation of the land and water resources to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission for on-site activities, and included discussing the transition of property ownership from the City of Scottsdale to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. A boundary record of survey, consistent with the standards of the Arizona Boundary Survey Minimum Standards, was conducted on the 3,418 acres of land that comprise the lease agreement. Survey content and placement of on-site monumentation defined the proposed LCR MSCP lease boundary. The survey will also result in the legal description of the parcel and will be ready for recording in FY10.

FY10 Activities: After the October 2009 Steering Committee meeting, members of the committee were given a tour of the Planet Ranch property. The tour included presentations on the area's geology, the relationship of Planet Ranch and Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge, and conceptual plans for habitat restoration and potential downstream cottonwood-willow credit.

Regulatory compliance activities required under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act are anticipated. Those activities are expected to include an Environmental Assessment with a public comment period, Native American consultation, and a class I cultural survey. In addition, state regulatory compliance from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality ADEQ is being coordinated by the City of Scottsdale.

A transition plan will be drafted to address the need for on-site staff and appurtenances such as vehicles and farming equipment. Given the property's remote location, the city of Scottsdale currently employs a caretaker, living year-round on the property, for maintenance and security purposes. Finalization of the draft land use agreements with Arizona Game and Fish Department as well as the Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge is anticipated in FY10. The land use agreements will address the roles and commitments of all parties. Additional documents, to secure water resources, are also anticipated during this fiscal year. Issues and high priority items identified in the transition plan would be addressed in anticipation of the securing and transition of property ownership in FY11.

Proposed FY11 Activities: A Land and Water Resolution is anticipated to be presented to the Steering Committee at the October 2010 meeting. The resolution would include the terms and conditions of the escrow transactions as well as the responsibility of all parties involved. Assuming the property and its resources have been secured, the AGFD will provide on-site staffing. Activities to be conducted include maintenance of existing roads and river crossings, evaluation and repair of existing irrigation infrastructure, repair and maintenance of resident housing, procurement and deployment of vehicles and equipment necessary to maintain the ranch, and continued monitoring and research being conducted under other work tasks.

Pertinent Reports: *Planet Ranch: Potential Restoration Site, Preliminary Site Analysis and Conceptual Design* is posted to the LCR MSCP Web site.