

Work Task E25: Big Bend Conservation Area

FY10 Estimates	FY10 Actual	Cumulative Accomplishment Through FY10	FY11 Approved Estimate	FY12 Proposed Estimate	FY13 Proposed Estimate	FY14 Proposed Estimate
\$500,000	\$499,672.19	\$637,394.44	\$500,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000

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Start Date: FY09

Expected Duration: FY55

Long-term Goal: Habitat protection.

Conservation Measures: BONY2, RASU2, and FLSU1.

Location: Reach 3, Nevada, River Mile 266.5.

Purpose: Protection of an existing backwater from development which would result in 15 acres of backwater credit.

Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future): Marsh bird surveys are conducted under D1 while fish surveys have been conducted under multiple Work Tasks in section C and F5.

Project Description: The Boy Scout Camp purchased by the SNWA combined with the adjacent backwater managed by the State of Nevada has collectively been identified as the Big Bend Conservation Area. The conservation area includes approximately 15 acres of backwater within the Nevada portion of the Colorado River that will be protected, and approximately 15 acres of upland area adjacent to the backwater. The dry upland area is planned to be enhanced for education and outreach purposes by SNWA at minimal cost to the program and is being completed in concert with protection of the backwater. The properties are adjacent to and buffered by Big Bend State Park. This location may also provide an opportunity for restoration in the future.

Past native fish monitoring efforts have indicated the presence of native fishes in and adjacent to the existing backwater. Successfully securing the site will result in 15 acres of backwater habitat credit that benefits flannelmouth sucker, razorback sucker, and bonytail in Reach 3 of the LCR MSCP planning area. Reach 3 maintains the only self-sustaining population of flannelmouth sucker and has very few undeveloped backwaters, which make protection of the existing backwater a priority for the LCR MSCP. The Colorado River and Reach 3 in particular are experiencing extensive urban development. The Big Bend Conservation Area, formally known as the Boy Scout Camp, maintains access to the river via the adjacent backwater and would make the area a likely candidate for

development. Securing the property for the LCR MSCP ensures the commitment of adjacent land owners, and controls future development in the surrounding areas. Long-term security of the property would also provide protection to the backwater and allow for future restoration activities.

A long-term lease with the option to renew between Reclamation and SNWA was finalized in FY09. This lease would compensate SNWA for the acquisition cost of the 15 acres of upland. The compensation price of the upland was determined by a federal appraisal, which valued the property at \$872,000. The compensation was split equally over 2 fiscal years beginning in FY10. The 10 ac-ft of water attached to the Boy Scout Camp property and acquired by SNWA was excluded from the federal appraisal. Compensation was approved by the Steering Committee in October of 2008.

A land use agreement between Reclamation, NDOW, SNWA and Nevada Division of State Parks was signed and finalized in FY09. The land use agreement documents the roles and responsibility of each party pertaining to continual management of the Big Bend Conservation Area. A land and water resolution was approved by the Steering Committee in October 2008.

Previous Activities: The land use agreement documents the roles and responsibility of each party pertaining to continual management of the Big Bend Conservation Area.

SNWA assumed the responsibility of restoring the upland portion of Conservation Area at minimal cost to the program. Reclamation reviewed and concurred with the site improvement plans to ensure compatibility with LCR MSCP. Saltcedar was removed from the upland site and roughly 800 mesquite trees were planted. The LCR MSCP provided the mesquite trees, development of the existing groundwater well, and procurement of a portion of the irrigation system in support of SNWA's upland restoration action.

FY10 Accomplishments:

Maintenance/Restoration/Management: The SNWA was reimbursed for approximately ½ of the funding used to secure the Boy Scout Camp property through an in-kind contribution. The balance will be reimbursed in FY11. The LCR MSCP continued to support SNWA's effort to establish native plants on the upland property and ensure compatibility with the goals of backwater protection.

NDOW coordinated with the Nevada Wildlife Commission for the installation of two buoys at the entrance of the backwater. Permits for the buoy placements will be completed by March and the buoys will be installed in April 2011. The buoys will provide a no wake restriction in the backwater to decrease disturbance to wildlife.

Monitoring: Marsh bird surveys were conducted during March, April and May utilizing the National Marsh Bird Monitoring Protocol. Four survey points were established within the boundaries of the conservation area. No LCR MSCP species were detected.

All fisheries surveys for 2010 were conducted during February through May as part of the ongoing flannelmouth sucker activities associated with work task C15. One LCR MSCP covered species was contacted, a single flannelmouth sucker adult (610mm total length) was captured during the February survey. Additional netting was conducted during the May sampling trip in an attempt to contact age 0 flannelmouth.

FY11 Activities:

Maintenance/Restoration/Management: The SNWA will be reimbursed the remaining balance, approximately ½ of the funding, used to secure the Boy Scout Camp property. The LCR MSCP will continue to support SNWA's effort to establish native plants on the upland property and ensure compatibility with the goals of backwater protection.

Two "No Wake" buoys will be placed at the entrance of the backwater in April 2011. Installation will be accomplished with coordination between the LCR MSCP, NDOW, and YAO.

Monitoring: Presence/absence marsh bird surveys will be conducted in March, April and May at previous established points. At each survey point a vegetation survey will be conducted once per year, during the same time as the marsh bird surveys.

Fisheries surveys will be conducted. Electro-fishing, larval light trapping, and trammel nets will be accomplished monthly from February through May at locations which are dictated by water level or at locations which have historically produced native fish. Water quality profiles will be performed during each monitoring event and quarterly outside of the monitoring period.

Proposed FY12 Activities:

Maintenance/Restoration/Management: The LCR MSCP will continue to support SNWA's effort to establish native plants on the upland property and ensure compatibility with the goals of backwater protection.

Monitoring: Presence/absence marsh bird surveys will be conducted in March, April and May at previous established points. At each survey point a vegetation survey will be conducted once per year, during the same time as the marsh bird surveys.

Fisheries surveys will be conducted. Electro-fishing, larval light trapping, and trammel nets will be accomplished monthly from February through May at locations which are dictated by water level or at locations which have historically produced native fish. Water quality profiles will be performed during each monitoring event and quarterly outside of the monitoring period.

Pertinent Reports: *Big Bend Conservation Area Restoration Development and Monitoring Plan, Overview, and Site Improvement Plan for the Boy Scout Property* are posted on the LCR MSCP website.