

Work Task E29: Desert Tortoise

FY11 Estimate	FY11 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY11	FY12 Approved Estimate	FY13 Proposed Estimate	FY14 Proposed Estimate	FY15 Proposed Estimate
\$50,000	\$59,667.12	\$233,179.69	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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Start Date: FY10

Expected Duration: Closed in FY11.

Long-term Goal: Acquisition and protection of unprotected occupied habitat.

Conservation Measures: DET01.

Location: The Chuckwalla Bench Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is located in Riverside County, California, between the Chuckwalla Mountains and the Chocolate Mountains.

Purpose: Acquire 230 acres of unprotected occupied desert tortoise habitat for permanent protection of the species' habitat.

Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future): The Chuckwalla Bench ACEC was identified in the FY07 RFP issued under Conservation Area Site Selection (E16).

Project Description: The HCP requires the LCR MSCP to acquire and protect 230 acres of existing unprotected occupied habitat.

In response to the LCR MSCP's FY07 Request for Projects, the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy proposed the acquisition of 230 acres of desert tortoise habitat, currently owned by private landowners within the Chuckwalla Bench ACEC, which is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In 2007, the BLM's California Desert District Office was contacted to determine the transfer of ownership process. Several administrative procedures (i.e., letter writing, documentation, and solicitor review) will occur prior to the time of purchase. Private parcels acquired by the LCR MSCP will be transferred to the BLM for permanent protection.

Previous Activities: In 2007, the LCR MSCP solicited potential habitat areas for acquisition from Steering Committee members. Coachella Valley Water District, in conjunction with the Conservancy, proposed the acquisition of private in-holdings within the Chuckwalla Bench ACEC.

With the help of the Conservancy, 12 individual landowners within the ACEC were identified using county records and tax assessor information. Three landowners granted the Program access

to survey and appraise their parcels. The appraisals, totaling 260 acres, were conducted in FY09 through the Federal Appraisal Service Directorate.

The first acquisition, 200 acres of occupied desert tortoise habitat from one landowner, was completed in 2010. In September 2010 the BLM-California Desert District office sent a letter to Reclamation confirming the acceptance of the property, the recorded grant deed in BLM's name and reference to the LCR MSCP Conservation Measure DET01.

FY11 Accomplishments: The final two parcels were purchased from the landowners and transferred to the BLM for permanent species protection. Confirmation was received from the BLM that all grant deeds have been recorded in the name of the United States of America. The LCR MSCP Program Manager sent official correspondence to the USFWS demonstrating that 260 acres of occupied but unprotected desert tortoise habitat has been acquired by the LCR MSCP and transferred to an appropriate management agency.

On August 18, 2011 a memo was received from the USFWS confirming that the LCR MSCP has completed conservation measure DET01. All project information will be archived in the LCR MSCP files and this work task will closed in FY11.

Proposed FY12 Activities: Closed in FY11.

Pertinent Reports: *Desert Tortoise Surveys in the Chuckwalla Desert Wildlife Management Area on Private Land Parcels Proposed for Acquisition* will be posted on the LCR MSCP website.