

Work Task E30: Flat-tailed Horned Lizard

FY11 Estimate	FY11 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY11	FY12 Approved Estimate	FY13 Proposed Estimate	FY14 Proposed Estimate	FY15 Proposed Estimate
\$195,000	\$88,884.93	\$88,884.93	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0

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Start Date: FY11

Expected Duration: FY12

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

Conservation Measures: FTHL1.

Location: The Yuha Desert Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is located in southwestern Imperial County California.

Purpose: Acquire 230 acres of unprotected occupied flat-tailed horned lizard habitat for permanent protection of the species' habitat.

Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future): Prior to Steering Committee approval all activities associated with this conservation measure were charges to Conservation Area Site Selection (E16).

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

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy proposed the acquisition of 230 acres of flat-tailed horned lizard habitat within the Dos Palmas Conservation Area, 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. Discussions indicate that private parcels acquired by the program will be transferred to the BLM after purchase at no additional cost to the program.

After consulting with the local BLM office and reviewing suitable habitat within Dos Palmas Conservation Area, there is not enough private acreage available. Suitable habitat that is in private ownership consists of small parcels and is adjacent to unsuitable habitat for flat-tail horned lizards. It is anticipated that additional costs for multiple federal appraisals, title searches, and available willing sellers will disqualify the site for the LCR MSCP.

At the October 27, 2010 Steering Committee Meeting, Program Decision Document 10-001(r) was presented for approval. This Decision Document outlined the reasoning for not working in

the Dos Palmas Conservation Area at this time and proposed three alternative areas. Yuha Desert ACEC, East Mesa ACEC, and West Mesa ACEC are all suitable alternatives.

Previous Activities: N/A

FY11 Accomplishments: In November 2010 in consultation with staff from the BLM's El Centro Field Office, the LCR MSCP targeted acquisition to the Yuha Desert Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The Yuha Desert ACEC is one of three management areas for the flat-tailed horned lizard managed by the BLM. The BLM requested the LCR MSCP focus acquisition in the Yuha based on its smaller total acreage and contiguous flat-tail habitat remaining undisturbed.

A total of 13 land owners were contacted in the Yuha ACEC. To reduce the numbers of potential properties to be surveyed and federally appraised a minimum acreage of 69 was chosen. Two willing land owners signed and returned the right-of-entry permit allowing the LCR MSCP to access their land. Access is required for administering a hazardous materials inspection, a species survey by walking transects, and a federal appraisal conducted. One parcel totals 160 acres and the second totals 80 acres.

A preliminary title review conducted by the BLM shows no issues with legal ownership and the lands are minimally disturbed, free of any hazardous materials. Both parcels had species surveys conducted in May and June 2011. The parcels were divided into 24 (4-ha) plots and each plot was surveyed once. Two flat-tailed horned lizards (male) were detected in the 160 acre parcel and one flat-tailed horned lizard (female) was detected in the 80 acre parcel. Two desert horned lizards were detected on the 160 acre parcel and eight desert horned lizards were detected on the 80 acre parcel. Horned lizard scat was present in 22 of the 24 plots.

The BLM El Centro Field Office has agreed to accept the two parcels and manage the lands for permanent species protection when the LCR MSCP acquisitions are completed. Unfortunately the project was not completed in FY11 as originally scheduled. Consequently, the expenditures in FY11 were less than anticipated due to delays in acquisition. Acquisition of both properties and transfer to the BLM is expected in mid-FY12. The FY11 budget was expended on coordination meetings, federal appraisals, conducting species surveys and completing due diligence on the properties before acquisition.

FY12 Activities: Acquisition of the larger 160-acre parcel was completed in December 2011, and acquisition of the second parcel of 80 acres is expected to also occur in FY12. The FY12 budget reflects the cost of both properties and minimal administrative work. Once Reclamation receives confirmation from the BLM that both grant deeds have been recorded, the LCR MSCP Program Manager will contact the USFWS. A formal letter will be sent documenting the occupied, but unprotected habitat acquired and recorded grant deeds held with the BLM. It is expected that the USFWS will return a concurrence letter to the LCR MSCP which will officially close-out this work task.

Proposed FY13 Activities: Closed in FY12.

Pertinent Reports: N/A