

## Work Task E18: Law Enforcement and Fire Suppression

FY12 Estimate	FY12 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY12	FY13 Approved Estimate	FY14 Proposed Estimate	FY15 Proposed Estimate	FY16 Proposed Estimate
\$325,000	\$326,234.76	\$897,622.68	\$325,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000

**Contact:** Jed Blake, (702) 293-8165, [jblake@usbr.gov](mailto:jblake@usbr.gov)

**Start Date:** FY06

**Expected Duration:** FY55

**Long-term Goal:** Created habitat protection.

**Conservation Measures:** CMM1.

**Location:** Reaches 1-7.

**Purpose:** Provide law enforcement and fire suppression in support of habitat created under the LCR MSCP.

**Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future):** Law enforcement and fire suppression are anticipated to be integral management components for all habitats created through Section E work tasks.

**Project Description:** This project funds law enforcement and fire protection for created habitat. It is assumed that BLM, USFWS, AGFD, CDFW, NDOW, BIA, CAL-Fire and other agencies will conduct law enforcement and fire fighting activities on the river. Law enforcement and fire suppression strategies have been developed at the programmatic level and for each individual Conservation Area. As new Conservation Areas are incorporated into the program, site specific fire and law plans will be drafted.

**Previous Activities:** The BLM Colorado River District office based in Lake Havasu, Arizona provides fire management support services to the LCR MSCP. BLM is responsible for fire related activities and is the lead wildland fire agency for Conservation Areas on both state and Reclamation lands. Conservation Areas located on federal refuges are managed for wildland fire and law enforcement by the USFWS.

The BLM also conducts patrols on the site, outreach to land owners, risk assessment, site mapping and identification of critical infrastructure. The inspections are intended to proactively identify and address potential wildland fire management issues. Recommendations are discussed with the land owner and the LCR MSCP project manager. These recommendations help identify high risk areas, areas in need of fuels reduction, damage to infrastructure and management of visitor use areas.

**FY12 Accomplishments:** A majority of activities in FY12 were devoted to allowing fire and law agencies to become familiar with the conservation areas located in Yuma to the international border. Imperial Ponds, Laguna Division, Yuma East Wetlands and Hunters Hole were all visited; site visits documented and fire management services required were discussed. The program is actively working with Border Patrol and other law local law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety of staff working at Hunter's Hole. Funds from E18 were used to assist in the rehabilitation of the groundwater well at E31 Hunters Hole to increase capacity and allow for remote operation. This, in conjunction with automation of the irrigation valves, will allow rapid flooding of the cells without staff being present in case of a law or fire incident. It was anticipated that the LCR MSCP would approach the Bureau of Land Management, United States Border Patrol, City of Yuma, Quechan Indian Tribe, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department for law and fire management at Yuma East Wetlands; however, the land use agreement has not been signed yet so this activity will be delayed until FY13.

The BLM successfully conducted fire management support services at the Palo Verde Ecological Reserve (PVER) and for the Cibola Valley Conservation and Wildlife Area (CVCWA). Activities on the conservation areas included: attendance at irrigation district meetings, proactive patrols on the conservation areas, site visits with LCR MSCP staff, signage placement, budget meeting attendance, communicating with local irrigators, working with the local state game wardens and habitat managers.

In the August 2012 a driving tour with BLM law enforcement and fire personnel was conducted in the greater Yuma Area. Fire history on the new sites was discussed; site accessibility and potential fuels reduction activities were identified. Additionally, fire and law agencies located in the adjacent communities were identified and slated to be contacted as the conservation areas are developed.

A revision to the LCR MSCP conservation area specific plans was conducted in FY12. The revisions included updated maps, points of contacts for supporting agencies, correct telephone numbers included, and reproduction.

There were no fires on LCR MSCP conservation areas during FY12.

**FY13 Activities:** A pre-fire meeting in the Yuma area will be conducted with fire and law staff from the BLM, USFWS and local state agencies. Unlike conservation areas located in the Blythe area where jurisdiction is much clearer; the Yuma area has much more overlap between federal, state, tribal and city jurisdictions.

To help make the conservation areas known to fire and law staff, additional site visits and coordination meetings will be held. The LCR MSCP will be asking for the BLM's assistance in helping to outreach to the multiple fire agencies located in the area. A key reason the LCR MSCP is asking for the BLM's help is that the BLM maintains "mutual aide agreements" with every fire agency on the lower Colorado River. These agreements allow for partner agencies to respond to fire on conservation areas for up to 24 hours. When responding to a fire on conservation areas, the local fire agency will have been

informed of the habitat value, access routes, land ownership and limited use of suppression tactics on the site due to threatened and endangered animals.

Several fire plans will be drafted by the BLM and incorporated into the BLM's state fire plan. As conservation areas are developed the state fire plan will be revised to reflect the new site footprint in the following year's adoption of the plan. Some areas with past revegetation efforts such as Hunters Hole will be a revision to the state plan whereas new projects such as Laguna Division Conservation Area will be drafting of a new plan.

LCR MSCP staff is looking at new fuels reduction methods and techniques that can be implemented in the following years with the land owners consent. Proactive measures can be implemented through state conservation crews, internal staff or by commercial vendor.

**Proposed FY14 Activities:** Working with local fire and law agencies proactively in support of the conservation areas will continue in FY14. Map creation, site visits, coordination meetings, attendance at agency staff meetings, etc. is envisioned. One facet of the law and fire program for the LCR MSCP is that support agencies do not have the resources to seek out the Program for information. Rather the LCR MSCP must outreach to these agencies and make the conservation areas intention known.

The BLM will formally adopt the new Laguna Division fire plan and the revised fire plan for Hunters Hole. It is envisioned that the new conservation areas (i.e. Parker Dam Camp) will soon be established and will have the need for law and fire management. As new conservation areas are developed the BLM may be asked to be the lead law and fire agency or the LCR MSCP will work with the appropriate state, city or tribal agencies leveraging the existing mutual aide agreements in place.

Fuel load reduction may occur on or adjacent to conservation areas. Chemical treatments, manual, mechanical and chipping of invasive species are all generally accepted fuels reduction techniques. The BLM, USFWS, and supporting fire management offices will help advise the LCR MSCP on implementation of new fire breaks, vehicle turn-arounds, and associated fire management actions.

**Pertinent Reports:** N/A