

Work Task E31: Hunters Hole

FY12 Estimate	FY12 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY12	FY13 Approved Estimate	FY14 Proposed Estimate	FY15 Proposed Estimate	FY16 Proposed Estimate
\$30,000	\$88,198.74	\$56,805.78	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$65,000	\$60,000

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Start Date: FY11

Expected Duration: FY55

Long-term Goal: Habitat creation and maintenance.

Conservation Measures: WIFL1, YBCU1, ELOW1, GIFL1, GIWO1, VEFL1, BEVI1, YWAR1, SUTA1, PTBB2.

Location: Reach 7, Arizona, River Mile 2.5.

Purpose: To create and maintain land cover types and support site improvements that benefit LCR MSCP covered species.

Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future): Vegetation and species monitoring are being addressed under F1-F7.

Project Description: In 2010, the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area (YCNHA), in cooperation with the Reclamation, has developed a restoration plan for Hunters Hole located within the State of Arizona and within Reach 7 of the LCR MSCP planning area. The focus of the restoration has changed due to dropping groundwater levels. The open water was eliminated and replaced with wet, dense, cottonwood-willow and honey mesquite. The result is anticipated to achieve 36 acres of cottonwood-willow land cover type, reduce future pumping costs, use less water, and maximize the credit for the LCR MSCP. A supplemental Environmental Assessment has been completed based on the revised restoration plan.

The YCNHA has secured funding from the Arizona Water Protection Fund to design, permit, clear, and restore the Hunters Hole area. At the October 27, 2010 LCR MSCP Steering Committee Meeting, Resolution 11-001 was approved. Once the Conservation Area is established, the LCR MSCP has agreed to provide long-term funding for the operation and maintenance of created land cover types.

Previous Activities: In 2008 YCNHA approached Reclamation with a request to complete the project, which would be located on federal lands. In response, the Yuma Area Office completed National Environmental Protection Act compliance after discussions with other federal agencies. The Environmental Assessment was completed

in April 2009, and the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) document was signed in June 2009.

YCNHA invited a number of stakeholders to participate in the project planning effort. These stakeholders include BLM, U.S. Border Patrol, USFWS, U.S. and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission, AGFD, the City of San Luis, the City of Somerton, the City of Yuma, Yuma County Sheriff's Office, Environmental Defense, National Wildlife Federation, ProNatura Noroeste, and private landowners in the area. ProNatura Noroeste has developed a complimentary restoration plan on the Mexico side heralding the project as a bi-national border restoration effort.

FY12 Accomplishments:

Maintenance/Restoration/Management. Earthwork and irrigation infrastructure was fully installed in February. The site was planted using a variety of native species planting techniques during March. The site was planted similar to the original design that incorporated marsh and riparian land cover types. Bulrush and willows were planted in the marsh cells and willows, mesquite, cottonwoods and native grasses planted in the flood managed fields.

Non-native species control, irrigation and maintenance of irrigation infrastructure were the bulk of the effort spent in the remainder of 2012 after planting.

A new ground water pump was ordered for the project in 2012. These pumps are a special order from the manufacture and built to the sites requirements. Replacement is slated for the upcoming year.

Monitoring. The only monitoring activity, which took place in 2012, was the monitoring of vegetation at the site. No other monitoring was needed since planting took place in the spring and other types of wildlife monitoring does not take place until after at least one year of growth has occurred. Ten random points were established throughout the site and vegetation was measured at each point in October.

FY13 Activities:

Maintenance/Restoration/Management. Invasive species control and irrigation will continue throughout 2013 as the site becomes established. During planning meetings it was envisioned that labor required for the site would be reduced in future years.

A standard operating procedure for the irrigation system will be refined and implemented on the property. A draft schedule was developed in FY12; this schedule will be tailored for the site and incorporated into the operating plan after a year of irrigating.

The new groundwater pump will be installed in 2013 as well as additional upgrades to the irrigation system. Due to the travel time associated with reaching the site, Hunters Hole will utilize an automated irrigation system in future years. Multiple upgrades are required to have remote irrigation capabilities, however travel time and security risks warrant the

use of a remote operated system. Upgrades would include: automated valves, upgraded electrical panel, telemetry unit and associated hardware required to be incorporated into Reclamation's remote monitoring network.

Road maintenance is ongoing and conducted as required. The roads besides being used for LCR MSCP purposes are also used by the United States Border Patrol for patrolling the surrounding area.

Monitoring. In 2013 vegetation monitoring will be conducted at the same sites that were monitored in 2012. System-wide bird surveys will be conducted. Two rapid surveys will be conducted and will then be incorporated into the rest of the general bird surveys at restoration sites for purposes of analysis.

Proposed FY14 Activities: The site will be maintained and operated by the LCR MSCP, to meet covered species habitat requirements and support adaptive management activities to improve site conditions. Maintenance, monitoring and project coordination will be conducted. Groundwater well upgrades, which includes automation of the water control valves are scheduled to be completed in 2014. The automation is expected to reduce future operational costs.

Road maintenance is ongoing and conducted as required. The roads besides being used for LCR MSCP purposes are also used by the United States Border Patrol for patrolling the surrounding area.

In FY14, monitoring will include vegetation, general bird surveys, small mammal trapping, bat monitoring, southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo surveys.

Pertinent Reports: The *2012 Hunters Hole Conservation Area Annual Report*, which summarizes any planting conducted, site management, results of monitoring, and any recommendations for future adaptive management will be posted after integration of data collected throughout the calendar year.