

Work Task E18: Law Enforcement and Fire Suppression

FY13 Estimate	FY13 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY13	FY14 Approved Estimate	FY15 Proposed Estimate	FY16 Proposed Estimate	FY17 Proposed Estimate
\$325,000	\$320,149.03	\$1,243,149.46	\$250,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000

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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.

FY13 Activities: A pre-fire meeting in the Yuma area was conducted in March 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 were held throughout the year. The LCR MSCP has asked for the BLM's assistance in helping to outreach to the multiple fire agencies located in the area. A key reason the LCR MSCP asked 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.

BLM's State Fire Plan. Several fire plans (Hunters Hole and Yuma East Wetlands) have been 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 and Yuma East Wetlands were a revision to the state plan whereas new projects such as Laguna Division Conservation Area will be incorporated after completion.

LCR MSCP staff looked 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 the use of youth conservation crews, internal staff or by commercial vendors.

Yuma East Wetlands. A small fire, less than 2 acres, occurred on April 28th within the Yuma East Wetlands. The fire was located within the southern flood irrigated section of the wetlands that contained honey mesquite, Gooddings willow, and alkali sacaton. The fire was quickly extinguished by local firefighting personnel. The area was also flooded using the existing pump station, which minimized the damage.

Yuma East Wetlands. Heavy equipment started clearing phragmites from the bankline at Yuma East Wetlands, but clearing was stopped due to rain. The area being targeted to reduce fuel loading is on the northern bankline of the Colorado River on lands owned by the Quechan Tribe. Completion of clearing and stabilization of the bankline will occur in FY14.

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.

Access plans. Conservation Area specific access plans that address public access, agency access, and authorized contractors, will be developed for each Conservation Area and

incorporated into their respective Fire Plans (both BLM's State Fire Plan and Conservation Area specific fire suppression and law enforcement plans). The access plans will designate routes and parking facilities to minimize the impact of our activities on the Conservation Area and reduce fire risk. An access plan is being developed for the Laguna Division Conservation Area is being drafted and will service as a template for other Conservation Areas. 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. Mohave Valley Backwater) will be established as development progress and the need for law and fire management is identified. 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.

A small fire 50-60 acres occurred on December 30, 2013 at the area typically referred to as PVER-South (an extension of PVER) just north of the town of Blythe, California. The area burned was confined to an undeveloped portion of the low meander on the southern portion of the property. As PVER-south is scheduled for restoration in the future, we will take advantage of the fire to gather topographic information and may selective control the re-sprout of non-native vegetation.

FY15 Activities: Working with local fire and law agencies proactively in support of the conservation areas will continue in FY15. Map creation, site visits, coordination meetings, attendance at agency staff meetings, etc. is envisioned. Access plans, which address public access, agency access, and authorized contractors, will be developed for each Conservation Area. The access plans will designate routes and parking facilities to minimize the impact of our activities on the Conservation Area and reduce fire risk. Access plans will be developed for the Palo Verde Ecological Preserve and the Cibola Valley Conservation Area and incorporated into their respective Law Enforcement and Fire Suppression Plans.

Fire Suppression and Law Enforcement Plans. Site Specific Conservation Area Fire Suppression and Law Enforcement Plans for Yuma East Wetlands, Hunters Hole, and the Laguna Division Conservation Area, initiated in FY14, and are expected to be completed. Included in each plan with be access plans.

Pertinent Reports: N/A