

## Work Task E31: Hunters Hole

FY13 Estimate	FY13 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY13	FY14 Approved Estimate	FY15 Proposed Estimate	FY16 Proposed Estimate	FY17 Proposed Estimate
\$150,000	\$180,047.99	\$222,955.87	\$75,000	\$80,000	\$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 has completed restoration of the Hunters Hole area. At the October 27, 2010 LCR MSCP Steering Committee Meeting, Resolution 11-001 was approved. The LCR MSCP has agreed to provide long-term funding for the operation and maintenance of created land cover types.

**Previous Activities:** Earthwork and irrigation infrastructure was fully installed in February of 2012. 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.

#### **FY13 Accomplishments:**

**Maintenance/Restoration/Management.** A new ground water pump was installed. This pump was a special order from the manufacture and built to the sites requirements. Non-native species control, irrigation and maintenance of irrigation infrastructure were conducted in 2013. To reduce long term operational costs, a plan to remotely irrigate the site was developed and is expected to be operational in FY14.

**Monitoring.** Monitoring was increased in 2013 as small mammal and general bird surveys were added in the second year of growth, per protocol. Vegetation monitoring was conducted for the second year.

Small mammal trapping was conducted on three occasions in 2013, and approximately 120 traps were placed each time. No covered species were captured but some species typically found in riparian habitat were captured.

Two rapid surveys for birds were conducted at Hunter's Hole. One survey was conducted in April and a second survey was conducted May. No covered species were detected and only two species were found to be breeding at the site. The low number of breeding species at the site is to be expected, as the vegetation has not grown sufficiently to allow for most breeding species to have the cover needed to nest.

A permanent acoustic bat monitoring station was set up at Hunter's Hole in 2013. Acoustic data is now being recorded at the site and data on the species utilizing the site will be available in subsequent years.

Vegetation at the site was monitored at the same ten points that were monitored in 2012.

#### **FY14 Activities:**

**Maintenance/Restoration/Management.** To complement the new groundwater pump which can now be remotely operated, additional upgrades to automate the irrigation system are planned. Due to the travel time associated with reaching the site, Hunters Hole will utilize an automated irrigation system, expected to be operational in FY14. These upgrades are intended to reduce labor costs and increase safety of on-site personnel. A standard operating procedure for the irrigation system will be refined and allow for remote operation. Invasive species control and irrigation will continue throughout 2014 as the site becomes established.

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 FY14, monitoring surveys will be added for southwestern willow flycatchers, and yellow-billed cuckoos. All monitoring activities conducted in FY13 will also be conducted in FY14.

**Proposed FY15 Activities:** The site will be maintained and operated to meet covered species habitat requirements and support adaptive management activities to improve site conditions. Maintenance, monitoring and project coordination will be conducted.

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 FY15, monitoring will continue as conducted in 2014.

**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.