

Work Task E21: Planet Ranch, Bill Williams River

FY14 Estimate	FY14 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY14	FY15 Approved Estimate	FY16 Proposed Estimate	FY17 Proposed Estimate	FY18 Proposed Estimate
\$40,000	\$45,033.35	\$270,136.18	\$40,000	\$10,340,000*	\$540,000	\$540,000

* Includes \$8,300,000 acquisition pending approval from the Steering Committee.

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Start Date: FY05

Expected Duration: FY55

Long-Term Goal: Habitat creation and management

Conservation Measures: CLRA1, WIFL1, WIFL2, WRBA2, WYBA3, CRCR2, LEB1, YBCU1, YBCU2, ELOW1, GIFL1, GIWO1, VEFL1, BEV11, YWAR1, SUTA1, and MNSW2

Location: Reach 3, Bill Williams River, 11 miles east of River Mile 190, Arizona

Purpose: To create and manage a mosaic of native land cover types for LCR MSCP covered species

Connections with Other Work Tasks (Past and Future): This work task was previously included in the draft FY05 work tasks as Work Task E4. Costs associated with a Federal land and water appraisal conducted in FY08 were captured under Work Task E16. Work Task E21 was closed at the end of FY05 but was reopened in FY09 to track expenditures during negotiations.

Project Description: Planet Ranch encompasses approximately 8,400 acres, of which approximately 2,400 acres had previously been farmed for alfalfa. In 2008, the LCR MSCP Steering Committee approved a land and water resolution, which authorized Reclamation to enter into negotiations to secure approximately 3,418 acres of land and 5,549 acre-feet of water per year. The sum of \$8,300,000 to secure this land and water was determined through the Federal appraisal process. Negotiations are also underway to allow the BLM to secure the remaining acreage, which has no water entitlement from the Bill Williams River. Once finalized, the terms and conditions to secure the land and water resources will be brought back to the Steering Committee.

An estimated 550 acres of cottonwood-willow trees are anticipated to be developed on Planet Ranch; another 396 acres of cottonwood-willow trees

downstream on the Bill Williams River NWR will also be afforded protection by securing the Planet Ranch property. Additionally, there may be an opportunity to incorporate disconnected backwaters into the restoration plan.

Previous Activities: Planet Ranch was evaluated and a conceptual design was developed, assuming the ranch and water entitlement were secured for the program. This information is posted on the LCR MSCP Web site as *Planet Ranch: Potential Restoration Site, Preliminary Site Analysis and Conceptual Design*.

Regulatory compliance activities required under NEPA, ESA, and the National Historic Preservation Act are complete but may be updated at the time of property purchase. Native American consultation and a Class I Cultural Survey as prescribed in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act were completed in FY11.

FY14 Accomplishments: Negotiations to secure the land and water resources for the project continued; specifically, the final details of the lease, donation, and water agreements. NEPA compliance was initiated.

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission approved the acquisition of Planet Ranch in August 2014. Legislation directing the Secretary of the Interior to enter in an agreement for the acquisition of Planet Ranch was signed in December 2014.

Reclamation continued to be a member of the Bill Williams River Corridor Steering Committee.

FY15 Activities: The land and water resolution for the acquisition of Planet Ranch was approved by the LCR MSCP Steering Committee on April 22, 2015. A schedule to complete the acquisition and transition ownership to the AGFD Commission will be drafted.

Reclamation continues to be an active member of the Bill Williams River Corridor Steering Committee.

Proposed FY16 Activities: The proposed budget assumes both approval of the acquisition of Planet Ranch by the LCR MSCP Steering Committee and successful closing of escrow. The budget includes funds for both acquisition (\$8,300,000) and coordination for the transfer of ownership, ranch operations, and capital expenditures for items such as motor graders, water trucks, dump trucks, and backhoes.

Reclamation participation in the Bill Williams River Corridor Steering Committee continues.

Pertinent Reports: N/A