

Work Task E35: Mohave Valley Conservation Area

FY14 Estimate	FY14 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY14	FY15 Approved Estimate	FY16 Proposed Estimate	FY17 Proposed Estimate	FY18 Proposed Estimate
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$1,250,000	\$6,000,000	\$3,000,000

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Start Date: FY15

Expected Duration: FY55

Long-Term Goal: Habitat creation

Conservation Measures: BONY2, RASU2, and FLSU1

Location: Reach 3, River Miles 237–238, Park Moabi Regional Park, California

Purpose: The purpose of this work task is to create and manage a mosaic of land cover types to provide habitat for LCR MSCP covered species. Approximately 56 acres of backwater habitat for native fish will be provided and will incorporate marsh, riparian, and mesquite cover types where appropriate.

Connections with Other Work Tasks (Past and Future): This project was identified under Work Task E16, and design of the conservation area will also be conducted under that work task. Vegetation and species monitoring will be conducted under Work Tasks F1–F7.

Project Description: In the MVCA, a connected backwater will be created that diverts water off the main stem of the Colorado River just below River Mile 237. Diverted flows will run through an excavated channel, enter the existing Park Moabi backwater, and converge with the river 2 miles downstream from the new point of diversion. Excavating the channel will create approximately 56 acres of backwater habitat. The footprint of the conservation area is projected at approximately 90 acres, with native land cover types lining the banks and upland slopes of the backwater accounting for the additional 34 acres.

The MVCA is located 13 miles south of Needles, California, along the Colorado River. The 146-acre property resides within the boundary of Park Moabi Regional Park. The land is owned by the California State Lands Commission and leased to San Bernardino County. Prior to approaching the commission and county about the backwater project, the 146-acre parcel was used as an

off-highway vehicle recreational area; however, once the backwater project was presented, the county was willing to divide the property to accommodate both uses.

The project's area of impact will involve the entire 146 acres (includes areas of fill) as well as lands at the top and bottom of the parcel to connect the backwater to the main stem of the river and the Park Moabi channel. Excavated material will be used throughout the site to create the desired contour elevations, but the majority of the excavated material will be used to create terrain within the county's off-highway vehicle area.

Previous Activities: The California State Lands Commission, the landowner, and San Bernardino County, the lessee, were approached about the project in 2012. Basic, conceptual ideas about the project were presented to the commission and the county, and discussions and lease agreement negotiations continued, but they could not move forward toward a final agreement without an official design proposal for the project. Reclamation's contracting deadline schedule did not allow the solicitation for project design to be advertised during FY13; thus, project construction was delayed.

Reclamation is working with the California State Lands Commission to ensure NEPA/CEQA permitting requirements are met. Both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the USFWS were notified about the project.

A survey of the 146-acre parcel was conducted to establish new control points and develop elevation contours. Additionally, a temporary gauging station was installed directly across the river from the proposed inlet location so river stage could be monitored. These data, in conjunction with the site elevation data, will be used to determine the volume of material that will need to be excavated to achieve the desired depth of the backwater.

FY14 Accomplishments: Due to the 3-month contracting blackout that occurred while Reclamation transitioned to the new Federal accounting system, the design contract for the MVCA was not awarded during FY14. The permits necessary to perform a geotechnical survey were acquired and a survey was conducted in June 2014. The survey consisted of excavating test pits, logging the soil substrate, and determining the depth to groundwater. Additionally, the lease application for the land associated with the project was submitted to the California State Lands Commission; however, the lease cannot be finalized until a design for the project is reviewed by the commission.

All FY14 accomplishments for this project were funded under Work Task E16.

FY15 Activities: Following completion of the 30% design, environmental compliance activities will begin, and the lease with the California State Lands

Commission will be finalized. Pre-development monitoring of riparian birds will be conducted. Desert tortoise pre-construction clearances will be conducted as necessary.

Proposed FY16 Activities: Environmental permitting requirements will be finished. Plants will be ordered in the spring. Construction is anticipated to begin late in FY16. Desert tortoise pre-construction clearances and construction monitoring will be conducted as necessary.

Pertinent Reports: N/A