

Work Task E5: Cibola Valley Conservation Area

FY14 Estimate	FY14 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY14	FY15 Approved Estimate	FY16 Proposed Estimate	FY17 Proposed Estimate	FY18 Proposed Estimate
\$550,000	\$505,920.13	\$10,779,643.89	\$700,000	\$750,000	\$800,000	\$850,000

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Start Date: FY05

Expected Duration: FY55

Long-Term Goal: Habitat creation

Conservation Measures: WIFL1, WRBA2, WYBA3, YBCU1, ELOW1, GIFL1, GIWO1, VEFL1, BEVI1, YWAR1, SUTA1, and MNSW2

Location: Reach 4, River Miles 99–104, 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): Vegetation and species monitoring are being addressed under Work Tasks F1–F4 and F6.

Project Description: In 2007, under the LCR MSCP, 1,309 acres of land serviced by the Cibola Valley Irrigation and Drainage District were secured, and the CVCA was established. The AGFD acquired the CVCA in September 2007 through a multi-organizational agreement involving the AGFD, Reclamation, the Mohave County Water Authority, The Conservation Fund, and the Hopi Tribe. Through these agreements, the AGFD acquired CVCA fee title and water entitlements and agreed to manage the site.

The CVCA is located in southwestern La Paz County, Arizona, about 15 miles south of Blythe, California. The valley encompasses the land inside an engineered bend of the LCR and a remnant oxbow on the west side of the river (Palo Verde Oxbow). Six phases have been restored with native vegetation, and the remainder is farmed for cotton and alfalfa. The area is bordered to the south by the Cibola NWR and on the east by unimproved land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The river forms the north and west boundaries, except for the Palo Verde Oxbow, from River Miles 98.8 to 104.9.

Agricultural areas have irrigation systems in place that are conducive for water management of riparian species. Checks, which are small borders placed within a given field, allow for flooding of only a portion of a field. These provide additional flexibility to create and maintain saturated soil areas for covered species.

Previous Activities: Through FY13, over 650 acres of cottonwood-willow, honey mesquite, and buffer-stabilized ground have been established in Phases 1–6 and are being managed for LCR MSCP covered species. Phase 4 actually consists of two locations; one site (58 acres) is located north of Phase 3. The other site, consisting of 187 acres, is located west of Phases 1 and 2. Approximately 80 acres of this site were planted with a mix of native seeds and irrigated in an effort to eliminate blowing dust and stabilize the ground. This seed mixture consisted of quail bush, needle grama, curly mesquite grass, desert bluebells, and desert Indian wheat.

FY14 Accomplishments: The planting material for Phase 7, approximately 72 acres of honey mesquite habitat, was purchased in FY14 to be planted in the spring of FY15 in accordance with the *Cibola Valley Conservation Area Restoration Development and Monitoring Plan: Phase 7*.

Maintenance/Restoration/Management: No restoration activities were scheduled for FY14. Normal scheduled maintenance and irrigation activities were performed throughout the site.

All fields continued to be flood irrigated. Field crews continued to control small patches of morning glory, volunteer cotton, and salt cedar as necessary, with hand tools, throughout all the phases. This method of using crews proved to be an effective method of controlling invasive plants as they germinate. The crews removed invasive plants from the fields in the late spring or early summer.

Vegetation growing near concrete-lined canals was mechanically cleared several times to keep the tree roots from damaging or blocking them. Limited chemical spraying has been used to control vegetation from growing along these canals.

The Cibola Valley Irrigation and Drainage District hosts monthly meetings with its water users. The LCR MSCP is represented at each meeting. All topics are discussed, ranging from irrigation issues, to maintenance, to upcoming events and activities.

Monitoring: Vegetation monitoring was conducted between September and November 2014.

Yellow-billed cuckoo surveys were conducted between late June and early August. In Phases 1, 2, and 3, there was one confirmed breeding territory, one probable breeding territory, and one possible breeding territory. Resident or

breeding southwestern willow flycatchers were not found at the CVCA during 2014. Five migrating flycatchers were detected on May 30 and six and on June 12.

General bird surveys were conducted at the CVCA from April 15 to June 15, 2014. No confirmed breeding pairs of covered species were detected. Yellow warblers were detected in Phase 3 but were not considered to be breeding or resident at the site.

The CVCA was mist netted for bats once per month from May to September during 2014. Twelve western yellow bats and eight western red bats were captured. Western red bats, western yellow bats, California leaf-nosed bats, and Townsend's big-eared bats were detected during acoustic surveys.

Colorado River cotton rats were captured at CVCA Phase 1; nine during the spring and two in the fall.

Surveys were conducted for MacNeill's sootywing in Phase 4 in 2014. Larvae were detected in June and July, and adults were detected in July and August.

FY15 Activities: The planting material for Phase 8 (111 acres), primarily cottonwood-willow, was purchased in FY15 to be planted in the spring of FY16 in accordance with the *Cibola Valley Conservation Area Restoration Development and Monitoring Plan: Phase 8*.

Maintenance/Restoration/Management: Maintenance and regular irrigation of Phases 1–3 will continue. The planting of Phase 7 is scheduled for March 2015. The Restoration Development and Monitoring Plan for the planting of Phase 8 (111 acres) will be drafted.

Monitoring: Vegetation monitoring will continue. Small mammal monitoring will be conducted in the fall and spring. Bat capture surveys will be conducted from May to September. An established long-term bat monitoring station will be used to collect acoustic data. General bird surveys will be conducted from mid-April to mid-June. Single species surveys for the southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo will be conducted during their respective breeding seasons. MacNeill's sootywing surveys will be conducted in the spring and summer.

Proposed FY16 Activities:

Maintenance/Restoration/Management: Maintenance and management will continue. The Restoration Development and Monitoring Plan for the planting of Phase 9 (76 acres) will be drafted. Trees will be purchased in FY16, and planting should occur in the spring of FY17.

Monitoring: Vegetation monitoring will continue. Small mammal monitoring will be conducted in the fall and spring. Bat capture surveys will be conducted from May to September. An established long-term bat monitoring station will be used to collect acoustic data. General bird surveys will be conducted from mid-April to mid-June. Single species surveys for the southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo will be conducted during their respective breeding seasons. MacNeill's sootywing surveys will be conducted in the spring and summer.

Pertinent Reports: The *2013 Cibola Valley Conservation Area Annual Report*, which summarizes any planting conducted, site management, the results of monitoring, and any recommendations for future adaptive management, will be posted on the LCR MSCP Web site once integration of the data collected throughout the calendar year is complete.