

## Work Task H1: Habitat Maintenance Fund

FY16 Estimate	FY16 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY16*	FY17 Approved Estimate	FY18 Proposed Estimate	FY19 Proposed Estimate	FY20 Proposed Estimate
\$0	\$0	\$32,466,770.00	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

\* Cumulative expenditures reflect total required contributions to develop the fund.

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**Start Date:** FY06

**Expected Duration:** FY55

**Long-Term Goal:** Maintenance of existing habitat

**Conservation Measures:** BLRA2, CLRA2, WIFL2, and YBCU2

**Location:** Lower Colorado River (Reaches 1–7)

**Purpose:** To maintain existing habitat areas, excluding newly created habitat within conservation areas, by implementing actions that will prevent the further degradation or loss of habitat for LCR MSCP covered species

**Connections with Other Work Tasks (Past and Future):** This is a stand-alone requirement as described in the LCR MSCP Habitat Conservation Plan.

**Project Description:** The development of a \$25 million interest-bearing fund, called the Habitat Maintenance Fund (HMF), was completed over a 10-year period. The HMF will be used for maintaining habitats, which existed at the time of the signing of the Record of Decision (2005) and were suitable for LCR MSCP covered species, and which have since degraded after the LCR MSCP was initiated.

The HMF was established during the first 10 years of the LCR MSCP by the States of California, Arizona, and Nevada. Funding contributions during the initial 5 years were established at \$500,000 per year, with funding contributions in years 6–10 established at \$5,000,000 per year. Values are indexed to 2003 dollars and adjusted annually for inflation. All required contributions to the HMF are retained in interest-bearing accounts managed by the States of California, Arizona, and Nevada until required for use by the LCR MSCP. Current fund balances and project expenditures are detailed in attachment D-3a.

For HMF projects, the LCR MSCP serves as the funding source but will not directly implement specific projects. The lead agencies and planning participants are expected to use their own funds in the development of proposals and for participation in planning teams. Funds required to administer the HMF under the LCR MSCP will be tracked under Work Task A1.

The Habitat Conservation Plan specifies a priority for habitat and species types benefiting from projects funded through the HMF. Priority 1 for use of the fund is the protection of marsh, and specifically marsh complexes, occupied by LCR MSCP covered rail species that serve as key source populations. The four key source population areas are Topock Marsh and Topock Gorge within the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge (Reach 3), Reach 5 primarily within the Imperial National Wildlife Refuge, and Mittry Lake (Reach 6), which is located on Bureau of Reclamation withdrawn lands. The focus of the first 10 years of expenditures from the HMF (FY16–25) is to (1) improve the infrastructure to manage water levels for rail species and (2) enhance degraded rail habitat in Topock Gorge and Reach 5.

**Previous Activities:** Required annual funding contributions have been completed. In coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, planning teams comprised of representatives of appropriate resource agencies and landowners were assembled to investigate the use of the HMF to maintain Yuma clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris yumanensis* [also known as Yuma Ridgway's rail = *R. obsoletus yumanensis*]) and California black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*) key population centers at both Topock Marsh and Mittry Lake.

**FY16 Accomplishments:** In FY16, no funds were expended from the HMF for project purposes. The total dollar value of the HMF at the end of FY16, with interest, was \$33,464,227.50.

Discussions with the USFWS Arizona Ecological Services Field Office and Region 2 Refuges Regional Office resulted in an agreement to leverage remaining Avoidance and Minimization Measure 2 (AMM2) funds (E17) of approximately \$2.1 million and contributions from the HMF to complete infrastructure improvements at Topock Marsh. These efforts will allow for enhanced management of marsh levels for target species.

Preliminary discussions and planning efforts continued for a proposed project at Mittry Lake.

**FY17 Activities:** Project expenditures are not anticipated to occur in FY17. In coordination with the USFWS Arizona Ecological Services Field Office and planning teams, the LCR MSCP will continue to work with landowners and representatives of appropriate resource agencies to investigate opportunities and

proposals for use of the HMF to maintain key population centers at both Topock Marsh and Mittry Lake. The LCR MSCP will provide coordination and general support of these activities but will not directly implement the project.

At Mittry Lake, the landowner (Bureau of Reclamation) is anticipated to begin developing a proposal in FY17. If a project is ultimately defined and agreed upon, the Bureau of Reclamation's Yuma Area Office will be the lead for all efforts at Mittry Lake.

**Proposed FY18 Activities:** Planning and coordination efforts are anticipated to continue at both Topock Marsh and Mittry Lake.

**Pertinent Reports:** N/A