

Work Task E27: Laguna Division Conservation Area

FY09 Estimates	FY09 Actual	Cumulative Accomplishment Through FY09	FY10 Approved Estimate*	FY11 Proposed Estimate	FY12 Proposed Estimate	FY13 Proposed Estimate
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$750,000	\$1,375,000.00	\$5,000,000	\$12,000,000

*FY10 Approved Estimate revised at the October 2009 Steering Committee meeting.

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Start Date: FY10

Expected Duration: FY55

Long-term Goal: Habitat creation

Conservation Measures: CLRA1, WIFL1, YHCR2, LEBI1, BLRA1, YBCU1, ELOW1, GIFL1, GIWO1, VEFL1, BEVI1, YWAR1, SUTA1, PTBB2

Location: Reach 6, Federal and Quechan Tribal Lands, River Mile 43-49, California and Arizona.

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

Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future): This is a new start for the LCR MSCP in FY10.

Project Description: The Laguna Division has been identified as having potential for large-scale riparian and marsh restoration and enhancement (approximately 1,000 acres). In 2007, the Laguna Division Planning Group was formed to identify potential restoration projects within the division. The intent was to identify potential restoration projects and combine resources to ensure any actions taken in the area would not affect other potential restoration projects or ongoing river operations. Currently, there are three river operational requirements and constraints: water delivery, sediment removal, and power generation.

The Laguna Division Planning Group consists of representatives from the following organizations:

- Arizona Game and Fish Department
- Arizona Department of Water Resources
- California Department of Fish and Game
- Pacific Institute

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation

The Laguna Division Conservation Area is a relatively wide, undeveloped area with a series of low linear depressions, which are remnants of former river meanders. The intent of this project is to create marsh and riparian land cover types by shaping and contouring multiple meandering channels. These land cover types would be maintained with a maximum base flow of 100 cubic feet per second (cfs) from the Mittry Lake inlet canal or Gila Sluiceway. Open water areas could be created in the form of linear excavations aligned with historic river meanders that are east of lands identified as future stockpiling areas for dredged silt removed from the river (Laguna settling basin). To minimize earthwork, cuts and fills would follow the existing topography where feasible. Adjacent terraces would be graded to allow flooding and promote the establishment of native riparian species. Water control structures would be created to manage water levels. Upland vegetation would receive water either by flooding or drip irrigation.

To support the concept described above, inlet modifications to the point of diversion at the Gila desilting basin would be made to allow for up to 100 cfs capacity. This diversion ditch/pipe systems would be engineered to allow for maximum management flexibility including diverting the entire flow to Mittry Lake, the Laguna Division Conservation Area, or the old river channel.

Previous Activities: In coordination with the Laguna Planning team, several conceptual designs were created with the intent of determining the technical feasibility of implementing a large-scale restoration project. In addition, a team was established to determine the availability of water to create and support the new habitat. The combination of technical feasibility, water availability, and cost effectiveness will ultimately determine the project's implementation.

FY09 Accomplishments: The project is a new initiative for the LCR MSCP in FY10. Prior to entering the program, three alternative designs for the Laguna Division were prepared by Natural Channel Design with input from the Laguna Division Planning Group using non-LCR MSCP funds.

FY10 Activities: A design was presented, and the work task was approved as a new start project by the LCR MSCP Steering Committee in October 2009. With the passing of resolution 10-002, the Steering Committee has concurred with the restoration design and directed work to continue on planned restoration activities.

Further analysis/design refinement will occur between the Laguna Planning team, local stakeholders, state and federal agencies, and Reclamation. Compliance activities will be initiated for the overall restoration plan in support of the creation of riparian and marsh land cover types. Such activities consist of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, wetlands delineation, cultural survey, and the Section 404 permit. Land use

agreements, establishing rights-of-way, river operational requirements, and operations/maintenance requirements will be created.

Monitoring will commence to create a baseline of wildlife presence prior to construction and as a prerequisite for compliance requirements. Aggregate Base Course (ABC) rock will be stockpiled throughout the project boundary for use for road/firebreak construction.

Reclamation will conduct coordination meetings with the BLM in anticipation of conducting a 2,000 acre controlled burn to clear existing non-native tamarisk from the site. The assistance will generally be in the form of providing a burn plan along with equipment, materials, and personnel to conduct burn efforts on the site. The burn is scheduled for early FY12.

Proposed FY11 Activities: Continued analysis/design refinement will occur between the Laguna Planning team, local stakeholders, state and federal agencies, and Reclamation. The BLM will finalize the burn plan and burn preparations will occur with Reclamation assistance.

Solicitations for the procurement of the delivery pipe, water control structures, and a planting contractor to plant the native vegetation and provide maintenance of the site are anticipated.

A presentation to the Steering Committee is anticipated in October of 2010.

Pertinent Reports: *Laguna Division Conservation Area Task 4: Final/Preferred Habitat Restoration Concept* is available upon request.