

## Work Task E31: Hunters Hole

FY10 Estimates	FY10 Actual	Cumulative Accomplishment Through FY10	FY11 Approved Estimate	FY12 Proposed Estimate	FY13 Proposed Estimate	FY14 Proposed Estimate
\$0	\$0	\$0.00	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000

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**Start Date:** FY11

**Expected Duration:** FY55

**Long-term Goal:** Habitat creation and maintenance.

**Conservation Measures:** WIFL1, YBCU1, ELOW1, GIFL1, GIWO1, VEFL1, BEV11, YWAR1, SUTA1, PTBB2.

**Location:** Reach 7, Arizona, River Mile 2.5

**Purpose:** To create and maintain land cover types and support site improvements that benefit LCR MSCP covered species.

**Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future):** Vegetation and species monitoring are being addressed under F1-F7.

**Project Description:** In 2010, the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area (YCNHA), in cooperation with the Reclamation, has developed a restoration plan for the Hunters Hole located within the State of Arizona and within Reach 7 of the LCR MSCP planning area. The focus of the restoration has changed due to dropping groundwater levels. The open water was eliminated and replaced with wet, dense, cottonwood-willow (35 acres) and honey mesquite (15 acres). The result is anticipated to achieve 50 acres of cottonwood-willow land cover type, reduce future pumping costs, use less water, and maximize the credit for the LCR MSCP. A supplemental Environmental Assessment has been completed based on the revised restoration plan.

The YCNHA has secured funding from the Arizona Water Protection Fund to design, permit, clear, and restore the Hunters Hole area. At the October 27, 2010 LCR MSCP Steering Committee Meeting, Resolution 11-001 was approved. Once the Conservation Area is established, the LCR MSCP has agreed to provide long-term funding for the operation and maintenance of created land cover types.

**Previous Activities:** In 2007 The Walton Foundation met with the YCNHA regarding potential investment in the Limitrophe section of the Lower Colorado River. YCNHA proposed the Hunters Hole Restoration project in response. The 435 acre project provided for preservation of 30 acres of existing cottonwood/willow, establishment of 40 acres of

mesquite, development of 20 acres of surface water, creation of 15 acres of marsh and planting of local grasses on the remaining acres.

In 2008 YCNHA approached Reclamation with a request to complete the project which would be located on federal lands. In response, Yuma Area Office completed National Environmental Protection Act compliance after discussions with other federal agencies. The Environmental Assessment was completed in April 2009, and the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) document was signed in June 2009.

YCNHA invited a number of stakeholders to participate in the project planning effort. These stakeholders include BLM, U.S. Border Patrol, USFWS, U.S. and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission, AGFD, the City of Yuma, Yuma County Sheriff's Office, Environmental Defense, National Wildlife Federation, ProNatura Noroeste, and private landowners in the area. ProNatura Noroeste has developed a complimentary restoration plan on the Mexico side heralding the project as a bi-national border restoration effort.

In 2008, the YCNHA identified the Hunters Hole area for restoration and asked the LCR MSCP to evaluate the project for inclusion into their program. In October 2008, a trip report was completed for the Hunters Hole which recommended the LCR MSCP remain involved in the planning, but not commit long-term funding until the roles and responsibilities of the LCR MSCP was defined.

**FY10 Accomplishments:** New start in FY11.

**FY11 Activities:** The YCNHA, as the lead agency for the Hunters Hole restoration and utilizing funding provided by the Arizona Water Protection Fund, will obtain permits, clear, level, and install infrastructure in preparation for planting in FY12. The LCR MSCP will provide technical support for the restoration activities and funding of on-site operations and maintenance activities such as payment of utilities and installation of totalizing flow meters. Restoration is anticipated to be completed by the end of FY12.

**Proposed FY12 Activities:** In Spring of FY12, the conservation area will be planted using funds provided by Arizona Water Protection Fund and habitat maintenance activities will begin. Activities include: scheduling of labor used for herbicide application and re-planting of native plants, paying for electrical costs, attendance of project coordination meetings, site safety plan development containing law and fire elements, upkeep of the irrigation infrastructure and submission of required documentation.

**Pertinent Reports:** N/A