

**COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM
FY-2016-2017 PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK**
(Easement management)

Project No.: C-6-EM

Reclamation Agreement number: R13PG400019
Reclamation Agreement term: Oct. 1, 2013 – Sep. 30, 2017

Lead Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Submitted by: Dan Schaad, Refuge Manager
Address: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ouray National Wildlife Refuge
HCR-69, P.O. Box 232
Randlett, UT 84063
Phone: 435-545-2522 Ext 13
E-Mail: Dan_Schaad@fws.gov
Date: June 18, 2015, ATK

<u>Category:</u>	<u>Expected Funding Source:</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annual funds
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing-revised project	<input type="checkbox"/> Capital funds
<input type="checkbox"/> Requested new project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (explain) FWS
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsolicited proposal	

I. Title of Proposal: Management of easements acquired for the Recovery Program

II. Relationship to RIPRAP:

- GREEN RIVER ACTION PLAN: MAINSTEM
 - COLORADO RIVER ACTION PLAN: MAINSTEM
 - COLORADO RIVER ACTION PLAN: GUNNISON RIVER
- II.A. Restore and manage flooded bottomland habitat.

III. Study Background: Easements have been acquired on 17 properties totaling 1,347.12 acres. The last easement was acquired on the Colorado River (Hoglund property) in April 2006. Easements acquired by the Recovery Program were transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Refuges for management as part of the Colorado River Wildlife Management Area established in July 1999. All easements are managed in accordance with an easement management manual (“Administrative and Enforcement Guidelines and Procedures for Management of Perpetual Floodplain Easements, Colorado River Wildlife Management Area” dated April 3, 2000). Management primarily consists of monitoring easements to ensure that landowners comply with easement terms and special use conditions. The Refuge Manager and/or staff visit with landowners once annually to ensure that they understand the terms of the easement. Enforcement and penalty procedures are identified in the Easement Enforcement Manual in the event of a violation.

IV. Study Goals, Objectives, End Product:

Goal: Monitor and manage easements acquired by the Recovery Program for the purpose of supporting and sustaining recovery of the endangered fishes.

Objectives:

1. To restore, enhance, and/or protect floodplain habitats to benefit endangered fishes.
2. To maintain positive working relationships with Colorado River Wildlife Management Area landowners.

End Product: Annual report submitted to the Recovery Program

- V. Study Area:** Easements are located within priority geographic areas which include the Green River floodplain between Pariette Draw (RM 238) and Dinosaur National Monument (RM 318); the Gunnison River floodplain between Escalante SWA (RM 50) and the North Fork (RM 75) and the Whitewater area; and the Colorado River floodplain between Westwater (RM 127) and Rifle (RM 240).

VI. Study Methods/Approach

After an easement is acquired by the Recovery Program and transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Refuges, contact is established between the Refuge Manager and the landowner as soon as possible. A letter is sent by the Refuge Manager to the landowner that introduces the easement Manager and describes what the landowner can expect during easement administration. Attached to the letter are maps, photos, and legal descriptions that delineate easement boundaries; and lists of activities that are allowed, not allowed, or allowed only with a permit. Floodability enhancement plans accompany the letter where applicable. The landowner needs to be notified prior to any construction activities, and a pre-construction meeting will be held with the landowner in attendance.

The Refuge Manager may conduct an annual on-site meeting with the landowner and/or operator. At such a meeting, the Refuge Manager will review the terms and conditions of the easement contract, reaffirm the landowners and the operators understanding of the terms and conditions, visually inspect all dikes, dams, and levees, building sites and other improvements to assess whether any improvements or additions contrary to the easement or Service permits have been made, or that Service constructed inlets, outlets, gates, dikes, or levees are operating as designed and are in a good state of repair. Any management problems that the landowner or operator are experiencing will be discussed.

The annual meeting and inspection are also ways to reaffirm that the landowner, or possibly a new or second-generation landowner or operator, is aware and knowledgeable of the easement and its terms and conditions, and a way to establish more of a partnership or working relationship between the landowner/operator and the Service.

All easements may be checked aerially for compliance once each year during spring runoff (May/June). If the easements are not aerially inspected they will be inspected on the ground. The objective is to detect all activities which may constitute a violation of the floodplain easement. Such violations would include alterations in floodplain topography or hydrology resulting from earth-moving, excavation, and/or construction or operation of flood-control features.

If violations are suspected as a result of the routine aerial flights, then follow-up ground inspections will be conducted as soon as possible. Once a violation is confirmed, it will be investigated and documented in detail.

If damage or harm to the floodplain easement can be demonstrated or articulated as a result of activities within the easement boundaries, an easement violation may have been committed. The findings will be documented and the landowner will be contacted in person. If the landowner does not repair the damage, the Refuge Manager or Special Agent may issue a notice of violation. Compliance contacts will be made until restoration or restitution has been made.

Global Positioning System (GPS) and GIS mapping may take place on all acquired easements. Easement boundary, access point and existing structures are recorded. Other points or areas of significance within or related to the easement will also be documented.

To address local concerns, easement management will include monitoring for noxious weeds. The monitoring may be conducted by refuge staff during annual ground inspections, or it may be contracted. The degree of noxious weed management depends on the severity of the infestation, plant species and the possible threat to the endangered fish.

VII. Task Description and Schedule

1. Initial contact with landowner (within 30 days after easement is acquired or land ownership has been transferred)
2. Annual monitoring
 - a. Aerial inspections (May) if deemed necessary
 - b. Ground inspections and annual meetings with landowners (September/October unless an easement violation was detected during an aerial inspection)
3. Pre-construction meetings (as needed)
4. Permit issuance (as needed)
5. Enforcement (as needed)

VIII. FY-2016/17 Work

-Description of Work

See study methods/approach and task descriptions, above.

-Deliverables

Annual report of activities

IX. Budget Summary

FY-2016 \$60,500 (Program contribution of \$50,000)

FY-2017 \$60,500 (Program contribution of \$50,000)

Total: \$121,000

As per the 1999 agreement between the Recovery Program and the Refuge Program, the Recovery Program has committed to funding a minimum of \$50,000 per year throughout the life of the Recovery Program. This remains one of the terms under which the Refuge System continues to manage the floodplain easements.

FY 16 Costs

Labor					
Position	Unit cost	Quantity	Program Contribution	Refuge contribution	Total
Project Manager GS-13/4	\$1900/wk	9.5 wks	\$18,050	0	\$18,050
Biologist GS-11/6	\$1500/wk	5 wks	\$7,500	0	\$7,500
Refuge Officer GS-12/4	\$1400/wk	4 wks	\$6,400	0	\$6,400
Biological Technicians GS- 5/1	\$500/wk	5 wks	\$2,500	0	\$2,500
Maintenance Worker WG-10/3	\$1,075/wk	2.5 wks	\$2,687.50	0	\$2,687.50
Administrative Support Assistant GS-7/7	\$1,100 / wk	2 wks	\$2,200	0	2,200
Subtotal			\$39,337.50	0	\$39,337.50
Travel (USFWS-owned heavy-duty 4WD vehicles which, based on past years' records, are driven ~2,500 miles/year)					
Vehicle	\$60/day	40 days	\$2,400	0	\$2,400
Per Diem	\$30/day	20 days	\$600	0	\$600
Lodging	\$55/day	20 days	\$1,100	0	\$1,100
Fuel	\$4.30 / gal	250 gals	\$1,075	0	\$1,075
Subtotal			\$5,175	0	\$5,175
Services					
Aerial Surveillance (cost based on previous years' surveys)	\$1250 ea	1	0	\$1,250	\$1,250
Equipment					
GPS				\$150	\$150

GIS				\$250	\$250
Computer (pro-rata annual share of computer costs, including service, trouble-shooting, replacement, software upgrades, communications improvements. Computers generally replaced every 3 years.)			\$1,250		\$1,250
Camera				\$125	\$125
ATV	\$25/day	10		\$250	\$250
Herbicide Spray Equip	\$15/day	10		\$150	\$150
Chainsaw	\$375 ea	1		\$375	\$375
Dump Truck	\$257.50/day	5	\$1,287.50		\$1,287.50
Skid Steer	\$250/day	5	\$1,250		\$1,250
Auger				\$250	\$250
Hand Tools			\$450.50	\$149.50	\$600
Trailer	\$75/day	5		\$375	\$375
Subtotal			\$5,488	\$824.50	\$6,312.50
Supplies					
Herbicide				\$2,500	\$2,500
Personal Protective Equip				\$750	\$750
Tools (purchase and/or repair)				\$1,750	\$1,750
Lubricants				\$250	\$250
Filters / misc. parts				\$150	\$150
Film and processing				\$75	\$75
Flagging / lath				\$50	\$50
Boundary signs and posts				\$1750	\$1750
Office supplies				\$750	\$750
Cell Phone usage				\$150	\$150
Other Misc. supplies				\$250	\$250
Subtotal				\$8,425	\$8,425
TOTALS			\$50,000	\$10,500	\$60,500

FY 18 – FY 20 Costs – same as above

Note: The above numbers are modest estimates of known costs of managing lands in accordance with National Wildlife Refuge System standards. The cost estimates include habitat management through invasive weed control (which is seriously needed on all easements) as well as all other aspects of refuge land management.