

AESO/SE  
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September 21, 2009

Memorandum

To: Project Manager, Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program,  
Bureau of Reclamation, Boulder City, Nevada

From: Field Supervisor

Subject: Protection of Water Levels at Topock Marsh, Havasu National Wildlife Refuge,  
Mohave County, Arizona

The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Regional Office's National Wildlife Refuge Division and Arizona Ecological Services Office (AESO) have initiated a project to improve the water delivery system to Topock Marsh in the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge and has invited the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) to participate. The LCR MSCP has, through Avoidance and Minimization Measure 2 (AMM2) a conservation responsibility for Topock Marsh to ensure that future water deliveries to the marsh are not compromised by the covered actions. In AMM2, options suggested to achieve this include improvements to intake structures and purchase, installation, and operation of electric pumps to physically move water from the river into the marsh.

The FWS proposes to create a new primary intake structure associated with a new, concrete lined, delivery canal. Other features of the proposed action are a new intake structure at the existing Farm Ditch and a new gate spanning the existing Topock Inlet Canal sited to allow water deliveries to the Mohave Valley Irrigation District and Fort Mohave Indian Reservation but close off the remainder of the canal to the Refuge except when inflows are desired. In discussions between FWS and the LCR MSCP, a preliminary agreement that the LCR MSCP would fund the construction of the new Fire Break Inlet Structure as its construction contribution under AMM2 has been reached. Provision for long-term operation and maintenance of the structure, including cost-share for actual pumping costs, will require an additional agreement between the FWS and LCR MSCP.

The AESO believes that funding for the new Fire Break Inlet Structure by the LCR MSCP is consistent with the terms under AMM2, and if constructed as agreed, will meet the construction component of AMM2. The FWS proposed action to improve water deliveries to Topock Marsh is a comprehensive solution to the existing problems at the marsh proper, and addresses the future issues of reduced water flows in the river that necessitated the inclusion of AMM2 in the LCR MSCP.

We appreciate the cooperative working relationship between us, Mr. Terry Murphy of the LCR MSCP, Mr. Andrew Hautzinger of the Regional Office, and Mr. Dick Gilbert of the Refuge to address this comprehensive plan. We look forward to continuing the planning and subsequent implementation of this project. If you have any questions concerning this project or its applicability to AMM2, please contact Lesley Fitzpatrick (602-242-0210 x236) or me (x244).

/s/ Steven L. Spangle

cc: Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM (NWRs: Andrew Hautzinger)  
Complex Manager, Havasu-Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Parker, AZ  
Lower Colorado River Coordinator, Fish and Wildlife Service, Phoenix, AZ

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