

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program



Balancing Resource Use and Conservation

Planet Ranch – Bill Williams River

The 8,400-acre Planet Ranch is located about 20 miles east of Parker, Arizona, immediately upstream and adjacent to the Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge. The Bill Williams River flows west from Alamo Lake through the ranch and into Lake Havasu, charging the ranch land with thousands of acre-feet of water each year.



Freeport McMoran currently owns Planet Ranch and its 14,000 acre-feet of Bill Williams River water, a portion of which was previously used to

irrigate approximately 2,400 acres of alfalfa at the site. In February 2005, the Ranch was evaluated to determine acreages and types of native vegetation which could be established in support of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program. A conceptual design plan was developed to balance water needs for LCR MSCP habitat, while minimizing the risks of impacting riparian, marsh and mesquite habitat at the refuge downstream.

An estimated 550 acres of primarily cottonwood-willow habitat is anticipated to be developed on Planet Ranch. Another 396 acres of cottonwood-willow on the Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge can be protected by securing the Planet Ranch property.

The Bureau of Reclamation is presently negotiating with Freeport McMoran to secure approximately 3,418 acres of Planet Ranch, primarily along the river corridor, and 4,668 acre-feet of water rights. The appraised value of the land and water is \$8,300,000. Once the terms of an acquisition are finalized, the terms and conditions to secure the land and water resources would be brought back to the Steering Committee for review and approval. Separate negotiations are also underway to allow the Bureau of Land Management to secure the remaining upland acreage.

For more information and documentation about this activity, visit the LCR MSCP website at: www.lcrmscp.gov



Figure 1 Planet Ranch during managed flooding.