

Interim Project Report  
Bats & Water: Landscape Level Conservation  
June 15, 2009

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Scope of Work:

A. 1. The Contractor shall conduct a minimum of 3 bat habitat assessments events during the period of performance for this Agreement. These assessment events will include visits to multiple bat habitat sites and a landscape-level evaluation of habitat factors that are important to bats at each site. Whenever possible, bat habitat assessments will take place with the presence of the land manager.

Accomplishments to date:

As part of a landscape-level bats and water analysis, BCI biologists have made 24 visits to 12 different range water developments (dirt stock ponds and metal storage tanks) on the Fort Bliss Military reservation. Information on water type, dimensions, configuration, water level, and habitat has been recorded. Capture and acoustic surveys have been conducted at least once and a maximum of four times for 23 of these sites, between 2 December 08 and June 15, 2009. A summary of species captured is being sent under separate cover. Acoustic detections (36 nights to date) are still being analyzed. Twenty one additional visits/sampling sessions including site assessments, bat capture, and acoustic sampling are planned between June 15 and November 15, 2009. The final report will include a prioritization of sites for restoration and enhancement, along with suggested methods. .

BCI biologists made two initial visits to the Bonita Watershed on the Lincoln National Forest, on February 10, and March 12, 2009, with Lincoln National Forest biologists. Inclement weather shortened the first visit, but on the second visit, two semi-natural pools in Littleton and Philadelphia Canyons were evaluated, and additional water site evaluations and concurrent bat sampling are planned for June, July, August, and September (a minimum of 8 nights), 2009, including training of Forest Service employees in bat habitat assessment and inventory techniques.

An initial visit to a third landscape-level bats and water assessment site will be made in August on the Guadalupe Ranger District of the Lincoln National Forest, with field work beginning in 2010. Forest Service range and wildlife staff and local ranchers will be collaborating on this effort.

An additional eight waters, seven livestock waters and one natural spring, and associated bat habitat were evaluated on the Quivira Coalition's Valle Grande Allotment on Rowe

Mesa in September of 2008 and May of 2009, with the range and wildlife staff from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Santa Fe National Forest, and the Quivira Coalition. On May 7<sup>th</sup>, BCI and NRCS biologists and Quivira Coalition staff and volunteers constructed a 30' long by 8' wide pond, gravity fed by a rainwater catchment system, to provide a reliable water source for bats and other wildlife when an adjacent existing dirt stock tank dries up during drought and prior summer rains. This newly created pond will be monitored for bat use during the summers of 2009 and 2010.

A.2. Based on the results of 1.A. above, identify a minimum of 4 sites for bat habitat improvement projects. Improvement projects will address potential habitat actions such as fencing adjustments, water retention liners, etc. The contractor will provide assistance to land managers to facilitate implementation of these bat habitat improvement projects.

#### Accomplishments to date

One site on the Quivira Coalition's Valle Grand Allotment was identified for water site enhancement, and a new bat and wildlife water was constructed on May 7<sup>th</sup>. While the Fort Bliss landscape-level water assessment is not yet complete, one water site has already been identified for restoration. Chimney Tank, a higher elevation pond created by an old rock dam is in excellent bat habitat, at the base of tall cliffs, in a mosaic of mature pinyon woodland, shrubland, and grassland. It is the only large, pooled water source for some distance and receives high level of bat activity. However, because it is silting in, it does not provide water during critical periods. Additional sites will be identified for restoration and enhancement on Fort Bliss and in the Bonita Watershed in 2009, and in the Bonita Watershed and Guadalupe Ranger District of the Lincoln National Forest in 2010.

A.3. Conduct at least one, day-long training session regarding wildlife compatible water development for wildlife biologists and rangelands. The workshop(s) will be held at locations where demonstration projects can be incorporated into the training. Workshops will be able to accommodate up to 45 people per training session.

#### Accomplishments to date

The first workshop on livestock water developments and wildlife was held on October 9<sup>th</sup> in Las Vegas, New Mexico. The workshop was attended by more than 30 range and wildlife managers and ranchers from across Northern New Mexico, representing over a dozen agencies and organizations. In the afternoon, a group of workshop attendants volunteered their time to construct almost 100 wildlife escape ramps for installation in water troughs on the Santa Fe National Forest. These escape ramps will prevent the drowning of hundreds to thousands of small mammals, bats, passerines, and raptors over the lifespan of the structures. A second workshop is being planned with the USDA-Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service and the USDI-Bureau of Land Management for fall of 2009 in Carlsbad, New Mexico, and an additional workshop on pond and wetlands creation is being planned for the Sacramento or Smokey Bear District of the Lincoln National Forest for spring of 2010.