



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103




In Reply Refer To:
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SEP 23 2015

Memorandum

To: Fund Manager, Restoration Program, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

From: Regional Director, Southwest Region 

Subject: Allocation Request from the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Fund, Texmo Oil Spill, Arizona

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2, is requesting allocation of \$225,000, to be used in activities related to restoration associated with the Texmo Oil Spill, Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Arizona (Account Number 0481).

These funds will be used in areas affected by the Willow Fire, in Arizona. The 5,966 acre lightning-caused Willow Fire began on August 8, 2015, and initially spread north along the east side of the Colorado River in an area northwest of Topock Marsh. The fire burned wetland, riparian and upland vegetation, which was composed of a mix of native and exotic species occupied by the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher. Dense stands of exotic tamarisk (*Tamarix spp.*) and areas interspersed stands of native mesquite, willow, and cottonwood were consumed.

The concern of primary fire rehabilitation is re-establishment of native wildlife habitats, including riparian willow/cottonwood forest and mesquite woodlands important for threatened and endangered species. The refuge is applying for Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) funds which will be partnered with Texmo settlement funds as a method to increase enhancement of the burned areas and to ensure success of the restoration actions. The refuge plans to begin implementing restoration this fall and winter, which will increase the likelihood of tamarisk control and native tree re-establishment.

If BAR funds were used alone, the success of the rehabilitation effort would be much lower; thus, settlement funds will demonstrate added benefit. The tasks in this action are covered under the existing restoration plan which guides use of Texmo settlement funds on the Havasu and Bill

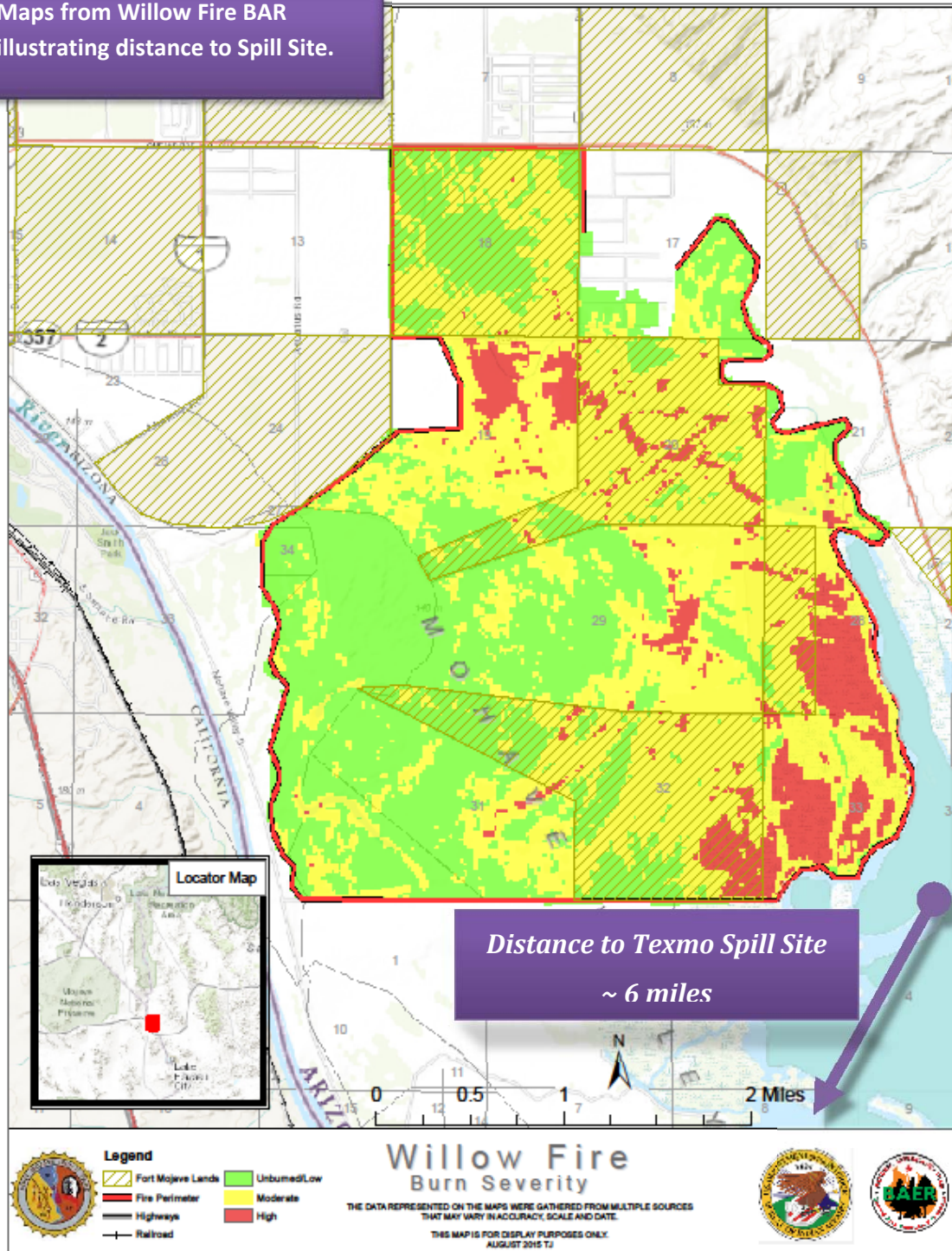
Williams NWR (DCN BP032196). Tasks include site preparation, tamarisk suppression and control, and pole planting in areas of formerly occupied habitat by the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher, on roughly 75 acres. This exceeds the 10-64 acres needed to satisfy our restoration goals for the Texmo event. Using settlement funds may also increase the acreage of the restoration to greater than the planned 75 acres and extend the treatments into a 4th or 5th year, although additional allocations may be necessary in the future to expand restoration efforts over 75 acres.

The restoration plan and associated environmental assessment can be viewed at: https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Documents/ECReports/Texmo%20RP_EA%20FINAL%20Nov%202011.pdf. A copy of the Consent Decree should be on file with your office.

We appreciate your assistance in these matters. If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Shaughnessy, Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Albuquerque, New Mexico, at 505-248-6671; or Ms. Karen Cathey, Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Coordinator, Ecological Services, Albuquerque, New Mexico, at 505-248-6648.

cc: Christina Kravitz, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Branch of Environmental Response and Restoration,
Falls Church, VA
Environmental Contaminant Specialist, Arizona Ecological Field Office, Phoenix, AZ
Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Coordinator, Albuquerque, NM

Maps from Willow Fire BAR
illustrating distance to Spill Site.



Map 1: Burned Area Reflectance Classification (BARC) Map showing soil burn reflectance as derived by remote sensing, yellow and red suggesting moderate to high burn severity respectively.