

Work Task B11: Overton Wildlife Management Area

FY13 Estimate	FY13 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY13	FY14 Approved Estimate	FY15 Proposed Estimate	FY16 Proposed Estimate	FY17 Proposed Estimate
\$50,000	\$49,516.55	\$397,693.66	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$20,000

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Start Date: FY06

Expected Duration: FY18

Long-term Goal: Develop and maintain off-site rearing capability to augment production at state and Federal hatcheries.

Conservation Measures: RASU3, RASU4, RASU6, RASU7, and RASU8.

Location: Reach 1, Overton, Nevada.

Purpose: Provide additional rearing capacity for RASU, and complete RASU conservation measures identified in the 2001 SIA BO.

Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future): This work task was initiated in April 2006 following approval from the Steering Committee and concurrence by the USFWS. This work is closely related to the Lake Mead Fish Hatchery (B6), Lake Mead Razorback Sucker Study (C13), and Razorback Sucker and Bonytail Stock Assessment (D8) work tasks. Ponds at the Overton Wildlife Management Area (OWMA) also receive fish from Willow Beach NFH (B2) for grow-out and future repatriation.

Project Description: The OWMA is located in Clark County, Nevada, at the upper end of Lake Mead at the confluence of the Muddy and Virgin rivers, 65 miles northeast of Las Vegas. The wildlife area is managed solely for fish and wildlife and their habitats and has limited public access. The OWMA covers more than 17,000 acres, and includes three primary waterfowl management ponds, all of which are available for native fish culture.

The LCR MSCP activities for this site include receiving Lake Mead and Lake Mohave RASU for grow-out to target size (300+ mm) for future program needs. The OWMA may also provide opportunities to conduct species research under the LCR MSCP AMP. At this time the expected duration of this project has been extended through FY18. As the USFWS nears completion of the RASU Recovery Plan for the LCR, in which the Lake Mead RASU will likely be identified as a recovery population, it is prudent to maintain this site as a grow-out location for native fish. Therefore the purpose of this extension is to continue conservation of Lake Mead and Lake Mohave RASU currently held at the OWMA, as well as to prepare this site for future potential use. A reduction in funding for this project is expected in FY17 and FY18 as work transitions from development into

maintenance. In future years, maintenance of the OWMA ponds will be performed by the NDOW, and native fish monitoring and grow-out will be accomplished as part of work task B6.

Previous Activities: Designs for site modifications, including repair and improvement to water delivery infrastructure to facilitate managing Honeybee and Center ponds for native fish culture, were completed in 2006. Improvements to the water delivery infrastructure for Honeybee and Center ponds were completed in 2007 and followed with stockings of native fish in both ponds. Due to low native fish survival and invasion of nonnative fish species, stockings in Honeybee Pond ceased in 2008. Plans to remove nonnative fish species and investigate potential means of renovating Honeybee Pond were scheduled for future years. Between 2009 and 2011, a total of 4,615 RASU were stocked into Center Pond. From this time through the present, stocked fish and pond water quality have been monitored on a biannual and monthly basis respectively. Pond improvements, maintenance, and repairs have also been performed from 2008 to present, and have notably included the purchase of a chemical spray unit to curtail aquatic vegetation and maintain sufficient open water areas, installation of a new boat ramp in the northeast corner of Center Pond, and the purchase of a new outlet structure and valves for the planned renovation of Honeybee Pond.

FY13 Accomplishments: No RASU were stocked into the OWMA ponds during FY13 due to the estimated size of the current RASU population in Center Pond and initiation of renovations at Honeybee Pond. Field work associated with Center Pond included monthly monitoring of pond water quality as well as a single sampling event to assess RASU pond stock. The sampling event was completed in November and yielded 43 RASU ranging from 396 to 562 mm in total length (TL) and averaging 471 mm TL. RASU dominated the catch as expected, accounting for 65% of the total biomass and 45% of all fish captured. All nonnative fish species captured during the survey were removed from the pond. Center Pond's water delivery infrastructure was also inspected during FY13 site visits, but no specific maintenance or repair needs were identified. Renovation of Honeybee Pond was also completed in FY13. NDOW's Fisheries, Habitat, and Diversity divisions held several site visits with the USFWS to discuss renovation plans and to ensure that critical habitat for CLRA remained intact. NDOW drafted and submitted a project plan, including a detailed map of planned activities, which was approved by the USFWS. Following the pond drawdown and final survey for native fish, a prescribed burn was completed in March 2013 to remove overabundant emergent vegetation. Complete drying of the pond began in April 2013. Earthwork on Honeybee Pond was completed by NDOW following the summer months and included excavation of silt depositions to create deep pool, channel, and open water areas. A new water outlet structure, purchased in FY12, was also installed in August.

FY14 Activities: Lake Mead RASU from the 2009 year class will be stocked into Honeybee Pond in early 2014. RASU in both Honeybee and Center Pond will be monitored as needed using standard methods such as hoop nets, trammel nets, remote PIT tag scanners, and/or electrofishing. Water quality information will be collected quarterly, as well as in association with all fish monitoring activities, using standardized methods consistent with water quality data collection from previous project segments.

Management of aquatic vegetation and routine maintenance on the existing water delivery infrastructure will be performed as necessary. FY14 funding will also support a portion of the work being completed at the Lake Mead Hatchery.

Proposed FY15 Activities: RASU from the Lake Mead Hatchery will be stocked into OWMA ponds for grow-out and future program needs. Fish populations and water quality in Overton WMA ponds will also continue to be monitored through routine sampling efforts. Site and infrastructure improvements will continue, as needed, in support of future conservation efforts.

Pertinent Reports: The 2013 *Razorback Sucker Augmentation, Overton Wildlife Management Area* draft annual report is available upon request. It will be posted to the LCR MSCP website following editorial review.