

## Work Task B5: Bubbling Ponds Fish Hatchery

FY14 Estimate	FY14 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY14	FY15 Approved Estimate	FY16 Proposed Estimate	FY17 Proposed Estimate	FY18 Proposed Estimate
\$300,000	\$300,297.40	\$2,410,139.24	\$960,000	\$315,000	\$315,000	\$315,000

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**Start Date:** FY05

**Expected Duration:** FY55

**Long-Term Goal:** Fish augmentation

**Conservation Measures:** RASU3 and RASU4

**Location:** Off-river, Cornville, Arizona

**Purpose:** To operate and maintain the fish rearing facility and annually contribute razorback sucker to the LCR MSCP Fish Augmentation Program

**Connections with Other Work Tasks (Past and Future):** Activities at the Bubbling Ponds Fish Hatchery are related to Work Task B4; the hatchery receives razorback sucker from the SNARRC. A portion of the fish rearing and predator-conditioning research activities outlined in Work Tasks C10 and C11 are also conducted at the hatchery.

**Project Description:** Bubbling Ponds Fish Hatchery is managed and operated by the AGFD. This is a warm-water rearing facility that is supplied by a continuous, year-round, 10-cubic-feet-per-second (cfs) spring flow of 68-degree Fahrenheit water. The facility has 10 acres of production ponds, a workshop, a storage shed, a small laboratory, and sufficient fish distribution equipment to meet the delivery requirements for the LCR MSCP. Program funds provide for salaries, fish feed and supplies, facility operation and maintenance, and delivery of fish. Production goals are 12,000 razorback sucker of 300 mm minimum TL for release into Reaches 3–5 of the LCR.

**Previous Activities:** Prior to the LCR MSCP, 70,000 razorback sucker were successfully reared at the Bubbling Ponds Fish Hatchery and delivered to the LCR as required by two Biological Opinions (1997 and 2001).

**FY14 Accomplishments:** A total of 60,000 fry were received for rearing from the SNARRC in April. During FY14, a total of 11,933 razorback sucker were harvested, PIT/wire tagged, and stocked. A total of 6,000 razorback sucker were stocked into Lake Havasu (Reach 3), and 5,933 were stocked below Parker Dam (Reach 4).

**FY15 Activities:** The Bubbling Ponds Fish Hatchery began 2015 with approximately 29,247 razorback sucker on station. This total includes 7,047 razorback sucker of the 2011 year class, 5,200 of the 2012 year class, and 17,000 of the 2013 year class, all supplied by the SNARRC. They are expected to reach target size in 2015 and 2016.

A new 5-year agreement will be developed to continue and potentially expand native fish production at the Bubbling Ponds Fish Hatchery; this agreement may include additional funding for increased production goals and/or facility maintenance requirements. The first year of the agreement will begin in FY16 but will be supported with funds obligated in FY15 in order to ensure seamless carryover of all year class fish production on station. A Memorandum of Understanding is being discussed with the AGFD to secure long-term production of native fish for the LCR MSCP.

The Bubbling Ponds Fish Hatchery will require a substantial capital investment for infrastructure repair and improvements in order to secure current production goals at this facility. The FY15 budget includes a coarse estimate for some of these major facility improvements. Initially, it was expected that some of these large-scale improvements would occur in FY15; however, late in 2014, the AGFD purchased land adjacent to the hatchery and has expressed an interest in developing a native fish rearing facility on these lands. Discussions are underway with the AGFD to determine how this new facility might accommodate the needs of the LCR MSCP and what investments will need to be provided by cooperating parties. In the meantime, large capital improvements on the existing facility in FY15 will be delayed, and consequently, budget expenditures are expected to be similar to those of the previous years. Support for topographic surveys and assistance with hydraulic surveys and design work in FY15 to help assess the potential capital costs and production capabilities of the proposed new facility will continue.

A number of smaller-scale facility improvements are planned for FY15, including the replacement of some of the deteriorated water supply pipes throughout the hatchery using pipe previously purchased. Other improvements may occur in FY15, but they will be limited to those that are necessary or those that will benefit the LCR MSCP regardless of where production of native fishes on this facility may occur in the future.

**Proposed FY16 Activities:** Razorback sucker larvae will continue to be received from the SNARRC. Razorback sucker from the 2014 and 2015 year

classes will continue to be reared. Based on the results from the new agreement negotiations in FY15, 12,000 to 14,000 razorback sucker (305 mm TL) will be sorted, tagged, and delivered to the LCR for FY16. This is an increase in the targeted fish numbers previously identified in past agreements, and the budget estimate for FY16 has been adjusted accordingly. Annual administrative progress reports for FY15 activities and production numbers will also be provided by the Bubbling Ponds Fish Hatchery.

More information will be gathered regarding the development of a new native fish rearing facility on the lands adjacent to the Bubbling Ponds Fish Hatchery. A cost-benefit analysis will be performed to determine what the appropriate investment should be under the LCR MSCP in terms of assistance in construction of this facility compared to the long-term benefits that will be gained. If large capital improvements are undertaken, a long-term agreement will be developed and executed to secure the space and water required to continue production at the hatchery for the life of the LCR MSCP. Out-year budget estimates may be revised based on potential future construction at this facility.

**Pertinent Reports:** Annual administrative reports are available upon request.