

Facts Regarding Potential Loss of Mitigation Funding in FY 2012

- Funding for National Fish Hatchery Operations (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service) will be reduced by \$6.28 million in 2012. Six of the nine national fish hatcheries to be eliminated or substantially reduced are located in the Southeast. These include the Chattahoochee Forest NFH (GA), Dale Hollow NFH (TN), Erwin NFH (TN), Greers Ferry NFH (AR), Norfolk NFH (AR), and the Wolf Creek NFH (KY). The Southeast Region requires \$4.5 million for these six mitigation hatchery operations to be fully funded in FY 2012.
- The budget cuts are primarily directed toward the National Fish Hatcheries and offices across the country that have been involved in activities to mitigate the adverse effects of federal water development projects constructed by other federal agencies. The Service has worked for decades with its state and Tribal partners to mitigate for those fisheries lost as a result of federal water projects (dams). Nearly the entire fish production at Chattahoochee Forest NFH (GA) is dedicated to mitigation stocking.
- The Service has been asked to intensify efforts to obtain reimbursement for fish mitigation production from the agencies responsible for the water development projects (such as the Corps of Engineers and TVA) so the Service's Fish Hatchery System's base funds could be redirected to recovery and restoration of native species and their habitats.
- Over the past two years, the Service has successfully negotiated with the Army Corps of Engineers and secured \$4.5 million in FY 2010; and anticipates securing \$3.8 million from the Army Corps of Engineers in FY 2011 and FY 2012, although negotiations are on-going. Of this \$3.8 million, the Southeast Region will receive a percentage that will be far less than full reimbursement. As a result, full reimbursement for the total cost to operate the mitigation hatcheries is very unlikely.
- The Chattahoochee Forest NFH provides 324,000 stockable size fish each year into Georgia lakes and streams. Another 460,000 smaller fish are transferred to Georgia hatcheries for further growout and stocking. The Dale Hollow NFH provides 45,000 smaller fish to Georgia hatcheries, and the Erwin NFH provides in excess of 350,000 eggs annually. Closure of the federal hatcheries will impact Georgia State Fish Hatcheries and stocking program.
- The Service holds dozens of agreements with other organizations, including Tribes and States, to produce fish to recover Federally-listed species, to mitigate the impacts of Federal water development projects, and to provide recreational fishing opportunities for the American public. Most of the mitigation hatcheries also work with aquatic threatened and endangered species. The status of these agreements is unknown at this time. The Service has a long-standing agreement with the State of Georgia that will certainly be impacted.