

USFWS Commits to Funding the Mitigation Hatcheries through 2014

Updated September 25, 2013

The Mitigation Hatcheries received a real threat recently when the USFWS leaked a preliminary report that listed the closing of at least 4 hatcheries on Oct. 1, 2013. If not challenged, this could have happened and would have included the Greers Ferry Hatchery. Thankfully, our AR Senators and Congressmen took up the fight and after conversations with the USFWS to confirm the rumors decided to go to their managing Service which is the Department of the Interior. After very blunt conversations and a letter to the Director, Sally Jewel, this decision was rescinded by the USFWS.

The attached Press Release from Congressman Rick Crawford announces that there will be no imminent closures of mitigation hatchery facilities and that funds would be repurposed to ensure the facilities are adequately funded. This Press Release was issued Sept. 17, 2013.

This Press Release came about as a result of a conversation with Secretary Jewell, DOI, and Congressman Rick Crawford regarding the preliminary report from the USFWS announcing the closing of several mitigation hatcheries. This was followed up with a letter to Secretary Jewell requesting a review of this announcement. The letter to Secretary Jewell is also attached. The response from the DOI is the basis of the press release. Please note that a number of Senators and Congressmen from AR and other states signed the letter and made contact regarding this decision and all are to receive credit for changing the directive to close these mitigation hatcheries.

I hope this helps with the understanding of the sequence of events that led to this decision and to the content of the press release.

The Bill (HR 2261) submitted by Congressman Crawford which will provide for a long term funding of the Mitigation Hatcheries is still active and has received additional sponsors. However, it is still in the US House in Committee. Both our US Senators have agreed to submit a similar Bill in the Senate to speed up the approval process. We will need to wait and see if this effort goes through. More updates on the HR 2261 as the Bill progresses through Congress.