Work Task B5: Bubbling Ponds Fish Hatchery

FY06 Estimates	FY06 Actual	Cumulative Accomplishment Through FY06	FY07 Approved Estimate	FY08 Proposed Estimate	FY09 Proposed Estimate	FY10 Proposed Estimate
$140,000	$176,017	$214,017	$225,000	$235,000	$235,000	$235,000

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Start Date: FY05

Expected Duration: FY55

Long-term Goal: Maintain fish-rearing capability and provide RASU for the LCR MSCP Fish Augmentation Program.

Conservation Measures: RASU3 and RASU4

Location: Off-river, Cornville, AZ

Purpose: Operate and maintain fish rearing facility and annually contribute RASU to the LCR MSCP Fish Augmentation Program.

Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future): Activities at Bubbling Ponds SFH are closely related to B2, as Bubbling Ponds SFH receives early life stages of RASU from Willow Beach NFH. In addtion, some of the fish-rearing research activities outlined in C10 will be conducted at Bubbling Ponds SFH. Funds ($60,000) were reallocated to a new work task (B10) following approval from the Steering Committee at the April 2006 meeting, and with the concurrence of USFWS.

Project Description: Bubbling Ponds SFH is managed and operated by AGFD. This is a warm-water rearing facility supplied by a continuous, year-round, 6 cfs spring flow of 68°F water. The facility has 10 acres of production ponds, a work shop, a storage shed, a small laboratory, and sufficient fish distribution equipment to meet the delivery requirements for the LCR MSCP. Program funds will provide for salary, fish feed and supplies, facility operation and maintenance, and delivery of fish. Production goals are to annually produce 12,000 RASU of 300 mm TL for release to reaches 3-5 of the lower Colorado River.

Previous Activities: Reclamation and AGFD have cooperatively worked to upgrade and renovate this warmwater fish-rearing facility since 1998. Prior to implementation of the LCR MSCP, more than 50,000 RASU were successfully reared at this facility and delivered to the lower Colorado River to complete a requirement of the 1997 BO. A subsequent BO was issued for the SIA in 2001, requiring the rearing and stocking of another 20,000 RASU into the lower Colorado River below Parker Dam. This work was also assigned to Bubbling Ponds SFH; in 2003, Reclamation contributed $225,000 for the work (all FY03 funds). Production and delivery

of RASU began in 2005 with a total of 4,814 RASU (330-360 mm TL) stocked to the river downstream of Parker Dam.

FY06 Accomplishments: A total of 28,000 fingerlings were received from Willow Beach NFH and 11,455 RASU were repatriated into Reaches 4 and 5 below Parker Dam; these fish averaged 360 mm TL. Fish on station as of December totaled 38,300. In addition to salary for this work, funds were expended to purchase feed, nets, materials for live-trapping river otters, and a contract for a professional trapper to assist with otter removal.

FY07 Activities: Bubbling Ponds SFH began 2007 with approximately 38,300 RASU on station, and all of these fish originated as wild-caught RASU larvae from Lake Mohave. In January 2007, a total of 3,743 RASU were tagged and repatriated into reaches 4 and 5, which completed the RASU production requirements for the SIA BO. Bubbling Ponds SFH expects to rear the remaining fish and repatriate the required 12,000 RASU each year for both 2007 and 2008.

Also in January 2007, adults and larvae of the exotic quagga mussel were discovered in lakes Mead and Mohave. Because the water for Willow Beach NFH comes directly from the Colorado River below Hoover Dam, the facility must be considered contaminated by this exotic animal. For the foreseeable future, no fish will be transferred from Willow Beach NFH to Bubbling Ponds SFH until new protocols for such transport are established, or until Willow Beach NFH is certified free of the quagga mussel. As a contingency plan, Dexter NFH will provide RASU larvae to Bubbling Ponds SFH for rearing and stocking into the lower Colorado River. These fish are expected to reach target size and become available for stocking in 2009. Under a Federal Grant Agreement between Reclamation and AGFD, an engineering firm was retained to design new production features that consolidate fish culture into a single-pass, serial-use system to improve bio-security (escapement and invasion) and predator avoidance/control, reduce pathogenic agents, and facilitate harvest. Construction of these new features will begin in 2007.

Proposed FY08 Activities: Razorback sucker larvae will be received from either Dexter NFH or Willow Beach NFH, RASU from the 2006 and 2007 year classes will continue to be reared, 12,000 RASU (300 mm TL) will be sorted, tagged, and delivered to reaches 3, 4, and 5 of the lower Colorado River, and annual progress reports will be produced. Construction of production design features will continue. As features are completed, normal fish culture activities will be dovetailed into the new systems.

Pertinent Reports: The *2006 Activity Report* is in review and will be available upon request from the LCR MSCP.