

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

COMPLETE STATEMENT
OF

MS. DIANE PARKS
DEPUTY CHIEF OF OPERATIONS AND REGULATORY

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, OCEANS
AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON

“National Fish Hatchery System: Strategic Hatchery and Workplace
Planning Report”

March 4, 2014

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, I am Diane Parks, Deputy Chief of Operations and Regulatory for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). I am honored to appear before you today to discuss the National Fish Hatchery System associated with Corps water resources projects. The Corps recognizes the impacts of water development projects and strives to meet the commitment of off-setting impacts by, where appropriate, replacing stocks of native fish where possible or providing non-native sport angling opportunities with support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) National Fish Hatchery System. The Corps also appreciates the significant economic benefits that the sport fishing industry brings to local communities where stocking of hatchery fish into lakes and streams is common practice.

Appendix A of the March 2013 National Fish Hatchery System Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report, shows that the Corps is completing over 95 percent of its mitigation requirements and reimbursements for native endangered species management in the Northwest Region 1 funded by specific Corps projects and we will continue to work with the Service to strive to meet 100 percent. We also do concur that the report data from 2012 accurately shows the Corps meeting 80 percent of the mitigation requirements at the 17 National Fish Hatcheries within Regions 3, 4, 5 and 6. These requirements are centrally funded by the Corps' Civil Works Operation and Maintenance Appropriations under "Fish and Wildlife Operating Fish Hatchery Reimbursement." Although the hatchery work in the Northwest has been ongoing for decades, this centrally funded program began in 2010 in response to the Committee on Appropriations Report 110-187 (Accompanying the Department of Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2008), directing the Service to seek reimbursement for mitigation fish production. Since 2010, the Corps has worked closely with the Service to produce and release approximately 32 million fish into 45 different receiving waters impacted by Corps dams. This amount, although not full mitigation, represented the amount the Corps was able to fund, while considering all eligible projects, programs, and activities, including significant increases in cost of Biological Opinions related to listed endangered species, across many programs. The Corps must annually prioritize investments in the Nation's water resources based on their return to the Nation, which requires the agency to make difficult decisions that affect many program areas. All costs, including any increases in mitigation, must be evaluated closely.

The baseline cost of \$4,700,000 was an estimate determined by the Service in 2010 to meet 100 percent of its requirements to raise and distribute fish for Corps mitigation (based on historic numbers). The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 includes \$4,700,000 to be transferred to the Service for production of mitigation fish for the Corps, which will meet the 100 percent mitigation this fiscal year.

Even under constrained fiscal times, the Corps looks forward to continued coordination and collaboration with the Service in meeting our mitigation commitments. The Corps has been in contact with the Service to improve the Corps involvement in the process,

improve accuracy of funding needs, and to formalize an agreement between the Corps and Service for long term commitment.

In closing, the Corps is actively engaged in the process to improve and formalize the current partnership with the Service and to insure the protection and benefits our resources provide to the public.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. Again, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.