



Greers Ferry Lake Little Red River Association

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Published by Ross & Susan Moore

Trout Hatchery's on the Chopping Block Again

It has just come to my attention from the Friends of the Norfolk National Fish Hatchery that the National Budget calls for a decrease of funding for the Norfolk NFH and the Greers Ferry NFC. Specifically: The Presidents 2013 Budget was released on February 13 and according to a USFWS Bureau Highlights document, the mitigation hatcheries, including Norfolk National Fish Hatchery and Greers Ferry National Fish Hatchery were not included for funding. The following is an excerpt from page BH-61 of that document.

"Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Conservation – *The budget request includes a total \$131.6 million for the Fisheries and Aquatic Resource program, a decrease of \$3.7 million from the 2012 level. These increases are offset by reductions in other program activities, including a \$3.2 million program reduction to costs associated with the production of fish for the purpose of mitigating the effects of Federal water development projects. The FWS will continue to work to recover costs from responsible agencies in order to focus its base funding on native fish recovery and restoration."*

For the second consecutive year, the USFWS has eliminated funding from their proposed budget for the nine mitigation hatcheries which includes the Norfolk NFH and Greers Ferry NFH in spite of the successful efforts by Congress to reinstate the funding into the 2012 Budget. These AR Hatcheries have an economic impact of \$100 for every \$1 of operating costs.

On the back of this newsletter is a copy of a letter that everyone is encouraged to send to our congressional representatives from Arkansas urging them to see that this budget situation is corrected. Not only do we need the funding re-instated; we need to get the situation fixed so we don't have to go through this process each and every year as we have done for so many years. Please feel free to alter the letters to suit your own thoughts. We do need to get our letter writing campaign underway as soon as possible.

Impact is the goal and the more letters we send in, the greater that impact.

I was extremely disappointed to learn that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service once again plans to eliminate the budgets for the mitigation hatcheries which includes the trout hatcheries below Norfolk and Greers Ferry dams. These facilities, which have an economic Impact of over \$158 million annually at a cost to the taxpayers of about \$1.5 million a year, provide the very foundation for Arkansas's world-renowned trout fishery. These two hatcheries alone generate \$5.5 million in federal tax revenues, or roughly \$3.65 for every \$1.00 invested. The contribution to the economy amounts to over \$100 for every \$1.00 of operational budget spent.

These modest projects rank among the all-time success stories of our federal government. In addition, fish production at the Norfolk NFH provides employment for 994 individuals in the area, while the Greers Ferry NFH has resulted in another 752 jobs. Dozens of resorts now line the Norfolk, White and Little Red Rivers which provide recreation for thousands of visitors each year and bring in the much needed tax dollars that our local economies depend on.

As a concerned citizen, I am seriously concerned about the ever-growing federal deficit, but abandoning the trout program would be contrary to this effort. This is an investment that has demonstrated positive returns year in and year out for over half a century. Closing the hatcheries would be a short-sighted action by our Federal Government which will quickly result in even fewer tax dollars flowing into Washington.

I respectfully request that you demonstrate your leadership in Congress by having the Federal Government "Fully Fund" these Federal Fish Hatcheries and to make provisions that they will be "Permanently Funded" in the years to come.

Sincerely,

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