

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources



DNR

Alvin A. Taylor

Director

Emily C. Cope

Deputy Director for
Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries

October 26, 2017

The Honorable Eddie Tallon, Chairman
House Legislative Oversight Committee
418 Blatt Building
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Hearing of October 23, 2017 Regarding Walhalla Fish Hatchery

Dear Chairman Tallon:

The following information is provided with the intent to clarify comments made during the October 23, 2017 testimony by SCDNR to the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Subcommittee of the Legislative Oversight Committee concerning recommendations to repeal 50-13-1936 of the South Carolina Code of Laws. Section 50-13-1936 provided for the SCDNR to charge a fee to cover the operational cost of the Walhalla Fish Hatchery should the SCDNR assume maintenance of operations of the facility if the federal government ceased its operations there.

In 1996, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) did cease its operation of the Walhalla Fish Hatchery. The SCDNR did accept and maintain operations of the facility. While SCDNR did not exercise its authority to charge a fee for the operations of the facility, funding was provided by the USFWS for three years to support the transition to SCDNR. Funding was also a priority for repairs of storm damage which had occurred at the facility. Repairs were made to a retaining wall along Indian Camp Creek and the liquid oxygen storage vessel was upgraded and relocated to a more secure site on the facility.

Funds provided for the transition and repairs were:

1997	\$366,000
1998	\$170,400
1999	\$ 85,200

In addition to the funds provided at the time of transition, the USFWS continues to allow SCDNR access to the National Brood Stock Programs for trout eggs. The USFWS annually provides between 650,000 and 700,000 fertilized rainbow trout eggs that are incubated, hatched and reared at the Walhalla Hatchery to support South Carolina's cold water trout fishery.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Emily C. Cope
Deputy Director