

APPENDIX B

**Leadville National Fish Hatchery
Fishing Plan**

February 2019

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Leadville National Fish Hatchery
2846 Highway 300
Leadville, CO 80461
Lake County**

Submitted: _____
Project Leader Date

Concurrence: _____
Geographical Supervisor (CO, UT, WY) Date

Approval: _____
Assistant Regional Director – FAC Date

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

LEADVILLE NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY FISHING PLAN

I. Introduction

National Fish Hatcheries are guided by the mission and goals of the National Fish Hatchery System (NFH); the purposes of an individual hatchery; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policy, laws and international treaties.

The Leadville National Fish Hatchery resides on 3,072 acres in Lake County, Colorado. The Hatchery was created by Executive Order of President Benjamin Harrison in 1889 for the purpose of restoring depleted stocks of trout in the Upper Arkansas Region of Colorado, the Black hills of South Dakota, and Nebraska. At that time the main water supply for the hatchery was from Rock Creek. To protect the hatchery's water supply, most of the Rock Creek drainage was included in the 3,072 acre hatchery land base. Leadville National Fish Hatchery is the second oldest federally operated fish hatchery in existence today and is one of the oldest surviving tangible examples of the historic legacy upon which the Service was first established.

The hatchery is located in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado approximately six miles southwest of the city of Leadville. Elevation ranges from 9,600 feet on the hatchery proper to over 13,000 feet on the Rock Creek drainage of Mount Massive. Typical Rocky Mountain subalpine forest vegetation of lodgepole pine and aspen make up 90 percent of the hatchery property vegetation. The hatchery property contains over 12 miles of hiking trails and connects to other trails, such as the Colorado Trail, located within the Mt. Massive Wilderness Area. Most of the hatchery property is bordered on three sides by federal land managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

The Mount Massive Wilderness was designated by the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-560, 99 Stat. 3265) on December 22, 1980. The Mt. Massive Wilderness Area encompasses 30,540 acres, with over 90% (27,980 acres) located in the San Isabel National Forest (USFS), while 2,560 acres are located in the Leadville National Fish Hatchery (managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)). This portion of the Mount Massive Wilderness is the only area in the National Wilderness Preservation System that is located in a National Fish Hatchery.

The Leadville National Fish Hatchery is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). The Hatchery comprises approximately 3,072 acres and is located in Lake County, Colorado at N39.21791° W106.43312° (NAD83). The site is located just west of the town of Leadville, Colorado.

National fish hatchery areas are maintained for the fundamental purpose of the propagation and distribution of fish and other aquatic animal life and managed for the protection of all species of wildlife (50 CFR Ch.1 70.1)



Figure 1: Location of Leadville National Fish Hatchery

II. Statement of Objectives

Allowing fishing from hatchery property is consistent with the Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program’s Strategic goal to “Enhance Recreational Fishing and Other Public Uses of Aquatic Resources”. The Service has a long tradition of fostering public uses and enjoyment of aquatic resources through its work to conserve these resources, to support fishing and other aquatic outdoor recreational activities, and national education programs.

Fishing Plan Goal

Increase angling participation. Diverse, stable and productive angling opportunities are the basis for increased angling participation. Programs should foster life-long participation in fishing and the outdoors based on simple, easily available opportunities and skills that can be learned at any age.

Fishing Plan Objective

The objective of a fishing program on Leadville NFH is to provide opportunities for visitors to fish from hatchery property in accordance with FAC goals and the Colorado Parks and Wildlife fishing regulations.

The program will:

- Include clear and concise regulations that are readily available to visitors on the hatchery website;

- Pose minimal conflict with overall FAC and hatchery objectives;
- Pose minimal conflict with other priority public use activities; and
- Provide a quality angling program that provides opportunities for visitors to fish from or on hatchery lands.

Fishing Plan Strategies:

- a. Allow anglers to access Rock Creek and its headwater tributaries and lakes from Rock Creek dam upstream into the Mt. Massive Wilderness Area.
- b. Allow disabled military programs and organized groups working with youth and disadvantaged individual's access to fish our discharge sedimentation ponds and/or Evergreen Lakes on a limited basis through Special Use Permits.
- c. Each year hold a Pathways to Fishing program for the 5th grade students of Lake County to learn about fish, fishing and fishing techniques. Every student who finishes the program will be provided fishing rods and reels to encourage participation in the sport.

The Hatchery will use an adaptive management approach by reviewing the Fish Plan every 5 years and revising if necessary.

III. Description of Fishing Program

A. Areas to be Opened to Fishing

Rock Creek and its headwater tributaries and lakes are open for public fishing upstream of Rock Creek Dam, located on the hatchery property. Additionally, through Special Use Permit, the hatchery's two discharge sedimentation ponds and six Evergreen Lakes will be open for fishing on a limited basis.

B. Species to be Taken, Fishing Periods, Fishing Access

The areas described in III.A. will be open for anglers year around from dawn to dusk. The access for Rock Creek starting at the dam is approximately a one mile hike from the main hatchery parking lot. The Rock Creek Trail and sections of the Highline Trail parallel Rock Creek in the Mt. Massive Wilderness. The hatchery discharge sedimentation ponds are accessed from the gravel parking area off of Highway 300 just east of the hatchery main compound. The Evergreen Lakes can be accessed from the parking lot at the Evergreen Lakes Day Use Area.

Species available in Rock Creek include cutthroat trout and brook trout. In the sedimentation ponds there are cutthroat trout, brown trout, rainbow trout and brook trout. Evergreen Lakes contain brook and cutthroat trout.

C. Fishing Permit Requirements

Anglers who are eligible to fish under Colorado law are eligible to fish public waters from hatchery property. They must obtain a Colorado fishing license and follow Colorado state laws, limits, and regulations.

D. Consultation and Coordination with the State

The Service reviewed any applicable state fishing regulations to ensure consistency, and has been in contact with Colorado Parks and Wildlife about support for the Service proposal.

Law Enforcement

State law enforcement officers will be periodically checking anglers on the hatchery.

The following methods are used to control and enforce regulations:

- Hatchery and fishing area boundaries will be clearly posted;
- The hatchery website will provide information for anglers including links to State websites relative to regulations and obtaining fishing licenses;
- Fishing information will be available at the Leadville National Fish Hatchery headquarters.

E. Funding and Staffing Requirements

Costs associated with the development of infrastructure to support fishing at Leadville NFH are limited to installation of signage

Funding and staffing for fishing activities will be limited to administration of this plan only, as we rely on the State of Colorado for any necessary enforcement actions.

Table 1. Costs to Administer a Fishing Program at Hotchkiss NFH

Activity or Project	One-time Expense	Recurring (Annual) Expense
Signage	\$1,200	
Trash and recycling containers	No additional costs	
Maintenance		No additional costs
Staff		No additional costs
Total	\$1,200	\$0

IV. Conduct of the Fishing Program

A. Fishing Permit Application, Selection, and/or Registration Procedures

No special application or registration process is required, beyond any required by the State of Colorado.

B. Hatchery-Specific Fishing Regulations

There are no hatchery-specific fishing regulations. Fishing regulations for Rock Creek are published yearly in the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Fishing regulation guide.

C. Relevant State Regulations

[2019 Colorado Fishing Season](#)

D. Other Hatchery Rules and Regulations for Fishing

- Camping and overnight use are prohibited outside of the Mt. Massive Wilderness Area.
- Cleaning of fish on the hatchery is prohibited.
- Pets must be in direct control of the owner.

V. Public Engagement

A. Outreach for Announcing and Publicizing the Fishing Program

Announcements concerning public fishing will be made on the Leadville NFH Facebook page, with information about fishing available on the Leadville NFH website: [Leadville NFH website](#)

B. Anticipated Public Reaction to the Fishing Program

The Service does not anticipate any controversy as a result of opening access to recreational fishing on Leadville NFH.

C. How Anglers Will Be Informed of Relevant Rules and Regulations

General information regarding fishing and other wildlife-dependent public uses can be obtained from the Colorado Parks and Wildlife website:

[2019 Colorado Fishing Season](#)

VI. Compatibility Determination

Fishing and all associated program activities proposed in this plan are determined to be compatible with the purposes of the hatchery, and not detrimental to the propagation and distribution of fish or other aquatic wildlife (50 CFR 71).

III. Additional Figures

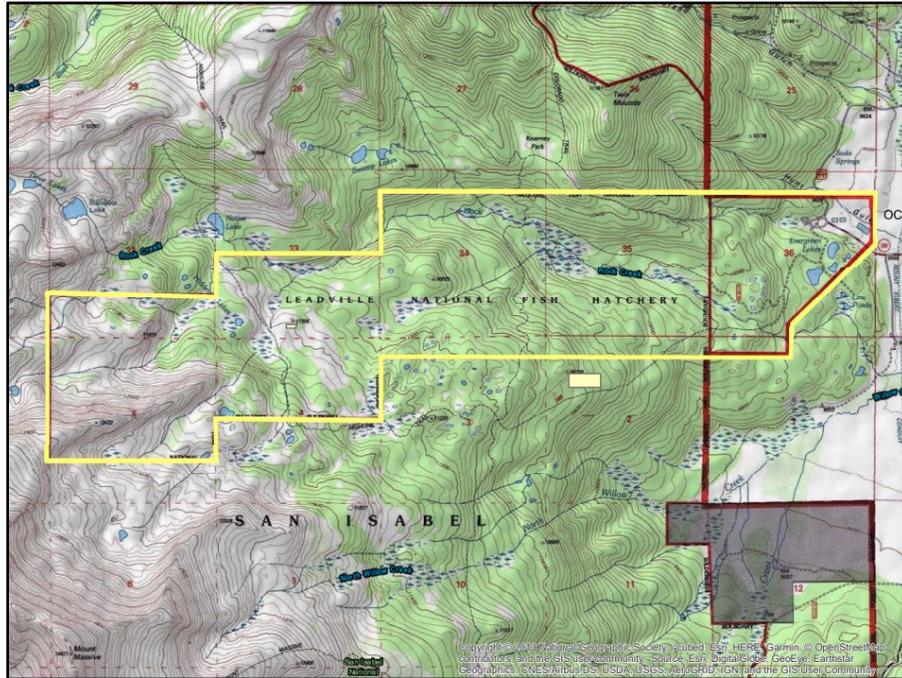


Figure 2: Hatchery Boundary (yellow). Wilderness boundary is thin north-south red line. Wilderness designation is located to the left of the line.

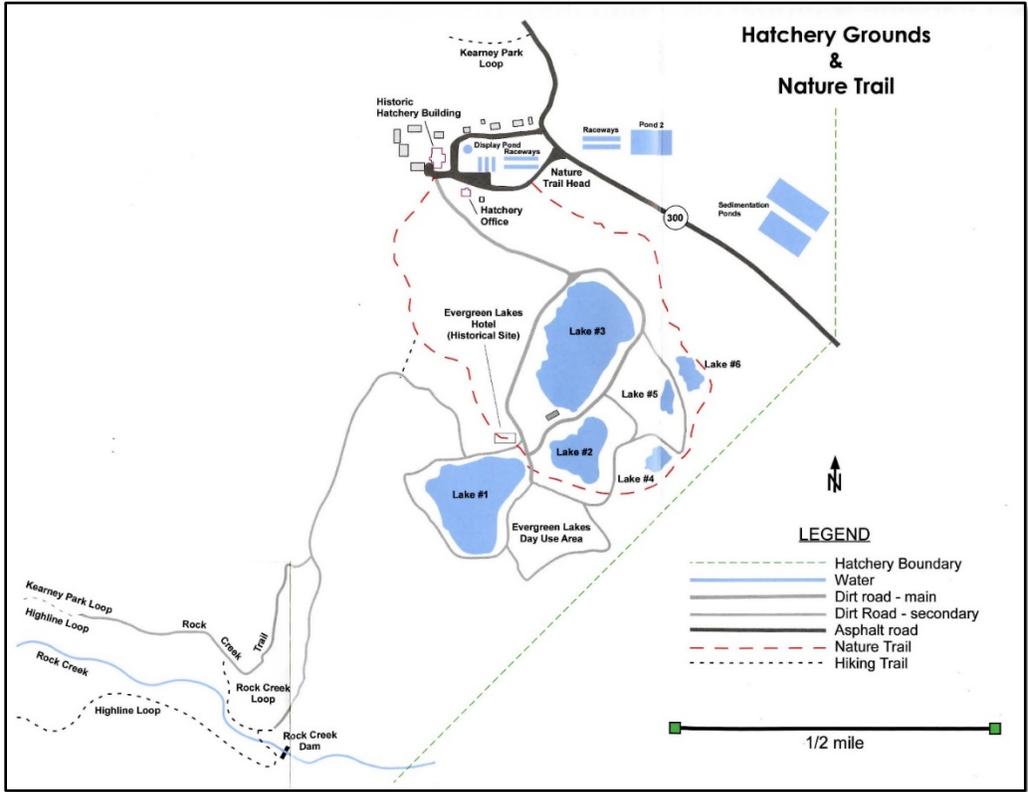


Figure 3: Main hatchery compound showing building locations and lower hatchery trails and roads.