



## Manager's Corner By: Karen Kilpatrick

This month I was able to attend a Project Leader's meeting in Memphis, TN, in which all my Fisheries Program cohorts discussed current issues and needs as well as future directions for the Service. We only hold these meetings once every 2-3 years, so it was great to see friends that I only normally get to talk with on the phone. It is always a time to catch up on families and friendships. It is also a time to get a lot of the complaining and concerns out of the way too! Overall, the meeting was very good and gave me hope for the future of the Service. It appears that the 2011 budget is going to be relatively stable but that we can all expect major cuts and belt-tightening beginning with the 2012 budget

season. The hatchery will continue to be a good steward of the tax dollars in which we are entrusted, and in December's issue we will discuss the eco-

nomie impact that the hatchery has on the economy (hint – it's GOOD news!). Until then, have a blessed Christmas! *karen*



FISHERIES PLANNERS MEETING  
MEMPHIS, TN 11-3-2010  
(Back L to R) Andy Currie, Tom Sinclair, Carlos Echevarria, Ricky Campbell, Steve Jackson, Glenn Constant, Willie Booker, John Galvez, Roger Schultz, Allan Brown, Ron Nassar, Jeff Herod, Craig Eaton, Karen Kilpatrick, Tripp Bolin, Bill Wayman, Judy Toppins, James Gray, John Robinette, (Front L to R) Richard Shelton, Wilson Laney, Norm Heil, Cynthia Williams, Deborah Burger, Linda Kelsey, Catherine Phillips, Sherri Shoultz, Vince Mudrak

## The Aquarium, at Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery, Lures in Students. By: Tony Brady

Natchitoches, Louisiana is a town filled with history and tradition as well as a plethora of places to visit. Natchitoches is home to a colonial fort, several antebellum plantations, the historic downtown area, and the aquarium at Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery (NNFH). Throughout the school year, the aquarium lures in school groups from all over northwestern Louisiana. In November, the NNFH aquarium attracted the Breda Town Head Start class. A total of 18 four and five year old children spent part of their day looking at the fish and other animals on display in the

aquarium. As the children ran from tank to tank dragging their teachers with them to show them either the alligator, the albino snapping turtle, the Spotted Gar, the Blue Catfish, or any of the other tanks of

fish the excitement in their eyes shown. This excitement lets the staff at NNFH know that they are making an impact on the next generation to be stewards of conservation.

Kids and fish pose for their picture at the NNFH aquarium.



# Oklahoma Alligator Snapping Turtles Spend Winter at Natchitoches NFH

By: Jan Dean

In October, Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery (NNFH) stocked the last remaining Alligator Snapping Turtles (AST) from the 2009 cohort, making room for 200 AST hatched out this past August at the Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery (TNFH) in Tishomingo, OK. On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Jan Dean, As-

sistant Manager at NNFH, met Brian Fillmore in Tyler, TX to pick up the new AST. This makes the third year that NNFH has overwintered AST for TNFH. Overwintering AST at NNFH increases the number of Oklahoma hatchlings which can be reared. The

advantage of AST overwintering at NNFH is our ability to maintain water temperatures near 80° F, thus extending the growing period for the AST. To create the Natchitoches AST Resort, the little snapping turtles are housed in several circular tanks on a recirculating water system which

includes a heat pump that maintains the water temps at about 80°F. Half-pipe PVC covers are placed in the tanks for the AST to hide under. Under these covers, the turtles will climb on one another, and they even climb on top of the covers in stacks three turtles high. One might ask how difficult it has been making the switch from culturing fish to culturing AST. Due to the fact that turtles breathe air directly, there is less concern about dissolved oxygen or other water quality parameters such as ammonia and nitrite nitrogen. One problem not seen in fish culture is that AST have been known to climb vertically several body lengths up hardware cloth covering a standpipe, so we have had to be inventive to prevent the AST from climbing out of the tanks. The AST have grown well with regular feeding and tank cleaning, and they probably don't care too much about the latter. Alligator snappers tend to get more aggressive as they grow; they are called snapping turtles for good reason.

Alligator Snapping Turtles enjoy the warm waters at the Natchitoches NNFH winter turtle resort.



## Property, Property, Property!

By: Karen Kilpatrick

We all know what a chore keeping up with “things” can be. The Fish and Wildlife Service prides itself on keeping up with property in an efficient manner...and the hatchery is no exception in that arena. Within the Service the Regional Offices track with property over \$5K and the field stations are responsible for monitoring and tracking property under \$5K. Volunteer Kemper Kilpatrick has been working diligently for the last few months reviewing all property under \$5K and entering the information into a national

database called PPMS (Personal Property Management System). Prior to using this system the hatchery maintained a separate database on its own. Switching to PPMS has allowed the hatchery to keep the information web-accessible so that it is not employee- or station-dependent for data entry or data accessibility. Kemper hopes to have the project completed by the end of December and will then be the main person responsible for tracking and monitoring the 250+ items of property under \$5K.



Volunteer Kemper Kilpatrick keeps track of over 250 pieces of property at Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery

# Sunfish from Natchitoches NFH Aide Turcotte State Fish Hatchery in Mississippi

By: Jan Dean

Sunfish -- bluegill and redear sunfish -- cultured at Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery (NNFH) are stocked either in public waters of Louisiana through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, or in federal waters on U.S. Forest Service property and in National Wildlife Refuges where recreational anglers can enjoy fishing for them. This fall, NNFH filled all requests for sunfish and still had plenty left over. In order to find a home for these sunfish, NNFH contacted other federal fish hatcheries in the Southeast to let them know of the excess. Ricky Campbell of the Pvt. John Allen National Fish Hatchery in Tupelo, Missis-

sippi mentioned a need of the Turcotte State Fish Hatchery (TSFH) in Mississippi for sunfish to feed their largemouth bass. Contacts were made, needs were assessed and four ponds were drained on November 4<sup>th</sup> to harvest the sunfish requested by TSFH. Personnel from TSFH arrived the morning of November 5<sup>th</sup> and hauled away 530 pounds of mixed bluegill and redear sunfish to help their bass program. We were pleased to assist this

important partner of our colleagues in Mississippi.

Sunfish are being harvest at NNFH



# Cane River Creole National Historical Park Partners Up with Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery for Mussel Identifications.

By: Tony Brady

Louisiana has been experiencing a drought for much of 2010 which is seen by most folks as a bad thing, but the low waters in Cane River Lake due to the drought, has uncovered lost treasures for Dustin Fuqua of the Cane River Creole National Historical Park. Fuqua was working along the bank of Cane River Lake across for the historic Oakland Plantation located south of Natchitoches, LA when he found the foundation of what is believed to be the pump house for the plantation, as well as other artifacts that was once hidden by the waters of Cane River Lake. Fuqua also collected some biological artifacts in the form of shells from freshwater mussels and snails. Fuqua then approached the staff at Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery (NNFH) for help to identify the species from which

the shells came. Tony Brady, NNFH's mussel biologist, was able to identify the shells of the four freshwater mussel species Fuqua collected, but suggested sending the snail shells to a friend of the hatchery, Dr. Paul Johnson with the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center in Marion, AL, who has an expertise in freshwater snails, for their identification. In addition to identifying the mussel species, Brady also accompanied Fuqua on 4 November to the Oakland Plantation site to look for additional mussel shells. While at the site, Fuqua and Brady found two live species in Cane River Lake. A few days later, Fuqua contacted the hatchery again about additional mussel shells collected at the Magnolia Plantation. This second collection of shells consisted of five new species. A dam

separates the two plantations, and may be the reason for the variety in the mussel shells collected from the two sites. If the current low water conditions persist, Fuqua and Brady plan to visit the Magnolia site for an additional survey of potential mussel shells.



Using a copy of the Historical Distribution of Freshwater Mussels of Louisiana, Brady and Fuqua identify mussel species collected in Cane River Lake.



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*Saving the world, one species  
at a time.*



This home school group studies the archaeology display at the NNFH aquarium.

[http://www.fws.gov/  
natchitoches](http://www.fws.gov/natchitoches)

## Louisiana School Student Hard At Work!

By: Karen Kilpatrick

One of the hardest things about a volunteer program is finding the right volunteer for the right job!



Katelynne Smith takes a break from school to work on the Caddo Indian Education Program

Well, that problem is non-existent when it comes to using students from the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts (LSMSA/Louisiana School). The school is a state supported residential honors high school with competitive admissions for high ability students. One of the school's goals is to build a student mindset of community service that will extend beyond their short time at the school. The school requires every student to do 3.0 hours of community service each week of the academic year. The hatchery

has used these students for three years in a variety of programs. This year's student is Katelynne Smith from Sibley, LA, a sophomore at the Louisiana School. She is undecided right now about her future major in college but is leaning toward the Arts. Katelynne is a valuable part of the hatchery volunteer program and has already helped prepare cultural education activities for the Caddo Indian Education Program grant as well as develop membership outreach spreadsheets for the hatchery Friends group, FISH.