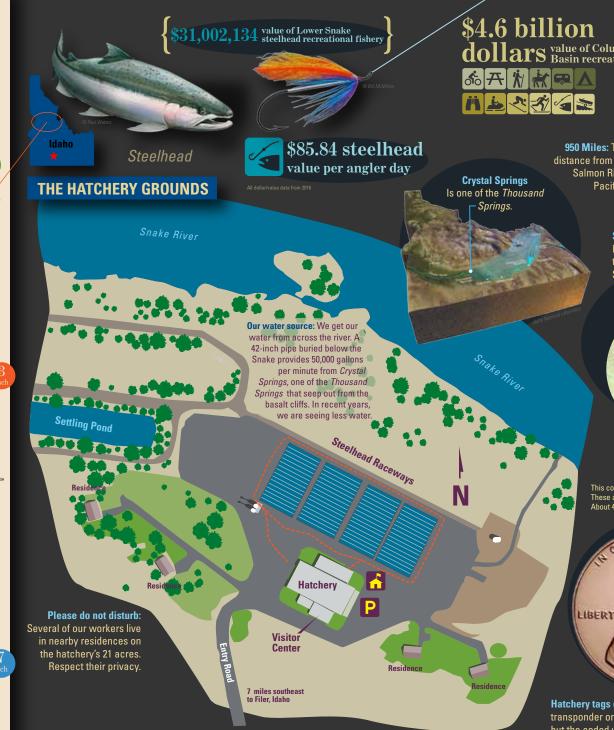




## **Magic Valley Steelhead Hatchery**

Open daily 8 to 4. Arrange for guided group tours by calling (208) 326-3230.



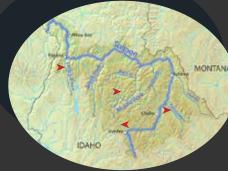




Salmon River to the Pacific Ocean



Steelhead release sites in the Salmon River basin In early spring, specialized trucks travel 300 miles to release steelhead smolts at various sites in the Salmon River Basin.





Hatchery tags compared to a penny: The passive integrated transponder or PIT tag covers Lincoln from shoulder to forehead, but the coded wire tag is only a little bigger than the "1" in 2018.

Magic Valley

is about giving

healthy start.

new fish a

Steelhead on the Lower Snake River

CONTACT OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR

The beauty

of a steelhead

smolt is full

of intricate

details.

Once upon a time, before 1958, steelhead could make it all the way to the part of the Snake River that rolls by Magic Valley hatchery. Shoshone Falls was the natural barrier on the Snake for thousands of years prior to Brownlee Dam in Hells Canyon. This dam now blocks all fish passage.

Steelhead are not quite like the other Pacific salmonids (salmon-like fish) of the Columbia Basin, Chinook, coho, sockeye, chum, and pink salmon all die after spawning. Not all steelhead die. Some can make a few spawning migrations out and back from the Ocean. Those that do are called "kelts." Another peculiarity of steelhead is that, for various reasons some individuals never make the ocean journey and stay as residents of freshwater like their close relations, the rainbow trout.

Magic Valley raises two distinct types of steelhead: smaller fish that spend a year in the ocean (A-run) and larger fish (B-run) that spend two years there, both are summer steelhead. (Winter steelhead are found only downstream of the Deschutes/ Columbia confluence in Oregon.)

Ten million steelhead swim from Idaho to the ocean each year. Only one percent (100,000) return as adults. In the hatchery, almost 95% of the eggs collected are fertilized. In the wild, that number is less than 30 percent. After 12 months in the hatchery, 80 percent of these fish, released as smolt, make it to the ocean. Only four percent of their wild counterparts will do so.

In the northwest we value steelhead economically, so we compensate for their loss due to hydroelectric dams. This is the essence of the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan. There are other reasons steelhead



Steelhead have economic value.

Supporting Conservation

of effective

conservation.

steelhead

We also support conservation of wild steelhead. Listing Lower Snake River steelhead as threatened under the Endangered Species Act requires we track hatchery fish. We clip adipose fins, insert coded wire tags and passive integrated transponders, because we want wild steelhead to stay in the rivers. Most of what we do relies on keeping hatchery fish segregated from wild ones.

are valued, other laws that come

produces Salmon River steelhead

to honor treaties between Idaho

Tribes and the United States and

recover steelhead runs.

into play. Magic Valley fish hatchery

subsequent court rulings. We directly

support tribal fisheries and efforts to

Recently we have released unclipped juvenile steelhead into certain rivers. These are part of an integrated program where hatchery fish are carefully mingled with wild ones. A new tagging system tracking parentage genetically is used in these integrated efforts to supplement, recover, or reintroduce steelhead.

Successful recovery relies on the steelhead's innate ability to imprint on a particular part of a river or stream as a juvenile. Their journey to the ocean is timed such that they make a map within them triggered by hormonal shifts imprinting the chemical "smell" of the journey from release point to ocean. This map will be recollected in reverse as adults when they get the urge to spawn in the very same part of the stream they were released into. This is the wonder of steelhead. They go out to the ocean small and return much larger to start the next generation—and to the joy

of the fishing public.



