

# Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery Hunting Plan

June 2020

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery

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Underwood, Washington 98651

Submitted By:  
Project Leader

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Figure 1. Aerial view of Spring Creek NFH with hunting areas denoted.

# SPRING CREEK NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY HUNTING PLAN

## **I. Introduction**

National Fish Hatcheries are guided by the goals and objectives of the *Strategic Plan for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program: FY2016-2020* (USFWS 2016), the mission and goals of the National Fish Hatchery (NFH) System, the authorized purposes of an individual hatchery, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) policy, laws and international treaties.

The Main Hatchery Area of the Spring Creek NFH is located at RM 167 along the north (Washington) shore of the Columbia River, 20 miles upstream of Bonneville Dam and approximately two miles downstream of the White Salmon River. The auxiliary Big White Ponds Area of Spring Creek NFH is located on the east bank of the White Salmon River approximately 1.5 miles upstream of the Columbia River confluence.

The facility was authorized by Special Act 24 Stat. 523, March 03, 1887, and Special Act 30 Stat. 612, July 01, 1898, and placed into operation in September 1901 to support the commercial fishing industry in the Columbia River. The hatchery was reauthorized by the Mitchell Act (16 USC 755-757; 52 Stat. 345) May 11, 1938, as amended on August 8, 1946, (60 Stat. 932) for mitigation of Bonneville Dam and conservation of fishery resources in the Columbia River Basin. The hatchery was remodeled in 1938 to prevent inundation by the pool behind Bonneville Dam. The hatchery was again remodeled in 1970 to expand operations to meet commitments under the John Day Dam Mitigation Act. The hatchery is currently propagating Tule fall Chinook salmon and includes adult broodstock collection, egg incubation, juvenile rearing, and an annual on-station release of 10.5 million sub-yearling smolts.

National Fish Hatchery lands are maintained for the fundamental purpose of propagating and distributing fish and other aquatic animal life and managed for the protection of all species of wildlife (50 CFR Ch.1 70.1). National Fish Hatchery areas may be opened to hunting wildlife when such activity is not detrimental to the propagation and distribution of fish or other aquatic wildlife.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is the state's principal steward of fish and wildlife resources. State law directs the Department to conserve native fish and wildlife and their habitat, while also supporting sustainable fishing, hunting and other outdoor opportunities for millions of Washington residents and visitors. In 2017, WDFW completed its 2017-2019 Strategic Plan (WDFW 2017). The Service's authorization of hunting at the Spring Creek NFH is in compliance and consistent with WDFW's strategic plan.

## **II. Statement of Objectives**

The objectives of hunting program on Spring Creek NFH are to provide:

- The public with an opportunity to experience, recreationally, wildlife on more hatchery lands and increase opportunities for hunters.
- Biological diversity by preserving the natural diversity and variety of biotic communities occurring on hatchery lands.
- Wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.

This plan will take into account operational requirements that restrict access to certain areas of the property and the fact that not all of the property lends itself to hunting opportunities.

The hatchery will use an adaptive management approach by the reviewing the Hunt Plan every five years and revising if necessary.

## **III. Assessment**

There has been no formal assessment of wildlife on the hatchery property. The viability of the game species populations proposed to be hunted is not expected to be negatively affected by hunting according to State season guidelines and management.

## **IV. Description of Hunting Program**

### **A. Areas to be Opened to Hunting**

Approximately 50 acres in the Big White Ponds Area west of State Route 141 Alt will officially be open to hunting (Figure 1). Hunting on this area would follow the season dates and bag limits outlined in the State of Washington regulations. <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations>. This consistency with the state helps reduce confusion when hunters participate in hunting activities on Service lands. Trapping is not permitted on Spring Creek NFH property



121°31'30"W

121°31'15"W

R 10 E

121°31'0"W

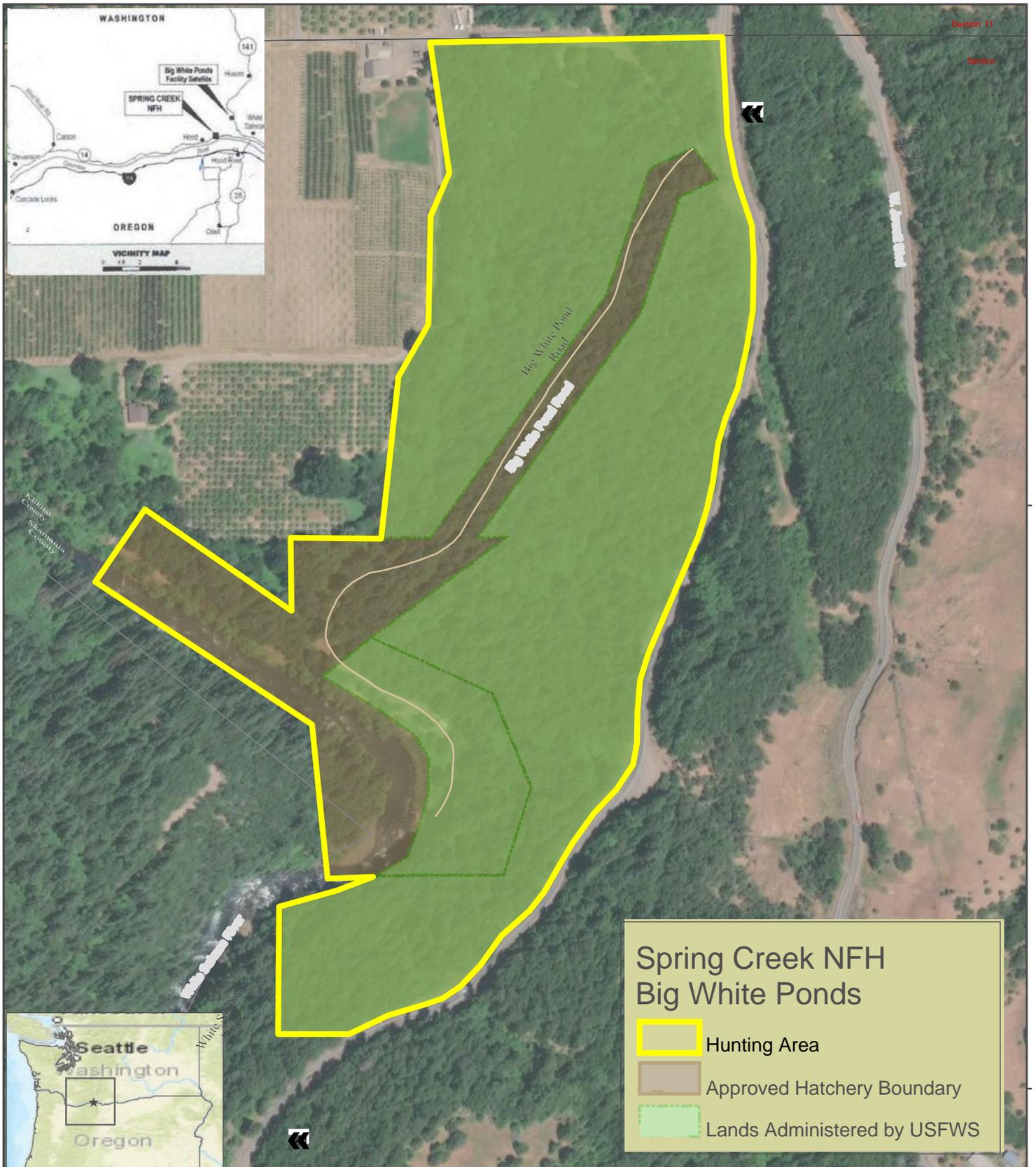


Figure 1. Area open to hunting on Spring Creek NFH's Big White Ponds Tract.

## **B. Species to be Taken, Hunting Periods, Hunting Access**

Hunting will be allowed for species listed below according to State of Washington hunting regulations. State seasons and bag limits apply. Trapping will not be allowed. Access to the Big White Ponds Area is found by traveling north on Hwy 141 Alt to SW Arnett Road. The gate is located immediately on the left. No public vehicles are allowed past the gate, but limited parking is available near the entrance (both 141 Alt and SW Arnett Rd).

- Big Game: Bear, Black-Tailed Deer, Mule Deer, and Elk,
- Upland / Small Game: Bobcat, Crow, Grouse, Partridge, Porcupine, and Wild Turkey

## **C. Hunting Permit Requirements**

Hunters are required to have licenses, permits and tags for the game species they are hunting compliant with State of Washington hunting regulations.

## **D. Consultation and Coordination with the State and Tribes**

Consultation and coordination of this Hunting Plan was initiated with WDFW and Yakima Nation on October 23, 2019 (Appendix A). To date neither entity has provided any comments.

## **E. Law Enforcement**

Enforcement of hunting regulations normally associated with management of NFH System properties is the responsibility of commissioned Federal Wildlife Officers. Other officers, Special Agents, state game wardens, and the local Sheriff's Department may assist Federal Wildlife Officers.

The following methods are used to control and enforce hunting regulations:

- The hatchery will provide a brochure that shows hunting areas; it is the responsibility of the hunter to determine property boundaries and to follow all applicable laws as they pertain to shooting near houses and other buildings.
- The hatchery website will be updated to describe the hunting areas; and
- Federal law enforcement may randomly check hunters for compliance with Federal and state laws.

The hatchery will have the hunting regulations and maps available in the I&E Office.

## **F. Funding and Staffing Requirements**

No additional costs are anticipated.

## **V. Conduct of the Hunting Program**

### **A. Hunting Permit Application, Selection, and/or Registration Procedures**

State of Washington hunting regulations apply. Washington hunting regulation pamphlets are available at the hatchery office or online at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations>

### **B. Hatchery-Specific Hunting Regulations**

General Provisions:

**50 CFR §71.2 Hunting and Fishing on National Fish Hatchery Areas. Subpart A. Hunting. General provisions (<https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/50/71.2>)**

Listed below are hatchery-specific regulations that pertain to hunting at Spring Creek NFH as of the date of this plan. These regulations may be modified as conditions change or if hatchery lands expand.

- (a) Each person shall secure and possess the required State license and permit.
- (b) Each person shall comply with the applicable provisions of Federal laws and regulations and the current Federal Migratory Bird regulations.
- (c) Each person shall comply with the applicable provisions and regulations of the State unless further restricted by Federal law and regulation.
- (d) Each person shall comply with the terms and conditions authorizing access and use of the NFH area.
- (e) Each person shall comply with the provisions of any special notices governing hunting on the Spring Creek NFH area. Such special notices will be posted throughout the hatchery and will be available at the hatchery office.

### **C. Relevant State Regulations**

All current state regulations apply to hunting on Spring Creek NFH lands.

### **D. Other Hatchery Rules and Regulations for Hunting**

- Camping, overnight use, and fires are prohibited
- Hunting on hatchery lands is allowed seven days per week

- Trapping is not allowed
- Baiting is not permitted on Service lands
- Cutting of shooting lanes or damaging trees is not allowed.
- The use of nails, screws, or a device that penetrates or damages trees is not allowed for stand or blind attachment.
- Roads with barriers and all road-less areas are closed to all motorized vehicles (50 CFR 26.21)
- **50 CFR §71.2 Management of Fisheries conservation Areas. National Fish Hatcheries. Public entry and use. Management of Fisheries Conservation Areas**  
The public entry and use provisions set forth in part 26 of this chapter are equally applicable to National Fish Hatchery areas.

## VI. Public Engagement

- **Outreach for Announcing and Publicizing the Hunting Program**

The hunting opportunity would be publicized on the website and on the informational kiosks located at the hatchery. Special announcements and articles may be released in conjunction with hunting seasons.

- **Anticipated Public Reaction to the Hunting Program**

No public reaction would be anticipated to opening portions of the hatchery to hunting.

- **How Anglers Will Be Informed of Relevant Rules and Regulations**

Maps will be available on the station website at:

[www.fws.gov/gorgefish/SpringCreekNFH/SCIndex.cfm](http://www.fws.gov/gorgefish/SpringCreekNFH/SCIndex.cfm), the Hatchery Headquarters, and on hatchery information kiosks. The 2020 Washington State Hunting Regulations can be found at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations>.

## VII. **Compatibility Determination**

Hunting and all associated program activities proposed in this plan are compatible with the purpose of the hatchery as outlined in (50 CFR Ch.1 70.1) “Opening of National Fish Hatchery Areas to Hunting: National Fish Hatchery areas may be opened to hunting wildlife when such activity is not detrimental to the propagation and distribution of fish or other aquatic wildlife.”

## VIII. **References**

USFWS (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). 2016. Strategic Plan for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program: FY2016-2020. Falls Church, VA.

WDFW (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife). 2017. 2017-19 Strategic Plan. Olympia, WA.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Coordination with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Yakima Nation**

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**Yakama Nation and WDFW Review of Draft USFWS Hunt Plans**

1 message

**Clark, Michael** <michael\_l\_clark@fws.gov>

Wed, Oct 23, 2019 at 12:54 PM

To: laural\_james@yakama.com, david\_blodgett@yakama.com, Bill Sharp &lt;Bill\_Sharp@yakama.com&gt;, sandra.jonker@dfw.wa.gov, stefanie.bergh@dfw.wa.gov

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Good afternoon,

As I mentioned a few months back, the USFWS is in the process of looking at identifying lands adjacent to hatcheries that may be opened up to the public for hunting access. Please find drafts of the plans for Little White Salmon and Spring Creek NFHs attached.

Let us know if you have any comments or edits to the documents. Please just go ahead and make any changes in track changes.

Thanks,

Mike

--  
Mike Clark

Complex Manager

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**2 attachments**

Fwf\ Little White NFH Draft Hunting Plan\_2020 v1 .docx

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Fwf\ Spring Creek NFH Draft Hunting Plan\_202 v1 .docx

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