

**Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery
Fishing Plan**

2019

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery
61552 State Road 14
Underwood, Washington 98651**

Submitted By:
Project Leader



Signature

10/1/2019

Date

Concurrence:
Westside
Line
Supervisor



Signature

10/1/2019

Date

Approved:
Assistant
Regional
Director-
Fish and
Aquatic
Conservation



Signature

11 Oct. '19

Date

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SPRING CREEK NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY DRAFT FISHING 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 15.1 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).

The Spring Creek NFH has provided fishing opportunities to the public since its establishment in 1901 and long before current environmental policies and regulations were promulgated. This document serves to retroactively and officially open Spring Creek NFH lands to public fishing via the Code of Federal Regulations. These action will ensure that all legal and policy obligations are met.

Recreational fishing is a popular sport adjacent to the hatchery on navigable waters of the Columbia River and also from the banks of the river on hatchery and state park lands, all accessible from the hatchery's entrance road. This area provides good opportunities for catching Pacific Salmon, White Sturgeon, Smallmouth Bass, and other cool water species. The Big White Ponds Area also provides bank fishing access for anglers to pursue Pacific salmon.

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 fishing at the Spring Creek NFH is in compliance and consistent with WDFW's strategic plan. For fish species such as Pacific Salmon and White Sturgeon, WDFW works closely with state and Federal agencies to set regulations that protect native species and allow for equitable harvest opportunities. The Department is committed to providing sustainable fishing opportunities throughout the state. Popular outdoor activities like fishing are a "quality of life" issue for millions of Washingtonians, and generate billions of dollars in economic benefits for local businesses and communities each year. Their plan is designed to maintain and increase those benefits with strategies that range from better access to better catch accounting.

II. Statement of Objectives

Fishing Plan Goals

Goal 1: *Fishing, wildlife viewing, and other outdoor activities are enhanced and expanded.* The Service strives to complement WDFW's goals which seek to preserve, protect and perpetuate fish and ecosystems while providing sustainable recreational and commercial fishing opportunities. These latter opportunities are enhanced via increased and improved access.

Goal 2: *Increase angling participation.* Diverse, stable and productive angling opportunities are the basis for increased angling participation. The Service strives to follow WDFW's objective of providing hatcheries and other public access sites that are safe, clean, and effectively support people's use and enjoyment of natural resources.

Fishing Plan Objective

The objective of a fishing program at Spring Creek NFH is to provide opportunities for visitors to fish from hatchery lands in accordance with the Service's Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program Strategic Goals, WDFW Strategic Plan Goals, and WDFW 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 fish and habitat objectives;
- Pose minimal conflict with other priority public use activities; and
- Provide a quality fishing program that provides opportunities for visitors to fish on hatchery lands.

Fishing Plan Strategies:

- a. Allow anglers to bank fish along the northern bank of the Columbia River on the Main

Hatchery Area and along the White Salmon River on the Big White Ponds Area.

- b. Provide, where feasible, parking along the hatchery access road adjacent to the northern bank of the Columbia River and along State Route 141 Alt and SW Arnett Road at the entrance to the Big White Ponds hatchery property.

III. Description of Fishing Program

A. Areas to be Opened to Fishing

Main Hatchery Area, Columbia River

Bank fishing occurs from the posted sign showing the start of hatchery property (end of State Park property) to approximately ¼ mile west of the opening to the hatchery's adult collection ladder. This spot is located by the start of the boulder rip-rap as you travel east towards the gate. A sign also delineates the boundary. The area open to fishing is approximately 8.8 acres. Within this area is approximately one mile of shoreline where fishing can take place (Figure 1).

Big White Ponds Area, White Salmon River

Anglers are prohibited from entering the property via motorized vehicle due to the lack of parking near the river, and the slope and rugged nature of the road. A sign at the entrance gate clearly states that no public vehicles are allowed. Anglers can walk from the gate to the river (about ¼ mile) to reach the White Salmon River. The area open to fishing is approximately 10 acres (Figure 2). This area contains approximately 2,100 feet of fishing shoreline. There are structures that may inhibit fishing in some spots and the public is cautioned to avoid them.



Figure 1. Columbia River fishing access associated with Spring Creek NFH's Main Hatchery Area.



Figure 2. White Salmon River fishing access associated with Spring Creek NFH's Big White Ponds Area.

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

Anglers are required to comply with species and take limits within WDFW fishing regulations. The areas will be open for anglers to access year-round, during daylight hours only. Anglers access the Columbia River, via hatchery property, by driving past the State Park property, located off State Hwy 14 (approximately 2 miles west of the White Salmon River) to the beginning of hatchery property. There are several parking areas and anglers can use the trails leading to the river.

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).

C. Fishing Permit Requirements

Anglers who are eligible to fish under Washington State law are eligible to fish on hatchery units. They must obtain a Washington State fishing license and follow Washington State laws, limits, and regulations.

D. Consultation and Coordination with the State

Consultation and coordination of this Fishing Plan was initiated via a letter to WDFW that described our intent to codify fishing access to our lands and explain that we would provide them with a draft copy of this Fishing Plan prior to its release for public comment (Appendix A).

E. Law Enforcement

Enforcement of hatchery regulations normally associated with management of National Fish Hatchery 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 fishing regulations:

- Hatchery and fishing area boundaries will be clearly posted;
- The hatchery will provide a brochure that shows fishing areas; and
- Federal law enforcement staff will randomly check anglers for compliance with Federal and state laws.

The hatchery will post fishing regulations on the hatchery website, hatchery information kiosks, and in hatchery offices.

F. Funding and Staffing Requirements

There will be costs associated with the development of infrastructure to support fishing at Spring Creek NFH. Annual costs to administer the fishing program at the hatchery, including salary, equipment, law enforcement, brochures, and maintenance, total approximately \$2,950 (Table 1). Expenses will consist primarily of posting and maintaining “Public Fishing Area” signs, maintenance of the trail and parking lot, retrieval of monofilament line deposited in waste containers, and production and dissemination of materials regarding fishing access and regulations

Table 1. Costs to Administer a Fishing Program at Spring Creek NFH.

Activity or Project	One-time Expense	Recurring (Annual) Expense
Develop fishing opening package	\$500	
Maintain the pedestrian trails leading to the Columbia River shoreline and public access on the Big White Salmon River		\$1,500
Monofilament line waste containers (3)	\$150	
Brochures, signs, posters	\$250	\$250
Maintenance/Staff		\$1,200
Total	\$870	\$2,950

IV. Conduct of the Fishing Program

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

No special application or registration process is required. Anglers must possess a current State of Washington fishing license.

B. Hatchery-Specific Fishing Regulations

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

Sport Fishing. We allow fishing on designated areas of the hatchery in accordance with state regulations from legal sunrise to legal sunset.

C. Relevant State Regulations

Refer to WDFW's "Sport Fishing Rules" for specific fishing regulations, as these may change often.

D. Other Hatchery Rules and Regulations for Fishing

- Camping, overnight use, and fires are prohibited.
- Fishing on hatchery lands is allowed seven days per week, during daylight hours only.
- Foot access to bank fishing areas is by established trails only.
- Pets are welcome, but must be on a leash at all times.

V. Public Engagement

A. Outreach for Announcing and Publicizing the Fishing Program

The hatchery maintains a mailing list, for news release purposes, to local newspapers, radio, and websites. Special announcements and articles may be released in conjunction with fishing seasons. In addition, information about fishing will be available at Spring Creek NFH or on the hatchery's website www.fws.gov/gorgefish/springcreekNFH/sciindex.cfm.

B. Anticipated Public Reaction to the Fishing Program

Public reaction should be minimal but positive. Fishing has been allowed at both the Main Hatchery and the Big White Ponds Area since their acquisition. As a consequence, the public is already aware of the opportunities.

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

Maps and regulations (Tear Sheets) will be available on the station website at: www.fws.gov/gorgefish/SpringCreekNFH/SCIndex.cfm, the Hatchery Headquarters, and on Hatchery information kiosks. The 2019 Washington State Sport fishing Regulations can be found at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations>.

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.



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery
61552 S.R. 14
Underwood, WA 98651

February 13, 2019

Mr. Matt Gardner
Region 5 Biologist
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
5525 S 11th St.
Ridgefield, WA 98642

Dear Mr. Gardner

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is in the process of assessing current and future Federal public fishing opportunities primarily on National Wildlife Refuge and National Fish Hatchery (NFH) lands. The first step in this process is to codify existing fishing opportunities at a number of our NFHs. This process involves developing hatchery-specific fishing plans, Environmental Assessments, and consulting on Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

This purpose of this letter is to inform you of this process and to coordinate completion of fishing plans for the Little White Salmon and Spring Creek NFH's (both in WDFW's Region 5). These plans explain and cover areas/opportunities for fishing at both facilities and will be sent to you in the near future for review and comment prior to their release for public comment.

Please find below, a brief summary of the areas at both facilities currently open to fishing. The newly drafted fishing plans for both facilities essentially maintain the current level of access.

Spring Creek NFH:

The entrance road to the hatchery is about two miles west of the White Salmon River mouth. The road is about one mile long; the first several hundred feet of which traverses Washington State Park lands. The public is allowed to fish at the beginning of the hatchery property (designated by our sign) along the shoreline of the Columbia River up to about ¼ mile west of the adult collection ladder. This represents approximately 8.8 acres of hatchery property.

Big White Collection Ponds/egg collection facility on the Big White Salmon River:

This hatchery property is located off State Highway 141 Alternate, about two miles north of State Highway 14. The gated entrance is at the start of SW Arnett Rd. No public motor vehicles are allowed past the gate, but anglers can walk the approximately ¼-mile-long road to get to the river. There is approximately 2,100 feet of riverfront that is open to fishing along with the associated 10 acres of hatchery property.

Little White Salmon NFH, Drano Lake and Little White Salmon River:

Bank fishing is allowed on hatchery property starting at State Highway 14, along the entire Drano Lake shoreline adjacent to the access road, upriver to the marked buoy line near the hatchery entrance, and along the lake's northeastern shore. This totals 7,389 feet of shoreline and the associated 9.3 acres of hatchery property.

If you require any additional information, please contact me at 509-493-1730.

Sincerely,



David Carie
Deputy Complex Manager
Columbia River Gorge NFH Complex

Cc: Bob Turik, Hatchery Manager, Little White Salmon NFH

