



Neosho National Fish Hatchery NEWSLETTER

November and December 2013



What a beautiful place we work at! This photo was enhanced with a simple trick...can you tell what was done to it? Here is another from a drizzly day in December....



November 11 was the observance of Veteran's Day, and here in Neosho we have one staff member who was in the armed forces.



The country owes a debt of gratitude to military veterans, and the Service is fortunate that many veterans find their skills can be put to good use conserving the nature of America. More than 1,400 veterans work with us and that number is growing.

More than 1,400 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees are military veterans, many of whom continue to serve in Reserve and National Guard units across the country. These people who once sacrificed for our country now use their skills in the cause of conservation. We thank each one of our veterans, and honor their service to our nation.

Raymond Villa, SFC, Retired, currently works as a Maintenance Mechanic for Neosho National Fish Hatchery in Missouri. He spent 20 years in the Army, retiring at the E7 rank of Sergeant First Class. Ray served in many locations including Hawaii, Kentucky, Colorado, Pennsylvania and the Pacific Islands. He was a Construction Engineer for all his years of service, and began his career at age 17. Thank you Ray for your service to our fine country!



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A hallmark of the Neosho hatchery is the park-like atmosphere and the support from the community. With the government shutdown a thing of the past, school groups once again came to enjoy the grounds and to learn about what we do, why we do it and how it benefits everyone.



Our aquarium bubble feature is always a great photo opportunity!



We even had a homeschool group request an in-depth tour and on-site fish anatomy lesson in our classroom, led by the staff education specialist. The students brought in preserved sharks for dissection.



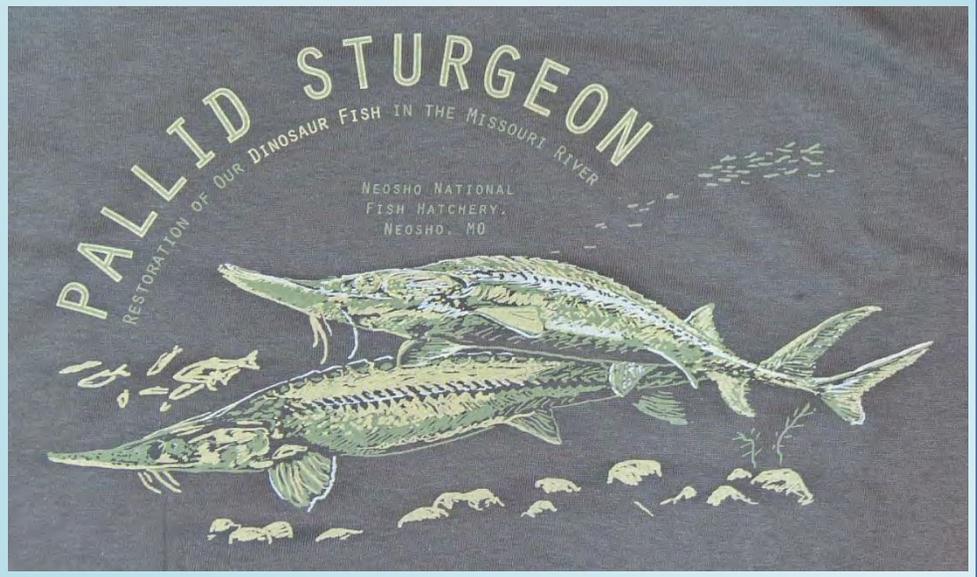


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Earlier in the fall, the hatchery got a new distribution trailer to be used in our endangered Pallid Sturgeon recovery efforts. The trailer has three compartments and is ten feet long by six feet wide. We worked with a local company to apply a vinyl wrap for the plain aluminum sides so we could have an eye-catching educational message as we are transporting these fish down the highway.



Our Friends group runs the gift shop in our visitor center. This fall they geared up for a strong holiday gift season, and even though they were hampered with the shutdown in October, they provided many wonderful and locally produced wares including some 125th anniversary pottery and new t-shirt design.





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Every three years or so, the hatchery receives its safety inspection, complete with a list of things that are needed to bring things up to the highest level. Here are some of the things we did to ensure compliance and safety all around.





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In mid-December, the hatchery bore witness to this unusual traffic snafu. Totally unrelated to the fish industry, this trailer with its heavy load was just passing by. However, the driver and his escort failed to anticipate the problem of the hump in the road where the railroad crosses. The result: grinding to an unresolvable stop and staying straddled on the tracks for about half an hour. Police came to help direct traffic around, but finally they were able to tilt the trailer enough to continue to their destination. Made for an interesting day!



We value our partners so much! Before the weather turned cold, we were able to have an information table manned at the George Washington Carver National Monument "Prairie Days" event. Lots of people came out to enjoy all the activities and learn something new, while enjoying the beautiful day.



We're also so blessed to have a strong and vibrant Friends group.





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Our older sturgeon building is getting a facelift of sorts. It was needing a new roof, so we're installing a metal roof and new siding to match the other buildings on the hatchery.



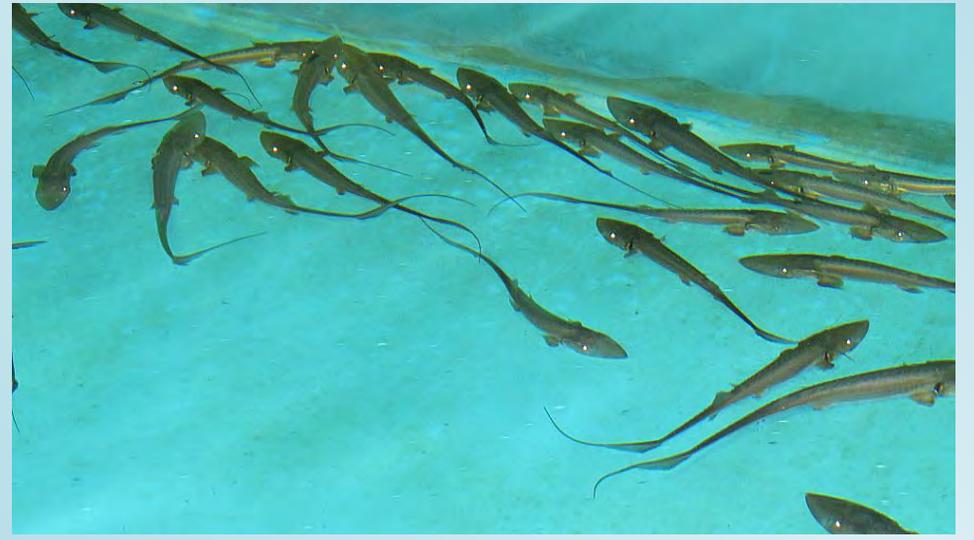
Everything should be completed by late January.



Speaking of sturgeon, our endangered pallid sturgeon operation is going well. Manager David Hendrix loves to feed and clean and check up on the young ones every day, as shown here.



We have over 2000 of these guys going strong from last year's spawn!





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If not busy raising fish, what could you do with an empty fish raceway? Chief Biologist Jaime Pacheco has an intriguing idea – use it to raise endangered aquatic plants from the area. This particular series of raceways might be able to be set aside from our rainbow trout production for the important work of endangered/threatened species recovery. A newly discovered recycling grant might give us the funding necessary, but there’s still a lot of planning and other logistics to sort through before we get the final approval to proceed.



We’re still working on endangered mussel recovery and hope to move into endangered salamander work upon future approval from those higher up.



The Final Word, from hatchery manager David Hendrix.



Hi Everyone! ☺

We are so proud to represent the US Fish & Wildlife Service and participate in conserving/protecting our nation’s precious fisheries resources. We focus a lot on educating our supporters: young people, seniors, disabled folks, veterans, and everyone in-between. The young people are our future, so we want to make sure they realize the fun of fishing, using great fishing ethics, fishing legally, the importance of protecting our environment and maintaining great water quality for the longevity of our fisheries for future generations. In an effort to promote education throughout the communities, we host a number of events to achieve that goal. Annually we host fishing derbies for Kids (First June Friday), Seniors (Second June Friday), Veterans (Second March Saturday), Boy/Girl Scouts (coming April 2015), and our Open House (Sunday, April 13, 2014). We welcome you to join us in these events and help us make a difference.

Take care, until next time! ☺

*Newsletter and photos by Bruce Hallman,
Environmental Education Specialist*

