



# Neosho National Fish Hatchery

## NEWSLETTER

January and February 2014



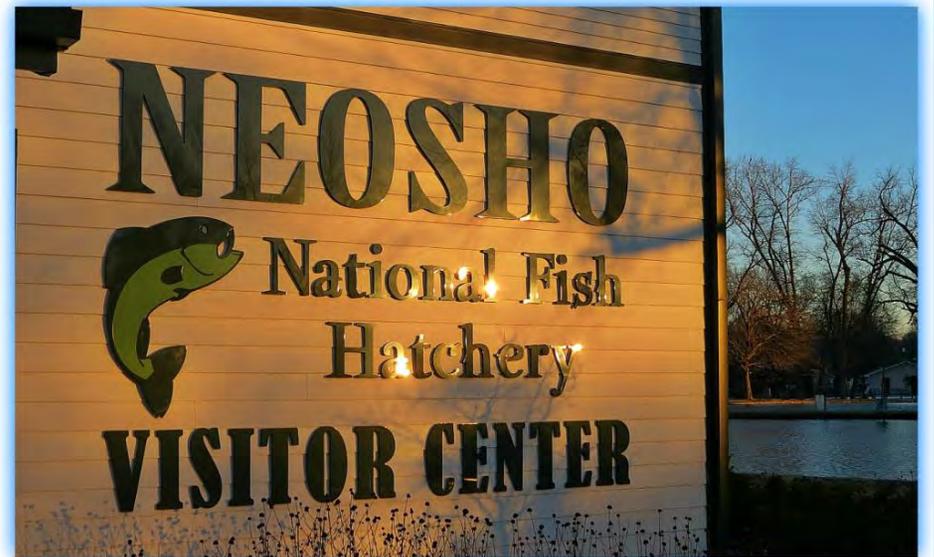
Beautiful winter scenes at the hatchery – stunning sunset and intricate ice crystal formations.



Even when it's freezing cold, sometimes you gotta move some fish.



Side of the building with the waning sun shining on.





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Lloyd Mitchell from IT at regional office came through the area and stopped in for a couple of days to work on our computers.



Paul Bunker and Christine Tsai from our big sponsor Eagle Claw (from Denver), with Friends Group President Russell Hively in the center.



Another Energy Award was given to the hatchery for its unique visitor center – here presented by Region 3 Director Tom Melius and AD Todd Turner.





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Two projects were completed:  
New roof and siding for our older sturgeon  
building...



...plus colorful wrap and hardware installed on our  
new Endangered Species Recovery Unit.



More winter shots...



So pretty....but so cold!





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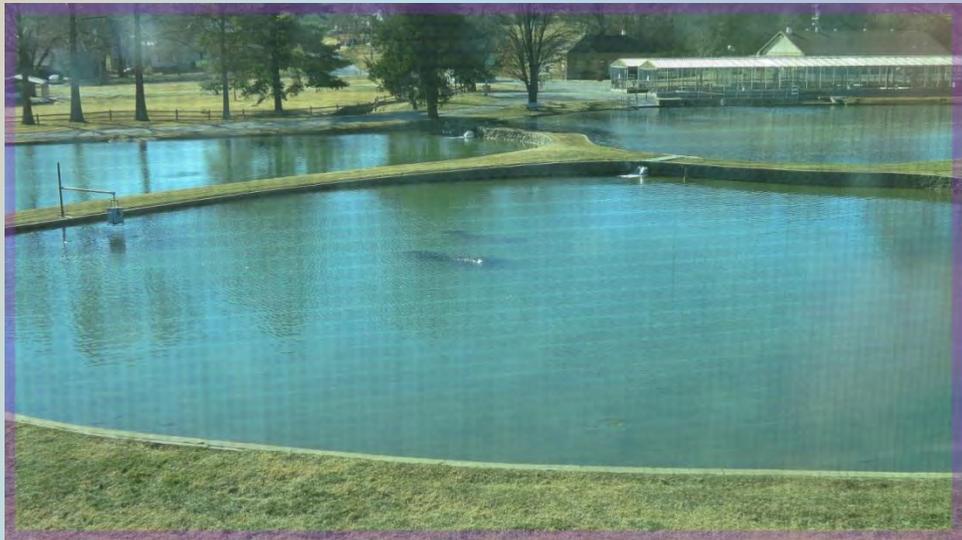
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Strange sights...

... fish jumping (for joy?).

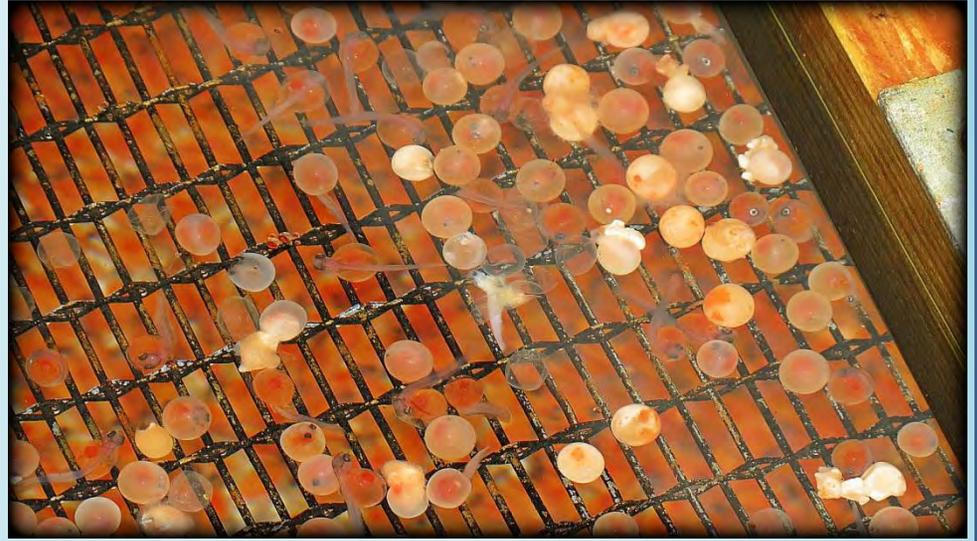


Neosho Loch Ness Monster in our pond?

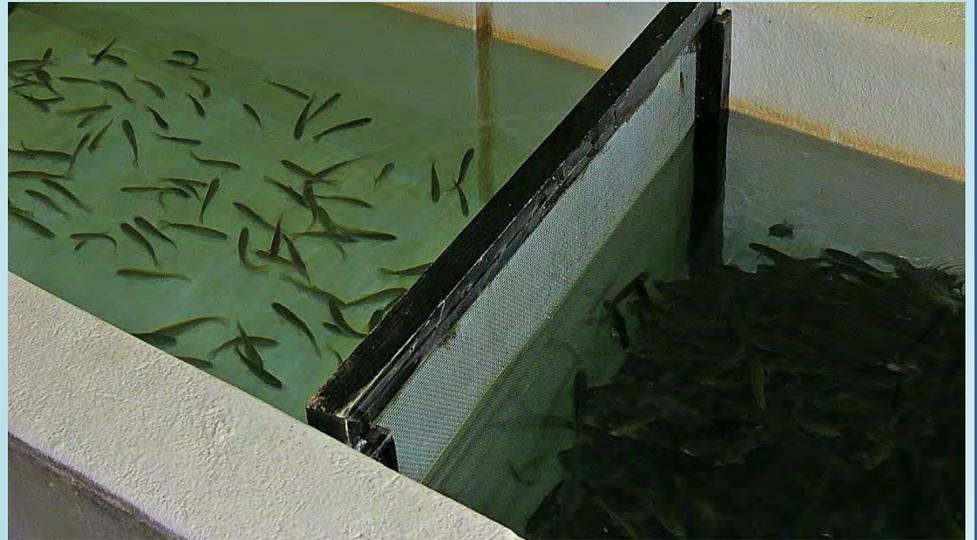


Good sights...

New trout eggs and hatching fry!



Lots and lots and LOTS of small trout!





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### The Best Part

Last year, somewhere around 50,000 people came to visit our little corner of the world. There are so many things that make the Neosho National Fish Hatchery a special place, and these many folks were finding out for themselves. Sure, quite a few of them are locals that already know what we're about, and some of them are frequent stoppers-by at that. But as detailed in my previous column, we've had people from all over the nation stop by to this City of Springs and the nation's oldest operating federal fish hatchery. And the guest book was signed by people from every continent (except Antarctica) – people coming to see what the fuss is all about.

But the best part of the hatchery is not the trout, not the buildings, not the park-like grounds, not the ponds, and not even the dinosaur fish. No, the best part of the hatchery is the people. By now most people in town know the manager, David Hendrix. He always has a

smile and warm greeting for everyone – and you can't miss that trademark white cowboy hat he always wears. He's been here since 1990 as the head honcho, but he hasn't been here the longest. That honor goes to Jeff Messens, our longtime biologist that has worked in Neosho since 1985. He knows every nook and cranny of this place, and his mental storehouse of parts and supplies is impressive.

Assistant manager Rod May and lead biologist Jaime Pacheco have both been here well over a decade each. In their own ways, they have increased productivity and helped make this place such a quality destination for thousands. Dave's assistant, Heather Thorne has been working here for over five years keeping the records and books in right standing and keeping him in line. The newest staff are all less than two years in Neosho – biologist Justin Perkins, maintenance guru Ray Villa and myself with outreach.

Recently we were visited by a previous assistant manager Doug Aloisi (shown in the photo, center) who spent about a decade here, helping establish foundations for our endangered mussel and pallid sturgeon work today. It was good to see him and him to see the place again. And most sadly, we said goodbye to our front desk greeter extraordinaire Janice Eaton (shown with cake). She left a big impression on all visitors who saw her smiling face and were greeted and informed and welcomed. We sure miss her!





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## Outreach

This fun activity was presented to a nearby Cub Scout group. It is called **Gyotaku** – or fish printing. Rubber replicas replaced real fish, but the results are pretty similar. Kids were able to have fun with the colors and prints and learn some piscine anatomy as well!



## TGIF Talks at the Hatchery

Casey, The Little Dog Nobody Wanted



Rod May, the Ozark Honey Man, and Becky Wylie, Master Naturalist and photographer.





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Tricky birds...

Starlings stealing food from the feeders....



Stately heron just waiting for us to leave.



Final Word from hatchery manager David Hendrix...



Hello Everyone ☺,

Welcome to the Neosho National Fish Hatchery!! Advancing through a very cold winter and now right on the verge of some beautiful weather, it's a wonderful time of the year down in the Ozarks. Our hatchery family is in the middle of readying up for endangered pallid sturgeon spawning. We have seven possible brood fish to spawn in the first part of May and we are very excited about the possibilities. Janis Albers (USGS) will visit our site shortly to confirm readiness for spawning. We encourage everyone to stop by and learn about the many activities that are taking place at this wonderful facility. The Neosho NFH is a "wonderful management tool" that is always ready to restore nature when it's thrown out of balance. Together, the hatchery, Friends, Partners and USFWS work to make our federal fish hatchery one of the most efficient in our nation.

Take care until next time!! ☺

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

