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New Partner to Support Station's Mission

Endow-Bio, a non-profit endowment agency whose mission is to support organizations that conserve the planet's...[Read More](#)



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Fish Tails

"**Fish Tails**" refers to articles that are submitted by field staff that do not appear as a feature in the current edition of Fish Lines. These articles provide examples of the diverse work that the Service's Midwest Fisheries Program and partners perform on behalf of our aquatic resources and for the benefit of the American public.

Field Notes

"**Field Notes**" is an online searchable database that showcases hundreds of employee-written summaries of field activities and accomplishments of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from across the nation.

Last updated: January 30, 2014



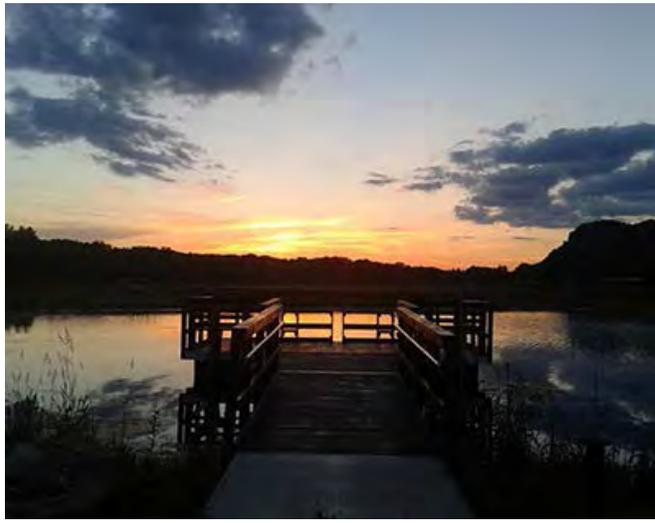
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Genoa NFH has New Partner to Support Station's Mission of Conservation

BY DOUG ALOISI, GENOA NFH



Overview of donated fishing dock at the Genoa NFH. Credit: USFWS

recently making donations to further our children's environmental and outdoor education programs. Cummins Filtration recently contributed \$5,000 to build a signed nature trail in our outdoor classroom and wetlands area, and Dairyland Power donated a handicapped fishing dock for one of our ponds to provide outdoor opportunities to those with limited access to the outdoors. These donations have allowed programs to be started or expanded that would never have been possible through typical funding sources. Genoa National Fish Hatchery would like to thank all of our corporate and individual donors for their help in supporting their mission of aquatic species conservation.

Further information on the Endow-Bio foundation can be found at the site: <http://endow-bio.org/>.

Endow-Bio, a non-profit endowment agency whose mission is to support organizations that conserve the planet's biodiversity, recently made the Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) one of its benefactors for calendar year 2014. This is exciting news and quite an honor for the station, to be recognized as a catalyst for positive change in maintaining and enhancing our nation's aquatic species biological diversity.

Genoa NFH was chosen as a benefactor due to its work on Endangered Mussel Recovery involving species such as the Higgins Eye Pearlymussel and the Winged Mapleleaf. Before the National Fish Hatchery Volunteer Act of 2006, no vehicle was in place to allow for this type of donation to a Fish and Wildlife Service fisheries facility. Due to our local Congressman Kind's (WI-3rd district) sponsoring the Volunteer Act legislation, the station can now accept donations to further ongoing station mission and programs.

Local businesses also deserve recognition for recently making donations to further our children's environmental and outdoor education programs. Cummins Filtration recently contributed \$5,000 to build a signed nature trail in our outdoor classroom and wetlands area, and Dairyland Power donated a handicapped fishing dock for one of our ponds to provide outdoor opportunities to those with limited access to the outdoors. These donations have allowed programs to be started or expanded that would never have been possible through typical funding sources. Genoa National Fish Hatchery would like to thank all of our corporate and individual donors for their help in supporting their mission of aquatic species conservation.

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Archaeological Survey Conducted for Riparian Planting Project on Rifle River, Michigan

BY ANDREA ANIA, ALPENA FWCO AND JAMES MYSTER, MIDWEST REGION

Riparian planting projects are typically thought of as beneficial from a biological perspective. Native riparian vegetation (vegetation along a riverbank) creates a protective buffer between the land and water, providing fish and wildlife with food and cover, controlling stream bank erosion, reducing water pollution, and minimizing impacts from flooding. However, such projects also need to be evaluated from an archaeological perspective to ensure significant historic resources are protected.

Projects that received federal funding must be reviewed under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA of 1966, as amended [USC Sec. 470-470t]) to ensure significant historical and archaeological sites in the United States of America are preserved. Thus, all habitat projects that involve any type of ground disturbance must be reviewed for potential impacts. In the Midwest Region, James Myster is the Regional Historic Preservation Officer and reviews projects for potential effects.

Myster reviewed a proposed riparian planting project planned for spring 2014 in Arenac County, Michigan and determined that an archaeological survey would be required. The project site is located Rifle River Watershed, which is known to have been used by Native Americans. On November 19th and 20th the Historical Society of Saginaw County, Inc. conducted a Phase I Archaeological Survey of the Proposed Stoddard Landing Riparian Planting Project along the Rifle River in Arenac County, Michigan. The project area includes two Areas of Potential Effect (APE) totaling 3.3 acres. Fieldwork consisted of surface inspection of exposed ground in each APE and shovel-testing of a single transect in each APE. The Phase I report indicated that "No significant archaeological material were found or collected at the site, and there were no catalogued or accessioned artifacts associated with the project." Historic review of projects ensures responsible stewardship and compliance with state and federal laws.



Jeffrey Sommer, Curator of Archaeology at the Historical Society of Saginaw County, Inc. records data collected during the archaeological survey. Credit: USFWS



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Students Learn to Plant the Seeds of Conservation

BY JORGE BUENING, GENOA NFH

The Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) has renewed a partnership with the La Crosse Garden Club in an effort to connect children with nature and beautify the hatchery grounds. From asters to zinnias this group provides an unmatched knowledge base about plant types, planting conditions, and what simply looks good. The only thing that this group is lacking is able bodied youngsters to share their knowledge with.

To address that problem we turned to the Summit Environmental Elementary School in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Together we have laid out the framework for a multi-year planting exercise that will enlist the fifth graders from the classes of Erica Rasmussen and Marty Maus. The plan is to have each spirited student plant and nurture seeds from two vegetables and two native prairie plants in their classroom. Then on Earth Day, April 22nd, they will come to the hatchery and cultivate their plants in either a vegetable garden or native prairie garden on the hatchery grounds. Following cultivation, maintenance and upkeep will be done by hatchery staff until fall harvest. Any production in the vegetable garden will be distributed to the new incoming fifth grade class at Summit. This year we have decided to try our hand at planting tomatoes and peppers in the vegetable garden, and sunflowers and coneflowers in the native prairie garden.

Hopefully, the native prairie gardens will reseed themselves and continue to grow from year-to-year resulting in beautiful prairie gardens around the hatchery, and the vegetable gardens will show the importance of planning something for the future. Just as students enjoyed the fresh vegetables when they started school, they can leave the same gift for the next 5th grade class. From there the lesson can expand and teach the students to protect and preserve nature and wild places so that it can be enjoyed by the future, just as they are currently enjoying it today. This is a goal that Genoa NFH, La Crosse Garden Club and Summit Elementary can commit to.



La Crosse Garden Club Members working in the pollinator garden on the grounds of Genoa NFH. Credit: USFWS



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Alpena FWCO Delivers Science Education and Results

BY HEATHER RAWLINGS, ALPENA FWCO

Starting in 2009, the Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) focused outreach efforts on one grade of children at Wilson Elementary School (Alpena Public Schools) for four years, following them from second to fifth grade. Office staff visited their classroom once a month to teach a science lesson that coincided with items tested by the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). Lessons provided a lab setting to encourage hands-on learning. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sponsored several field trips each year to introduce the children to various local ecosystems.

Our intent was to make the science curriculum fun as well as educational by repeatedly exposing the students to hands-on and place based lessons. The 2012 school year culminated with MEAP testing. We were gratified to learn that this group of students attained the highest MEAP Science scores in Alpena County. We wanted to repeat this success but reach a larger number of children. Since MEAP tests are given at the beginning of the fifth grade, our efforts are now focused on enriching the science curriculum of all third and fourth graders at Wilson Elementary School.



Wilson Elementary 3rd graders enjoy their search for aquatic insects in material they collected on a field trip to Paxon Quarry. Credit: USFWS



Elementary students tend to pay attention when a toothy sea lamprey is presented to them during a hands-on demonstration. Credit: USFWS

In November biologist Heather Rawlings taught lessons on magnetism (two classes of fourth graders) and sound (two classes of 3rd graders), to approximately 100 children in total. Lessons were conducted as labs with many hands-on activities. Students were asked to predict results and then test their theories. Alpena FWCO staff will continue to teach a lesson to both grades through the remainder of the school year. Two field trips per grade are planned for the spring months. MEAP testing results will be available in January 2015. If success continues, we will consider making these lessons available to an even larger audience.



Dan Kumlin Checks Out of the Genoa National Fish Hatchery

BY DOUG ALOISI, GENOA NFH



Dan Kumlin shows youngsters a bear trap during a segment of the station's outdoor classroom. Credit: USFWS

Dan Kumlin is retiring after a long and storied 32 year career serving his country and protecting the natural resources of the Upper Mississippi River. He began his government career in the U.S. Navy's "Silent Service" on the U.S.S. Sculpin, a fast attack nuclear submarine. It was in this role where he learned how "to fix most anything with most everything". After a four year stint in the Navy, he returned home to De Soto, Wisconsin and worked with the Corps of Engineers locking ships on the Upper Mississippi River Navigation System. Being an avid "Mississippi River Rat" and outdoorsman, when a maintenance position came open at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery in 1994, he jumped at the chance to work in the great outdoors.

Part of Dan's legacy he leaves us with is the design and construction of three mobile offsite rearing units which allows us to move the hatchery's mission beyond the hatchery boundaries, and the construction of the station's freshwater mussel facility, one of the first of its kind in the nation. He also designed the alarm systems which also allow the station to divest itself of hatchery quarters. This

alone opened up a recently constructed quarters to be converted to the station's new office building.

During his career, the station was converted from an extensive hatchery program using 75 year old rearing ponds to raise mainly sport fish, to a conservation hatchery with systems to house and maintain over 25 fish and freshwater mussel species. Dan helped design and build culture systems for non-traditional species that never had been cultured before, such as the Endangered Higgins Eye Pearlymussel and Winged Mapleleaf Mussel. His knowledge of electrical systems and troubleshooting went beyond the pale. Dan now has designs on spending more time in the outdoors that he loves so much. Congratulations, best of luck and happy trails Dan!

To see some of Dan's fine work please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkGqr5OMDGk>



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The La Crosse FWCO – Conserving Our Past for Our Future

BY MARK STEINGRAEBER, LA CROSSE FWCO

The La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) works actively with many partners to conserve native aquatic fauna, as well as the diverse habitats required for the survival and well-being of these creatures, in landscapes scattered across the upper Midwest. Established in 1981 to help protect, restore, and enhance native fishes and the aquatic communities which support them, most work at the La Crosse FWCO is strategically focused in portions of the 190,000 square-mile Upper Mississippi River (UMR) basin. Natural resource development, dating from European settlement to the present, has drastically altered landscapes here and in surrounding watersheds.

Frequently left in the wake of these actions were unforeseen environmental consequences that coalesced beneath the water. Coupled with other ecological manipulations and perturbations, these cumulative impacts have taken a serious toll on the functional stability of aquatic ecosystems, as well as the viability of fragmented or isolated populations of endemic aquatic fauna. The La Crosse FWCO fulfills many key roles in meeting federal obligations to conserve, protect, and enhance aquatic resources here that are held in trust for generations of Americans to come.



Thanks to successful restoration efforts, the endangered Higgins' Eye (shown here) is now among a growing number of mussel species that once again inhabit Midwestern Rivers like the Wapsipinicon in Iowa. Credit: USFWS



Hickson Dam located on the Red River of the North near Moorehead, Minnesota, had long been a barrier to the migration of lake sturgeon, channel catfish, walleye, and other native fish species.



The La Crosse FWCO worked with local partners to recently install a rock-arch bypass below this structure that now allows fish unimpeded access to 68 miles of upstream river habitat and has improved recreational safety at the dam. Credit: USFWS

The La Crosse FWCO coordinates actions of the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee, an organization of resource managers from Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin who work to promote the preservation and wise utilization of the river's natural resources. La Crosse FWCO biologists have been teaming with counterparts from these states and other river managers in recent years to successfully plan and execute dozens of large-scale habitat rehabilitation and enhancement projects, many of which are designed to benefit populations of native fish and recreational fisheries.

Likewise, the La Crosse FWCO supports multiagency efforts to recover several federally endangered species, including the facilitated propagation and reintroduction of Higgins'eye pearl mussels and winged mapleleaf mussels to essential habitat areas in the UMR and St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, respectively. Meanwhile, in the case of the endangered Topeka shiner, the La Crosse FWCO coordinates actions of the Fishers and Farmers Partnership (<http://fishersandfarmers.org>). This nationally recognized Fish Habitat Partnership has leveraged resources for some landowners to restore ox-bow habitats that are required by this species in temperate streams, while decreasing soil and nutrient runoff from surrounding farmlands as well. Many of these restoration actions can simultaneously lower crop production costs for participating landowners while reducing the long range transport of nutrients that contribute to hypoxic conditions in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Driftless Area Restoration Effort (<http://dare restoration.com>) is a second nationally recognized Fish Habitat Partnership coordinated by the La Crosse FWCO. This program aims to reverse a history of poor and inconsistent land and water management practices in the Driftless Area, a unique 24,000 square-mile landscape within the UMR basin that encompasses portions of southeast Minnesota, southwest Wisconsin, northeast Iowa, and northwest Illinois which were bypassed by the last continental glacier. Many cold water

streams and temperate rivers that drain this region store and transport excessive sediment and nutrient loads that have led to broad declines in fish populations and the overall diversity of aquatic life.



Tribal youths release hatchery-reared lake sturgeon fingerlings into White Earth Lake on the White Earth Indian Reservation in western Minnesota. Credit: USFWS

Upon request, the La Crosse FWCO also provides fishery management assistance to the National Wildlife Refuge System, other federal agencies, and recognized Native American tribes in the upper Midwest. For example, tribal work typically occurs on reservations in Minnesota and Wisconsin (i.e., beyond the UMR basin) and is largely dedicated to the re-establishment of self-sustaining lake sturgeon populations here through a combination of stocking activities and enhanced opportunities for critical fish passage. Efforts like this support what was, until recently, a widely held conviction that artificial barriers which impede fish passage and isolate vulnerable populations should be removed to help restore freshwater ecosystems.

But continuing introductions of aquatic nuisance species (ANS), particularly movements into UMR tributaries, have forced many river managers to consider whether new or existing barriers can effectively protect native aquatic fauna upstream. To help support key management decisions like these, the La Crosse FWCO conducts ongoing surveillance with partners to detect and estimate the relative abundance of ANS at key locations in the Chicago Area Waterways and UMR (Asian carp), the Illinois River (round goby), and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (zebra mussels).

Among all of the methods used by the La Crosse FWCO to conserve our aquatic resources, perhaps the most efficient and popular are its many public outreach activities. Geared particularly towards youth, events like the annual Youth Outdoor Fest in La Crosse introduce hundreds of families to new outdoor recreational opportunities that promote increased environmental awareness and continued stewardship of our common aquatic resource legacy in the UMR basin ... and at the very least, may spark some excitement for the whole family to go out and do it again!



A flotilla of electrofishing boats conduct surveillance for Asian carp near a water pumping station in the North Shore Channel, part of the Chicago Area Waterway System, near Wilmette, Illinois. Credit: USFWS



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Fish Tails

Articles submitted by field staff that do not appear as a feature within Fish Lines. These articles provide examples of the diverse work that is performed on behalf of aquatic resources.

Service Biologists Provide Fish Anatomy Lesson at AuGres-Sims Elementary School

BY HEATHER RAWLINGS, ALPENA FWCO

Educator Michael Fields, a fourth grade teacher at AuGres-Sims Elementary School, recently hosted personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Jordan River National Fish Hatchery (NFH) and Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) at the school to conduct fish dissections. Jordan River NFH's biologist Paul Haver led the dissection of brook trout, while Alpena FWCO's Biologists Chris Olds and Heather Rawlings assisted.

The twenty-six students, at first a bit squeamish, quickly became enthusiastic about the dissection and were soon able to identify all the fish organs. This hands-on learning complements the on-going Alpena FWCO curriculum augmentation activities and supports the Service priority of Connecting People with Nature. Mr. Fields is a member of the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI) and his classroom is participating in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's B-Wet Program. The Alpena FWCO assists the B-Wet Program and serves on the GLSI Leadership Team. The GLSI Team consists of personnel from a variety of natural resources agencies committed to teaching science and mathematics to local schools with emphasis on placed-based education. The fish dissection marked the fourth time the Alpena FWCO visited Mr. Fields' class this year. Our participation with this particular set of students will culminate this spring with a series of field trips to test water quality on three sections of the AuGres River, Michigan.



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Midwest Region Fisheries Divisions

National Fish Hatcheries

The Region's National Fish Hatcheries (NFH) focus on native species recovery and restoration. Primary species include: lake trout, endangered pallid sturgeon, and endangered, threatened, and native mussels. Other major programs include coaster brook trout and lake sturgeon restoration, fulfilling tribal trust responsibilities for native aquatic species, and cost reimbursed rainbow trout production for recreational fishing. Hatcheries also provide technical assistance to other agencies, provide fish and eggs for research, and develop and maintain brood stocks of various species and strains.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices (FWCO) conduct assessments of fish populations to guide management decisions, play a key role in targeting and implementing native fish and habitat restoration programs; perform key monitoring and control activities related to aquatic invasive species; survey and evaluate aquatic habitats to identify restoration/rehabilitation opportunities; work with private land owners, states, local governments and watershed organizations to complete aquatic habitat restoration projects under the Service's National Fish Passage Program, National Fish Habitat Partnerships, Partners for Fish and Wildlife and the Great Lakes Coastal Programs; provide coordination and technical assistance toward the management of interjurisdictional fisheries; maintain and operate several key interagency fisheries databases; provide technical expertise to other Service programs addressing contaminants, endangered species, federal project review and hydro-power operation and relicensing; evaluate and manage fisheries on Service lands; and, provide technical support to 38 Native American tribal governments and treaty authorities.



Sea Lamprey Biological Stations

The Fish and Wildlife Service is the United States Agent for sea lamprey control, with two Biological Stations assessing and managing sea lamprey populations throughout the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission administers the Sea Lamprey Management Program, with funding provided through the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of the Interior, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Fish Health Center

The Fish Health Center provides specialized fish health evaluation and diagnostic services to federal, state and tribal hatcheries in the region; conducts extensive monitoring and evaluation of wild fish health; examines and certifies the health of captive hatchery stocks; and, performs a wide range of special services helping to coordinate fishery program offices and partner organizations. The Whitney Genetics Lab serves as a leading edge genetics laboratory and conducts environmental DNA (eDNA) sample processing for early detection of invasive species.



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