

Genoa National Fish Hatchery News and Notes



July 2016



About Genoa NFH

Genoa NFH was established over 80 years ago by the Upper Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife Act. The mission of the hatchery has changed from providing sport fish for area waters to a conservation hatchery concerned with the recovery of endangered aquatic species.

The hatchery is open for tours during business hours. For large groups, please call for an appointment. You can reach the hatchery at 608-689-2605 from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm. You can also find us online at:

fws.gov/midwest/genoa

And on Facebook at:
facebook.com/GenoaNFH



Tagging Season Begins! Sturgeon Become Marked for Life

One important part of any successful aquatic species restoration program is assessing results and course correcting to maximize success. To successfully accomplish this, fish hatchery products must be recognizable from wild populations so that accurate survival estimates can be calculated. They also can be marked to distinguish between different lots so they may be assessed as being reared in different locations and under different diet or temperature regimes. Now emerging technologies have given us tags that can actually differentiate between individual fish. These PIT tags (Passive Integrated Transponder) function much as the bar code and scanner at your local grocery store. Due to their increased cost for the tag and the tag reader, PIT tags have become popular for tagging smaller numbers of fish where individual recognition is valuable. For most of our purposes at the hatchery, our fish are tagged with coded wire micro-tags. This method can distinguish between different strains and lots of fish simply by changing the wire code in the tagging machine before starting a distinct lot or strain of fish. At Genoa, we typically tag between 60-80,000 fingerling lake sturgeon in a summer, as well as 10-15,000 coaster brook trout for release in Lake Superior. To accomplish this task takes many people from all walks of life. We are extremely fortunate to have the tagging crew from our sister station, the Iron River National Fish Hatchery come down for a week to tag our coaster brook trout. This crew has a combined 50+ years of tagging experience with coded wire tagging machines. Then we also enlist the help of many of our Friends Group members, volunteers and local students for our lake sturgeon tagging. With the typical beginning tagger being able to do roughly 200 fish per hour, it is an estimated 10 week job for a typical 40 hour work week. We can't thank our volunteers and Friends enough for the work that they help us to accomplish every summer. This allows the staff to focus on their fish culture activities at the busiest time of the production season. And it enables us to meet our marking goals and stock fish that can be distinguished as hatchery product, so that restoration goals can be met. To paraphrase a rock anthem, "To those about to tag, (and those who already have) we salute you!" By : Doug Aloisi



Lake Sturgeon being micro-tagged.

Summer Camp Takes Aim at Genoa NFH

On August 10th, 2016, Genoa National Fish Hatchery welcomed 35 kids and 6 staff from the La Crosse YMCA Summer Camp Program for a day at the hatchery. The day campers ranged in age from 5-12 years old and were pretty excited about visiting the hatchery. The fish hatchery was a popular stop for the YMCA Summer Camp for several years, starting right after the hatchery staff were trained and certified for archery, but construction of the new visitor center prevented the camp from coming out for 2 summers. The project is getting closer to completion and has moved out of the area used for archery, so the hatchery was excited to have the camp come out again. The kids were

Genoa National Fish Hatchery's mission is to recover, restore, maintain and enhance fish and aquatic resources on a basin-wide and national level by producing over 35 aquatic species of varying life stages, participating in active conservation efforts with our partners, and becoming a positive force in the community by educating future generations on the benefits of conservation stewardship



Genoa's finest training tomorrows archery Olympians.



given a hatchery tour, explored the Sense of Wonder Discovery Wetland, finding birds, frogs, butterflies and beetles and received a 45 minute introduction to archery. Despite the extreme heat (just shy of the heat index advisory!) the kids had a blast and by the end of the 2 ½ hrs about 95% of the kids were hitting the targets and all of the kids were newly addicted to archery! By Angela Baran



YMCA kids practicing their draws.



Genoa SCUBA divers attend rescue diver training

Genoa National Fish Hatchery employs two SCUBA divers maintaining active status on the Region 3 Dive Team. Nathan and Megan both have years of experience SCUBA diving for mussel restoration activities. Active status on the regional dive team requires 40 hours of dive training in every three year period. To fulfill the training requirement this cycle the Genoa divers chose to enroll in the NAUI (National Association of Underwater Instructors) Rescue Diver Course this summer. This specialized training helps divers learn to recognize signs of stress in other divers and take appropriate actions when necessary. The course involved an online home study portion, followed by one day of classroom and practice in the pool followed by a final day of skills conducted in open water at a local lake. The class was held on the 16th and 17th of August with 6 members of the regional dive team participating. After the pool session the first day, the second day was convened at Lake

Wazee near Black River Falls. At the open water day divers practiced approaching an injured diver, transporting the injured diver to the surface, activating the emergency response system and towing the injured diver to safety.

The class taught students how to respond to common diving incidents and to think about what could happen and the appropriate response to given situations. Frequently attending dive training courses will improve the effectiveness of the SCUBA divers at Genoa NFH, and strengthen the entire Regional Dive Team as well.

By: Nathan Eckert



Six members of the Region 3 Dive Team at Lake Wazee.



Nathan Diving in the lake around some submerged trees.

USSA Summerfest 2016

Genoa National Fish Hatchery staff participated in the United Special Sportsman Alliance (USSA) annual Summerfest event held in Pittsville, WI this July and the event was again a great success! USSA is a non-profit “dream-wish granting charity that specialized in sending children and veterans with life threatening illness’s and disabilities on the outdoor adventure of their dreams. The annual Summerfest event offers family’s an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, meet new friends and families, and enjoy multiple days with fun fill activities. This year’s attractions included panning for gold, old time family portraits, horseback riding, fishing, a bb gun exhibit and target practice, cranberry tours, archery and rifle range, arts and crafts, a 4-H booth with baby deer, a bounce house, hatchet throwing, boat and jet ski rides, and a treasure hunt. Items supplied by the USSA for the event included all food and drinks, sporting equipment including all fishing gear, guns and archery equipment for the shooting ranges, life jackets, and tents for camping.

Genoa NFH set up an aquarium display with numerous fish and freshwater mussels for event goers to view. Attendees were educated about native fish and mussels and the missions of the hatchery were explained to identify how the hatchery helps in the world of conservation.



Summerfest goes learning fish identification.



Summerfest 2016!



Genoa's touch tank aquarium display..

Fish mounts and native mussels shells were also set out so people could take up close looks to help them better identify some of the native species in the area. Summerfest is an event that directly correlates to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service mission of protecting and enhancing our aquatic resources and connecting children with nature initiative that Genoa National Fish Hatchery proudly supports and is looking forward to participating in for many years to come. Next year's USSA Summerfest event is scheduled for July 20-23, 2017. By: Aaron Von Eschen

Connecting Children with Nature through Community Outreach

Year round Genoa National Fish Hatchery staff members are actively seeking opportunities to teach children and the community the value of aquatic and natural resources through indoor and outdoor education events. Staff members have been visiting local elementary and high school classrooms incorporating in class lessons on fish behavior and anatomy, aquaponics, fresh water mussel biology and conservation and monarch butterfly

restoration into the curriculum. In addition to in class lessons the hatchery has hosted many school groups and visitor tours onsite. This year alone the Genoa Fish Hatchery has been home to 59 onsite tours reaching over 3,000 children and adults and 20 offsite visits reaching over 10,000 participants in addition to the many people passing by along the great river road that are interested in hatchery operations. Visitor numbers are expected to increase after the completion of the Great River Road Interpretive Center. The Interpretive Center will serve as a vital tool in the community for continuing youth involvement in the great outdoors. The center will have exhibits consisting of hatchery operations, Upper Mississippi River history, and an exhibit that will focus on the Black Hawk War.



Genoa's newest tool for community education and involvement in the great outdoors.

By: Orey Eckes



Construction underway for Genoa's new Interpretive Center.



Making progress on the Interpretive Center!

Celebrating 30 years of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program

The Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program was established in 1986 combining habit restoration and ecological monitoring. Since its establishment the program had funded 55 projects and has restored approximately 100,000

Angel the Eagle.



acres of habitat between St. Paul and St. Louis. Genoa joined several other representatives from other federal and state agencies to help celebrate 30 years of the Upper Mississippi Restoration Program this month set up in Riverside Park in La Crosse. Some of our Lake Sturgeon and mussels were brought on display as kids and adults alike enjoyed touching and learning about Lake Sturgeon as well as other fish in our river system. Even Angel the eagle from the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, MN made a special guest appearance. Genoa staff took pride in the opportunity to show and educate the community in our commitment to conservation. The highlight of the day for Genoa staff was of course a chance to take a picture of the Brice Prairie Refuge's very own blue goose! By Erin Johnson



Visitors practicing fish identification.



Genoa staff celebrating with the blue goose!



Genoa proudly setting up for 30 years of restoring the Upper Mississippi River.

Upcoming calendar of events

September 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 Labor Day	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Friends of Pool 9 sturgeon tagging	14	15 Friends of Pool 9 sturgeon tagging day	16 Winged Mapleleaf collection dive on St. Croix River	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		NCTC Mussel Propagation Class				
25	26	27	28	29	30 Winged Mapleleaf collection dive on St. Croix River	
	Project Leader Training in Ashland WI					