



Neosho National Fish Hatchery

NEWSLETTER

January and February 2015

Snow and ice made their beautiful presence well known early in the year...



Happy Old Year!

Looking back over the year 2014, we have had so many wonderful events to allow us to give back to the community. Starting in March, on a chilly Saturday morning, when we held our first fishing derby of the year – this one for the Veterans of our armed forces. This was our third annual fishing day for this crowd, and despite the drizzly cold conditions, over 160 vets came and caught up to four good-sized rainbows. We are already planning for next year's event – planned for the second Saturday of March. We're hoping for a sunny clear day this time!

Our second big occasion was the Open House held on April 13th of last year. Due to the proximity with Easter, it did not coincide with the Neosho Dogwood Tour sponsored by the Rotary Club like it normally does. But we were able to host lots of booths with interesting materials, including the ever-popular Missouri Department of Conservation tree giveaway. Thanks to their giving and much planting, our community should be a few thousand trees richer!

Next up on the calendar was the Neosho MusicFest sponsored by the local Walgreens to support the Wounded Warrior project. We hosted the event from noon to about 9:00 that night, and saw so many people enjoy many very talented bands and musicians. We are planning the third annual version once again to be here on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend in May.



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Our last two events are some of our most popular. Falling, as they always do, on the first two Fridays of June, are the Kids and Senior Fishing Derbies. Over 500 kids in the 7-12 age range participated in our latest special day – each delighting in the free use of poles, bait, nets and catching up to their limit of four. Likewise, a couple hundred seniors had a flashback to their younger days by doing the same. We are so grateful for the dozens of volunteers that help make those events a big success for all involved!

And now, as we push forward into this next year, there will be another 235,000 scaly presents waiting from us in Lake Taneycomo. With our annual quota of rainbows in full production at their various stages of development, it is a privilege to be at a facility whose business is all about giving. And while we had a happy old year in 2014 – here's to the next one for even bigger and better things for all!



Our endangered pallid sturgeon are all doing super in their big blue homes. This has been our most productive year so far, and our 3000+ young ones will only be with us until summer. At that point we will transport them north to the Missouri River where they naturally are found.





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Bald eagles pass this way every January, and they can be seen flying and perching all around. We don't particularly like it when they sample our trout from a pond, but their majesty cannot be denied.



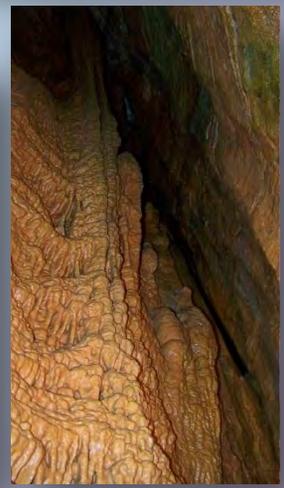
One of the challenges of having the oldest operating federal fish hatchery is that some things are old! Here we had to find an ancient pipe that was leaking many miles from the hatchery itself. We found a maze of metal going every which way, but finally did locate the problem and got it fixed!





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Missouri is called the Show-Me state, but it is also known as the Cave State. Our property contains springs and small caves, known to be the home of the extremely rare Ozark cavefish. Here are some local cave photos near Neosho.



Sunrise and sunset can be amazing around here!





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Cupid has affected our endangered pallid sturgeon program. Janice Albers of the USGS from Columbia, Missouri brought her fancy equipment and vast know-how to help us discern what the adult sturgeon are likely to do for the upcoming spawn. She used an ultrasound device to determine gender and an endoscope to try to ascertain egg readiness in the females. The female pallid sturgeon is not sexually mature until about age 15, and even then doesn't spawn every year – possibly every 2, 3 or even more years between. Eggs that are riper look different than ones that need more development, and that's what she will try to tell us about for this important visit. As best we can tell, wild pallid sturgeon are barely if at all spawning in the wild, so everything we can do to help them reproduce here in Neosho will help.





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Flora and fauna in and around the hatchery:





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The hatchery is quite the local landmark. A painted mural inside the Town Hall building includes the old “hatch house” – showing it a surprising yellow instead of the iconic white.



Construction to enclose the upstairs administrative area was completed this winter.



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 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 – staff and visitors alike! Won’t you be one of them?



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Winter is still here, but spring is a-coming!



Newsletter and photos by Bruce Hallman,
Environmental Education Specialist



Final Word from hatchery manager David Hendrix...



Hi Everyone ☺,

The Neosho National Fish Hatchery is now involved in the recovery effort of the Topeka shiner (*Notropis topeka*). On November 21, 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Neosho National Fish Hatchery (NNFH), the Columbia Ecological Services Field Office (CMFO), and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) was signed by all parties. CMFO coordinated a meeting at the Neosho NFH on November 4, 2014 with MDC fisheries staff, personnel of the Lost Valley State Fish Hatchery (LVSH) and the Neosho NFH's staff to determine the feasibility of Neosho becoming an additional partner propagating Topeka shiners. The meeting resulted in the development of an MOU between CMFO, Neosho, and MDC that outlines the responsibilities of each entity in further propagation and release efforts of Topeka shiners in Missouri. The MOU acknowledges and affirms the cooperative partnership between CMFO, Neosho, MDC (including Fisheries staff and LVSH personnel), and the Missouri Topeka shiner Recovery Team/Working Group. Neosho NFH has been a valued partner with CMFO in propagation efforts of other federally listed species including the pallid sturgeon as well as freshwater drum which is the host fish for multiple federally listed freshwater mussels (e.g. fat pocket book, scaleshell, and Higgins' eye pearly mussel). The established partnership and resulting MOU highlights the value of having multiple Service divisions in the recovery efforts of federally listed species. Feel free to stop by the Neosho NFH and check out the Topeka shiner.

Take care, until next time ☺ !!!