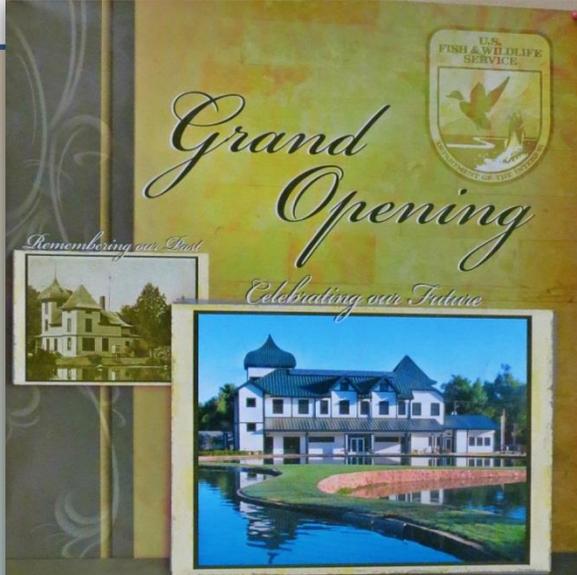




Neosho National Fish Hatchery NEWSLETTER

November and December 2015

We just passed the fifth anniversary of the opening of our "new" visitor center. Wow – what a fun ride it's been!



Neosho National Fish Hatchery

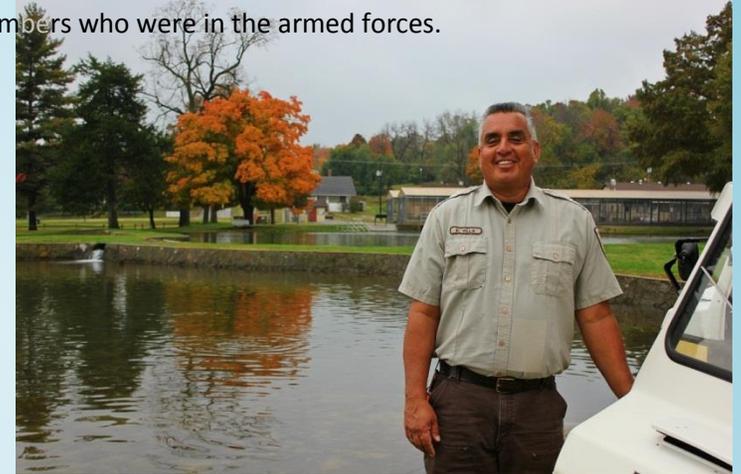
Thursday, December 9, 2010

- 9:30 a.m. Ceremony
- 10:30 a.m. Ribbon Cutting
- 10:45 a.m. Formal Tours
- 11:00 a.m. Lunch
- 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. Open House

Come celebrate with live music, lunch and tours!



November 11 was the observance of Veteran's Day, and here in Neosho we have two staff members who were 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. And Rosalee Poncé who is newest to our staff served eight years in the Air Force. Thank you for your service to our fine country!





Neosho National Fish Hatchery NEWSLETTER

The City of Neosho puts on an annual Christmas parade, and it was a delight to see all the smiling faces along the route. For the second year in a row we had wonderful weather and the event went off without a hitch. It was good to once again show off our decorated sturgeon tank trailer in all its festive glory!

A few of our cold-weather critter visitors...





Neosho National Fish Hatchery NEWSLETTER



Raceway power washing ... mowing and leaf pickup ... widening our south entrance for easier truck and vehicle access. There's always something going on here!





Neosho National Fish Hatchery

NEWSLETTER

Wettest months on record? November and December both saw about ten inches of rain in them. Just after Christmastime, the skies opened and over 8 inches fell in a few days. The flooding in the area was unreal, but the hatchery was unaffected. As for the wettest? Since we keep weather records here, we can say NO to that one. May 1943 had over 21.5 inches of rain! As for this time of year, again, no record, but highly unusual.



Shiner Stocking – first year success!

Because the small town of Neosho houses the hatchery where imperiled fish are being raised, we get to be right on the forefront of the fight against extinction. This summer we were able to successfully spawn and raise the federally endangered Topeka Shiner (*Notropis topeka*) in our spring-water raceways. And in early December, we were able to put into the wild about 2200 young fish that were reared for the first time in a federal fish hatchery!

While this may sound straightforward, whenever a protected species is being raised or transported, everything has to work seamlessly. Unlike operations involving poachers and dangerous bad guys, our stocking trip was not without a bit of excitement. As we were on the road, hauling the precious cargo in a goose-neck trailer, conversations were frantically going on to make sure all the transfers took place without stressing the fish too much. Two research facilities, one at the University of Minnesota and the other with the U.S. Geologic Survey, had requested some of our shiners for critical studies to help understand their environmental needs better. Timing the transport and moving the priceless shiners couldn't have happened without the help of all our valued partners. As we met with a Missouri Department of Conservation contact near the Iowa border in northern Missouri, just minutes away from meeting with the Minnesota researcher, all the wondering came to an end, and we were able to move our fish along. Whew!

With the drama behind us, it was time to stock the bulk of our fish into the wild. Two prairie streams were chosen, branches that historically have maintained populations of this rare little fish. With each site getting roughly half of our remaining cargo, we finally drained out our tanks as the last light of the day was draining from the sky. It took all day to travel, meet up with various agency representatives, travel to the stream site, and finally head back toward Neosho.

Being a part of the solution for this world's troubled wildlife is a wonderful privilege. Even though our contribution only involved a little minnow, it is critical to understand the big picture when it comes to biodiversity and our global

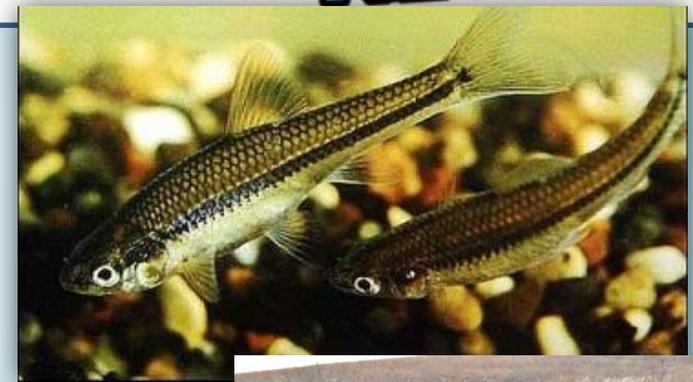


Neosho National Fish Hatchery

NEWSLETTER

ecological responsibilities. Every species has its place – life is like a giant Jenga game, the one with the stack of wooden blocks that are removed one at a time. We don't want to be around when nature's Jenga stack comes crashing down, though, we want to make sure it stays healthy, strong and standing with as many of its original blocks intact as possible.

Thanks to the efforts of the Neosho National Fish Hatchery in 2015, we just made that environmental stack of blocks a little harder to topple. Not a bad effort for such a little fish raised in a little southwest Missouri town!





Neosho National Fish Hatchery

NEWSLETTER

Our other main endangered species – the pallid sturgeon – is shown here in various life stages. Everything is looking great for this year’s bumper crop!



The Final Word, from hatchery manager David Hendrix.



Hi Everyone! ☺

I just want to take a moment to reflect on how blessed we are to be working at such a very special facility. The Neosho National Fish Hatchery is the oldest operating federal hatchery, capable of producing quality freshwater fish – regardless if they require cold, cool or warm waters. I feel we have the best community in the country, the best Friends group, the best water quality, best legislators, best staff, best state partners best civic groups, best school system, and of course the best leadership in the regional office that allows us to work our magic at this level. We work collectively every day to take this facility to another level in excellence.

Please take the time to visit sometime soon!

Take care, until next time! ☺

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

