



Neosho National Fish Hatchery NEWSLETTER

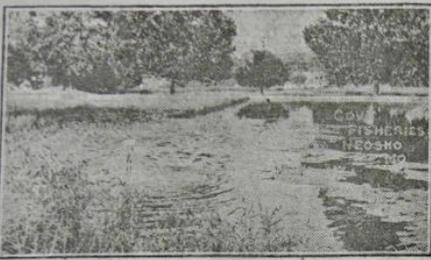
January and February 2016

Cold clear nights lead to scenic misty mornings and stunning sunrises!

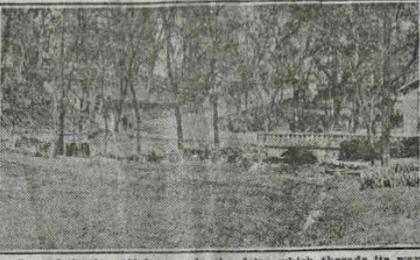


History is always a big part of the Neosho NFH experience. Here is a clipping from a nearby Tulsa newspaper from 1927! That is 89 years ago, but when the hatchery was already 39 years old! The article claims that Neosho is the best-known town of 5000 people in the country – largely due to its wonderful springs, one of the very reasons for our success in raising quality fish all these years.

Tulsa World Sunday June 12, 1927
Fish an Cold Springs Lure Vast Army of Tourists to Neosho



The government hatchery where millions of game fish are raised to feed the Ozark streams.



One of the beautiful turns in the drive which threads its way through Neosho's city park.

Finnny Tribe Has Own Clinic In Hatchery, World Man Finds

Small Fry Must Take Their Baths in Special Solutions; April Frosts Prove Disastrous to Bass as Well as Ozark Fruit Orchards

By MARSHALL SMITH

Most of the members of that vast army of vacationists or summer tourists veer into the Ozarks and they have two items definitely in mind—fish and cold springs. Further, a very large proportion of the summer movement touches Neosho, Mo., which is strong in both lines.

Neosho's big spring, in its city park, is as well known as the town, and the town officially proclaims itself to be "the best-known town of 5,000 people in America." Certainly it is well known and greatly admired.

Almost all travelers see the government fish hatchery and thousands of people visit it year after year. They like it as it is, but they will be interested to know that bigger plans are forming.

The hatchery is not under improvement this year because congress filibustered so much last

spring. There was an item of \$15,000 for beautification of the grounds and it seemed that nobody opposed it. It had the enthusiastic endorsement of all officials concerned. But the omnibus appropriation went down in the last days of the session—because of too much talk. This is a clear case of abuse of the people. The \$15,000 was talked out in an hour. It would have been a great thing for the hatchery and would have added delight to many thousands of summer tourists. A careful plan is on file and maybe congress won't talk so much next time.

8,000 IN POOL

A World man recently at the hatchery saw a fish clinic in action. There was a pool with about 3,000 rainbow trout in it; they were three or four inches long. They had developed a scale disease and were not thriving. They were dipped out, a few hundred at a time, and put through a saline solution and dumped into another

pool. They appeared dead at first, but soon recovered.

Superintendent W. A. Thomas said fish are like any other youngsters—something is always the matter with them. The hardest disease to treat is a trouble with the gills. The affected membranes, or whatever they are, cannot easily be reached by the ordinary saline or osmic treatment and special preparations that sometimes kill the fish are used. Fish must be watched closely.

Several pools hold 10,000 fish or more each—when they are small. They must be watched on account of weather. If the weather turns warm the fish will die by the hundreds. They suffer from crowding just as humans do and must be thinned out.

We all think of bass as a very husky fish. That is true, with important exceptions. The World man was at the hatchery to find out about a shipment for a nearby stream and was told by Superintendent Thomas that the supply of bass is very low. The reason was the same that affected the entire Ozark region very seriously—the April frosts. The bass were on the nests in the shallow ponds. The cold was so intense they left and went to deeper water. They either did not fertilize the eggs or the eggs disappeared or died. Anyway, comparatively few bass will be shipped out this season. This cold interfered several times with the bass ponds.

The rainbow trout habit has not spread to Oklahoma, it seems. The

big output of the hatchery is in rainbows but they go to Missouri streams, mainly. Somebody once made a report that the Oklahoma streams are too warm for rainbows and that is probably true, except in a very few cases. It is up to individual adherents of certain creeds to try out a rainbow colony.

The hatchery is government property—public property. The people are invited to see it. A great crowd may be found there almost any time. There is hardly a more fascinating place in all the wonderful Ozark country. The principal output is in bass, crappie, rainbow trout and sunfish. The output runs up into the millions each year. The applications for fish come through the fish commission office at Washington.

Neosho has more than one spring. It is said the original big spring is partially covered with industrial plants. A new industrial plant, the great Pet Milk concern, is now preparing to use the water from the big park spring and to landscaping the spring area. The city does not get its water from the big park spring as is often asserted, although there is a pipe in the spring and the water can be used by the city. The city supply comes from springs three or four miles out. A separate set of springs supplies the hatchery and still another set are in a second public park.

The Community club, which is Neosho's chamber of commerce, makes a great deal of use of the water and hatchery in its advertising of the neighborhood. Ne-



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Some wild winter visitors:





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Last November, hatchery manager David Hendrix went to China as a part of a 6-person team from various U.S. Fish & Wildlife stations. They were invited by the Chinese government to tour various sturgeon facilities from Shanghai to the Three Gorges Dam to Beijing and places in-between. Like our own pallid sturgeon, they have the Chinese sturgeon that is an endangered species—having problems with similar issues and facing serious population declines.

As we reflect on this historic trip, it is important to realize that this hatchery is not an isolated facility for visitors to enjoy and people in Neosho to treasure. We've always been managed by the federal hatchery system which has 70 facilities in 35 states raising over 60 different species.

But more than that, wildlife, fish, and plants do not recognize national boundaries. Conservation, the act of preserving, guarding or protecting for wise use, is a global responsibility. Most habitats extend beyond national boundaries, so cooperation among sometimes radically different cultures and peoples is essential if we are to take the survival of species seriously. With human populations growing – and corresponding increases in development, pollution and consumption of natural resources – the need for international collaboration has never been greater.

Some of the world's most treasured and exotic animals are dangerously close to extinction, as are thousands of lesser-known species. Destruction of natural habitat, illegal poaching, and pet-trade smuggling in parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America are devastating populations of tigers, great apes, elephants, marine turtles and many other cherished species. Back here in Neosho, we are doing our part by propagating and rearing endangered pallid sturgeon, Topeka shiners and freshwater mussels for

recovery and restoration. The Chinese sturgeon, a huge fish that is endemic to the Yangtze River, has also attracted attention by conservationists. The American team was able to see the refuge areas and facilities for helping save them from extinction.

Dave Hendrix stated soberly that their sturgeon face the same threats that our Missouri River counterparts do – illegal harvest, habitat destruction, pollution, damming of waterways, among other negative pressures. By collaborating with the Chinese regarding these aquatic treasures, not only can we increase our chances of saving them, but we can help move to ensure international cooperation for conserving habitats and endangered species of all types. It is vital that as a global community we design signature initiatives which bring together key stakeholder groups to solve conservation problems. If we want to save these species from extinction, we have to work across borders for present and future generations. And isn't it awesome to think that this, the oldest operating federal fish hatchery just took a big step forward in that enormous effort?

Photo: here
Dave is giving
a slide
presentation
to our Friends
Group.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
MARCH 3, 1849

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China pictures

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Back at the hatchery, cold weather reduces our visitation, but we still had wonderful visits by groups of adults as well as young people.

Frosty beauty:






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We have enjoyed many years of off-the-charts support from our community members. Here was one creative memento from the local pizza place from 27 years in the past!



More beauty:





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Late January saw the first of several visits by Janice Albers of the USGS from Columbia, Missouri who 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.



Photo by Rosalee Poncé





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At the end of February, we hosted a gathering of the Pallid Sturgeon Hatchery Review Team. Composed of other hatchery managers and fish health experts, these people all work with this endangered species directly. Hailing from Montana, Wisconsin, South Dakota and Missouri, they met for two days here to see our facilities firsthand, and to hash out all sorts of concerns and details for the upcoming year. Our Friends Group provided wonderful lunches for both days, and when all was done, everyone was so thankful for the warm welcome they received and commented on how well things were going here.



Final Word from hatchery manager David Hendrix...



Hi Everyone ☺,

It's a busy time throughout the year for us, but especially now with some big things on tap. We had an early spawning with several of our endangered pallid sturgeon, Arkansas Fly Tyers visit for tour and lunch, fifth annual Veterans Fishing Day coming up (Mar 19) with several hundred anticipated, we are readying for Topeka shiners spawning later this summer (June), working to breed surrogate mussels with their host fish (drum and bass), constantly shipping out lots of rainbow trout to Lake Taneycomo as part of our mandated mitigation program, and our annual Open House coming up in April (16th) with lots of help from our partners and many visitors. The Neosho National Fish Hatchery continues to be a very special place and we continue to encourage everyone to stop by and experience for yourself!

Take care, until next time ☺ !!!

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

