



Neosho National Fish Hatchery NEWSLETTER

August, September and October 2013



What better way to start off this edition than with some beautiful morning shots of the hatchery. We are lucky to work in such a picturesque place!



Have you ever heard of a fish farmer? Well, neither have we, but people seeing this scene might stop to wonder. Pictured here is chief fish biologist Jaime Pacheco running the tractor on a drained pond. In the hot summer months, ponds are not used for trout production, and draining them helps to control the algae that quickly can take over. Disking the ground is also a helpful remedy for this ongoing challenge.



These are two of our volunteers also battling the ever-present algae – thank you Cheyenne and Stormi for your hard work and dedication!





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We are quite proud of our endangered pallid sturgeon work here at the hatchery. Throughout the year, our staff is involved in the collection of wild adults for hopeful spring spawning, release of reared 1-2-year-olds into the Missouri River, and all the many days from hatching to release for the young ones.



Assistant Manager Roderick May releasing an adult sturgeon.



The Neosho hatchery has worked hard over the years to establish and maintain good relationships with many partners, including the Missouri Department of Conservation. When we spawned our sturgeon in the spring, we gave about half our eggs to the Blind Pony state hatchery to help reduce our risks for these special fish. They were able to raise the fry up for a few months, then in October, we got all that survived back to continue rearing them. By splitting our eggs, we are able to use their additional expertise, their facilities, and in the case of an unexpected disease outbreak, we are reducing the losses that could result. In the end, we now have over 3000 healthy six-month old sturgeon and things are going great.





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Despite the interruption of the government shutdown in October, the hatchery has hosted many school groups this fall.



Kids LOVE to feed the fish!



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We are also asked to give educational presentations at schools and various other groups. The hatchery has four microscopes to help introduce macroinvertebrates to kids of all ages. They always are fascinated!





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Special Visitor

The weekend of October 19-20 marked the return of a visitor to the hatchery after an extended absence. We get the honor of meeting many people who tell us of their fond memories of stopovers here in their past. And like them, this man recalls his childhood visit here, and, also like the others, was anxious to see it again.

On a family excursion in 1941, our traveler, the oldest of four children then 11 years old, rode with the family from their central Kansas small town to visit his uncle, then the president of the Pittsburg State Bank. From there, they called upon another uncle who was an itinerant preacher for three small churches in the Missouri Ozark region. At some point, he couldn't remember when, they lived in the small town of Blackburn MO, between Columbia and Kansas City. It was this contact that probably suggested the must-see sights of the area, leading them to see some fish.

Since it has been over 70 years between stops to the Neosho fish hatchery, he honestly could not remember a whole lot about the place from back then. He did not particularly remember the iconic hatch house that was in its prime back then, or the stately ponds or park-like atmosphere. He did remember the fish, though. He recalled the raceways (four of which were positioned south of the hatch house and are now long gone) with the huge trout in them. These raceways were much narrower than our current ones, and he told of his desire to touch and grab one. As is



true now, and was likely back then as well, this is not encouraged for our visitors, and indeed, he was unsuccessful in his attempt. And he did not test his technique on this current occasion! He recalls also how cold and clear the water was compared to back home.

Walking around the grounds and seeing the fish and facilities, he made many mentions of how impressed he was with it all. After the family stopped at the hatchery, they traveled up to St. Louis and caught several Cardinals games against the Brooklyn Dodgers and Boston Braves. One game ended in a 7-7 tie because of a midnight curfew rule, after twelve innings on July 29, 1941 at Sportsman's Park III. He remembers getting several autographs, including one from Stan Musial. The family trip then returned them back home afterwards. Later in life, he also mentions that when he joined the army, he was first stationed at Camp Crowder, just south of the hatchery for his initial training. He was then sent on to Fort Riley KS.

Now all this is interesting enough, and we get visitors with stories on par with this from time to time, but something else makes this visit particularly special. You see, this man is Stanley Hallman, my father. And these details were never really revealed to me in many years spent with him since we lived many hundreds of miles away in Denver, Colorado, still their home. It was a wonderful privilege to reminisce with him about his past and my present here at the Neosho National Fish Hatchery. Oh, and one last thing, their visit was on their 57th wedding anniversary.



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We also hosted a few events for the community – one for the local Chamber of Commerce...



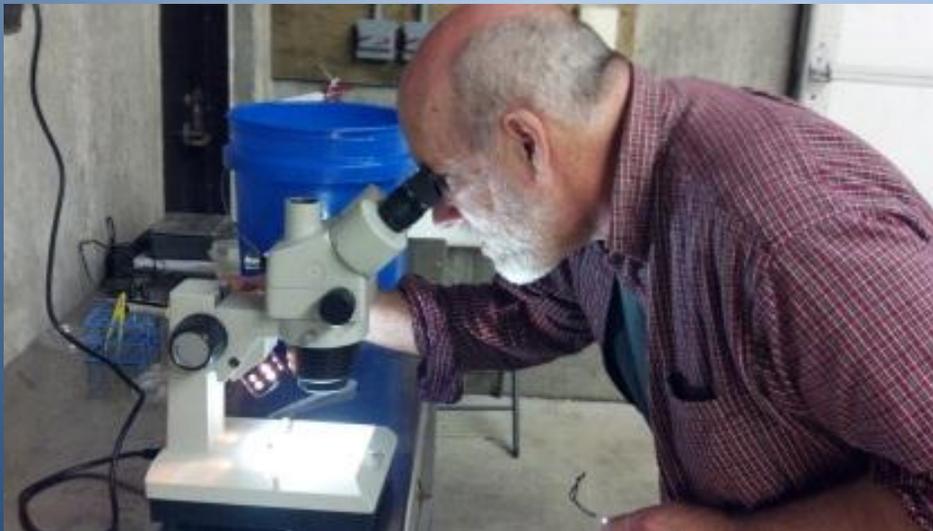
...and another for a car enthusiasts group.



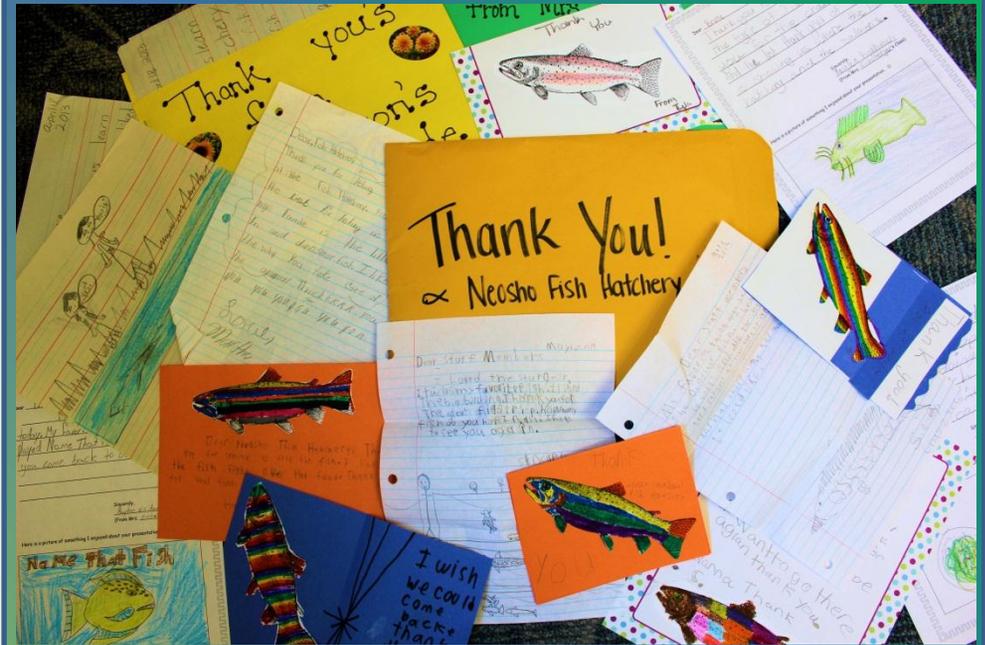


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Endangered mussel work on the hatchery is spearheaded by our partnership with Missouri State University professor Dr. Christopher Barnhart, show here collecting and observing larval mussel glochidia. Because they filter the water constantly, mussels are considered key indicators of river quality and are vital to aquatic ecosystems.



With the unfortunate government shutdown in October, several tours of the hatchery had to be cancelled or rescheduled. The happiest school of all was Noel Elementary who brought their 70 third graders the very first morning we were back in business!



Here are a student's words from that morning's tour:

Thank you for letting us come see your baby and adult rain bowtrout. Even after the government shoultdown. We liked it a lot. But I olmost got pushed in the whater ofer by the fihses. It was a little to crowded. But I liked it very much. The foll grown rain bowtrout was as big as my arm. The big looking shak fish was osom. Thank you for letting us go.



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We owe so much to our Friends Group – our events and facility would suffer immeasurably without their faithful hard work and dedication. In September we gave them a THANK YOU picnic, complete with a staff chili cook-off contest. While we all received votes for the best, somehow our novice chili cooking boss, David Hendrix, took away the top award.



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THANK YOU FRIENDS GROUP & VOLUNTEERS
Friends of the Neosho National Fish Hatchery
YOUR SUPPORT OF THE NEOSHO NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY IS PRICELESS



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Fall at the hatchery is a time for new beginnings, as we start getting the next year's trout eggs (August and September), and the conclusion of summer with the beautiful area fall colors.



Thousands of healthy sac fry trout are growing strong in Neosho!



Our first hard frost came October 27 this year.



Beautiful morning view at the hatchery.



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Gorgeous red maple displaying its amazing namesake foliage at the hatchery.



Local FFA high school students toured the grounds in September.

The final word comes from hatchery manager David Hendrix.



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Hi Everyone ☺ - The focus today is on the importance of “Teamwork” here at the Neosho National Fish Hatchery. I learned a long time ago that as a “Leader” you are only as good as the people you surround yourself with. I have been blessed to have surrounded myself with some quality people over the years. These are employees that realize we are public servants that serve our community with respect and understand we are the protectors of our nation’s finest resources. They appreciate the importance of educating our public about What we do, Why we do it, and How it benefits them. They also recognize the importance of building and nurturing partnerships. Bringing all these wonderful quality elements together working as a “Team” has brought about successful propagation – beautiful visitor center, one of the best Friends Groups in the country, thousands of visitors to our facility, a hatchery capable of producing anything in freshwater, success in endangered pallid sturgeon, and etc.

As time allows, please come visit our nation’s oldest operating federal fish hatchery. Until next time, take care!

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

