



PENDILLS/SULLIVAN CREEK NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY

Our Mission

The mission of the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

A vision of Fisheries Program that hatcheries directly address is to conserve aquatic species through recovery programs for threatened and endangered fish and mussel species, maintenance of fish health, restoration of native interjurisdictional species and management of aquatic nuisance species.

Our Facilities

Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery (NFH) is located along Lake Superior, approximately 17 minutes west from Brimley, Michigan. Pendills Creek NFH is a lake trout production facility and was established in 1951 to stock the Great Lakes. Lake trout are raised from eggs, and are reared for approximately 14 months, then are released into Lake Michigan. Currently, Pendills Creek is able to raise approximately 1 million lake trout each year.

Sullivan Creek National Fish Hatchery (NFH) is 15 miles west of Brimley, located south of M-28, on US Forest Service Road 3134, which is branched off of US Forest Service Road 3131. Sullivan Creek NFH was established in 1934 and is a lake trout brood stock facility. The brood stock at Sullivan Creek are from wild parents, and are maintained to provide approximately 5-7 million eggs each year for hatcheries to continue the restoration efforts.

Our complex is located in the Midwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (US FWS) within the Department of Interior. There are 6 hatcheries within our Region that play a valuable role in restoration/rehabilitation of native fish, mussels and other aquatic species around the Great Lakes.

Visiting our Facilities

Pendills Creek NFH is open for tours during business hours (7 am to 3 pm). For group tours, please call for an appointment, by calling (906) 437-5231 to schedule an appointment.

Sullivan Creek NFH provides tours by appointment only. Please call Pendills Creek to schedule an appointment.

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Extreme Makeover

During the winter months at Pendills Creek NFH when fish culture activities are at their lowest, it is an opportune time for Pendills Creek staff members to take on projects which require extended periods of time and labor. This year the winter project was remodeling the volunteer apartment. The volunteer apartment is located at the Pendills Creek NFH facility and is connected to the maintenance shop.

Maintenance Mechanic John Shuman completely renovated the bathroom by installing a new shower, plumbing fixtures, cabinets and a new floor. Biologist Tim Falconer and Biological Science Technician Randy Obermiller also gave the apartment a fresh coat of paint. New

carpeting and vinyl flooring was also installed throughout the apartment. The apartment will be furnished with new furniture, new beds, a TV and other accessories.

Throughout the years, the apartment has housed hatchery volunteers and college students fulfilling internships. Many volunteers and students whom have stayed in the apartment have gone on to careers with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and other various state fish and wildlife agencies.



Figure 1 – Apartment’s bathroom before remodeling.
(Photo Credit: US FWS)

The project was made possible by funds from both Pendills Creek and Green Bay Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO), located in Green Bay, Wisconsin. The apartment will also be available for use by the Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery biologists operating the Auto Fish Trailer while code wire tagging the lake trout at Pendills Creek.

- **Randy Obermiller**
Biological Science Technician



Figure 2 – Apartment’s bathroom after remodeling.
(Photo Credit: Randy Obermiller)

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The UP Version of Spring (2013)

According to folklore, if it is cloudy when a groundhog (Marmota monax) emerges from its burrow on Groundhog Day (February 2), then spring will come early; if it is sunny, the groundhog will supposedly see its shadow and retreat back into its burrow, and the winter weather will continue for six more weeks.

This year the prognosticating rodent Punxsutawney Phil was wrong as a weatherman. At 7:28 am Eastern time on February 2, 2013, the “King of the Groundhogs, Seer of Seers, Prognosticator of Prognosticators, Weather Prophet without Peer”, as titled by the people interested in keeping this tradition alive, was summoned from his ceremonial burrow at Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney, PA. After emerging from his den into the 8°F (-13°C) morning air and overcast skies, Phil failed to see his shadow, signaling that weather for the remainder of winter will be mild and spring-like.



Figure 3 – Groundhog (Photo courtesy of a Grand Rapids, Michigan meteorologist from woodtv.com)

According to some sources close to the groundhog's inner sanctum, Phil's predictions are correct 100% of the time, even though statistically Punxsutawney Phil's winter prognostications have been correct only 39% of the time. On a day in which the weather features a mix of sun and clouds, it's conceivable that Phil could come up with both predictions depending on the hour. This year is one of only 17 occasions on which Phil has not seen his shadow. Since the first prediction in 1887, he has seen his shadow 100 times. Nine years of predictions are either unknown or missing.

Currently in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, we are still dealing with snowy conditions that have delayed the distribution of Lake Trout into the Great Lakes. During the month of April at Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery, we have seen air temperatures as high as 44 degrees Fahrenheit and as low as 16 degrees Fahrenheit. That is not too unusual for spring, with the cool nights giving way to some sunny days, but as of April 15, we have also had a total of nearly 15 inches of snow, averaging out to about an inch of snow every day.

With this being my first winter in Michigan's Upper Peninsula in over a decade, I need to get used to all this snow and cold weather again, but, according to a friendly little ball of fur known as Punxsutawney Phil, this really must be what “spring” in the UP is like.

- *Tim Falconer*
Fish Biologist

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Ice Fishing at Public Access Site

Ice fishing the mouth of Pendills Creek just after it enters Lake Superior is tricky business. Anyone that has fished this area realizes two very important things; one the area can be dangerous and two fish do like to inhabit this shallow littoral zone due to the constant nutrient/food loading that comes out of Pendills Creek. Pendills Creek originates from the outflow from Pendills Lake. Pendills Lake is a shallow, eutrophic lake that has a population of cool water fish including perch and pike. There are times of the year such as mid to late summer that the Pendills Creek water supply becomes too warm to support cold water species of fish and most the cold water species then move out into Lake Superior's deeper colder waters. However, at other times of the year the Pendills Creek water is cold enough to support many of the cold water species, trout and salmon.

The terminal section of Pendills Creek is where so many of these species of fish occupy the creek or the shallow outflow from the creek into Lake Superior. This then at times becomes a favorable fishing spot for local anglers. Pendills Creek hatchery personnel have worked hand and hand with the Friends of Pendills Creek Hatchery, a non-profit organization, to develop



Figure 4 – Ice fishing on Lake Superior. Note the open water. (Photo Credit: Curt Friez)

this recreational site which receives about 160,000 hours of public use per year. Several enhancements have occurred at the site over the years from clearing of the site and constructing a picnic pavilion, to creating an accessible boardwalk from the parking area down to the Lake Superior shoreline. Other enhancements to the site include two benches at the terminal end of the boardwalk for visitors to sit on and a new pedestal grill, new trash container and a beautiful Friends of Pendills Creek kiosk that allows the group to place information on the site and the group itself.

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Now back to ice fishing at this site, out on the ice, on Lake Superior. Usually, the Whitefish Bay doesn't ice over until late January or early February; the ice fishing occurs here later in the winter and depending upon the weather during freeze up, the ice can be extremely jagged. If it freezes up jagged, it becomes extremely treacherous to walk on and requires negotiated routes out onto the ice. Also the area of interest that fisherpersons pursue is on fairly thin ice relatively close to the open creek water entering the lake. This can be extremely tricky especially for novices to the area. Luckily, even if you break through the ice, the water here is extremely shallow. However, walking back to your vehicle soaking wet in the winter can be less than desirable and becomes a quick lesson in what not to do at the site.



Figure 5 – Pendills Creek emptying into Lake Superior. (Photo Credit: Julie Timmer)

Although the risk exists, it's amazing to see the number of people that pursue to fish at this site each winter. The rewards of fishing here can be great with a variety of cold water species caught including trout, salmon, herring and whitefish. Since the enhancements to the site were completed, the hatchery has received numerous compliments on these improvements and without our Friends Group it's doubtful they would have occurred. This site receives visitation year-round and the hatchery is proud that it has become a recreation destination.

- *Curt Friez*
Project leader

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Friends of Pendills Creek Hatchery Update

Friends of Pendills Creek Hatchery (FPCH) held an appreciation breakfast on March 23, 2013 at Sacy's restaurant, within Bay Mills Resort and Casino. The breakfast was held to thank all those who volunteered, provided food, baked goods, etc. for the events held, such as the Snowmobile Open House, Rummage and Bake Sale, Children's Fishing Day event, and work conducted at the public access site. A total of 19 people attended the appreciation breakfast. The waitress for the group's meal is also a member of FPCH. Each person paid \$5 for their meal, and the Friends Group paid the remaining balance.



For the Friends Group upcoming events, check out the calendar of events in this newsletter.

- Julie Timmer
Administrative Officer



Figure 7 - Snow accumulating around kiosk at visitor parking lot. (Photo credit: Julie Timmer)



Figure 7 - Snow banks enclosed our propane tank and proceeding to the soffit height of our office building. (Photo Credit: Julie Timmer)

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Figure 8 – Attempting to peek inside northern office windows of main building. (Photo Credit: Julie Timmer)

Additional Apartment Remodel Pictures



Figure 10 – Apartment kitchen area before. (Photo Credit: US FWS)



Figure 10 – Apartment kitchen area after. (Photo Credit: Randy Obermiller)

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Calendar of Events

UV Completion (Hatchery).....	April
Monthly Friends Group Meeting (FPCH)	April 18
Assist State Hatcheries with Mass Marking (Hatchery)	April - June
Yearling Distribution (Hatchery).....	April - June
Sullivan Creek Egg Incubation Demo/Construction (Hatchery)	April - August
Rummage and Bake Sale (FPCH).....	May 18
Pendills Creek Roof/Remodel (Hatchery)	April - June
5 th Annual Children's Fishing Day (FPCH).....	June 8
4 th of July Parade (FPCH).....	July 4
Pendills Creek Mass Marking (Hatchery).....	August - September
Brood Stock Spawning (Hatchery).....	September - November

*Tentative Dates

US FWS Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery

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