

# White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery Newsletter

Issue 12: June - July 2008



## Connecting People with Nature



Matthew Patterson/USFWS

Jay celebrating his first catch!

### Birthday Boy Catches First Fish at the 2008 Fishing Derby

Jay Johnson had a party planned for his 3rd birthday but before opening presents he wanted to try his hand at fishing at the annual Fishing Derby at White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery. With a little help from his grandmother (Theresa Johnson) and a family friend (Richie Tucker), Jay baited his hook, cast into the derby pond and reeled in a beautiful rainbow trout. The trout was his very first catch and he celebrated with a chant of "I caught my first fishy! I caught my first fishy!". Jay wasn't the only one who had success at this year's derby. Two hundred and seventy-five children, ages 1-14, sat along the bank and pulled in one rainbow trout after another. When all was said and done, over 500 people from as far away as Alabama crowded along the pond's edge to spend the day fishing with their family. The Fishing Derby was hosted by the White Sulphur Springs Rotary Club.



Joe Appel/Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Rachel Mair and Matthew Patterson, Fishery Biologists with WSSNFH prepare to release juvenile northern riffleshell.

## Partnerships for Aquatic Species Conservation

### The USFWS and their Partners Team Up to Save the Federally Endangered Northern Riffleshell

Three divisions of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (WSSNFH, Pennsylvania Ecological Services and Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge) recently teamed up with their partners to release over 400 baby northern riffleshell, a federally endangered freshwater mussel, into the Allegheny River. The 1 year-old mussels produced at WSSNFH were large enough to tag, making it possible to come back at a later date and monitor their growth and survival in the wild. Starting in 2004, divers from the USFWS, the EPA and the West Virginia DNR worked with the Pennsylvania DOT to remove 128 adult northern riffleshell from under a new bridge project at East Brady, PA and relocate them to refugia at WSSNFH. While in refugia, female northern riffleshell became pregnant, providing hatchery biologists with an opportunity to grow baby mussels in the



Rachel Mair, USFWS

Tagged juvenile northern riffleshell.

lab and add to the wild population. While they were growing at the hatchery, the baby northern riffleshell went through a series of experiments that have provided valuable information on optimal growth conditions, diets and feeding rates that can be used to help grow other endangered mussels in the future. Several hundred mucket, a common species of freshwater mussel, were also released at East Brady in an attempt to re-establish the mussel bed under the bridge. Healthy mussel beds are important because they filter large volumes of water every day, helping to keep the water clean for fish and other critters that live in the river.

# Connecting People with Nature through Aquatic Species Conservation

## Local Children Return to Mill Creek to Help Save the James River Spiny mussel



Matthew Patterson/USFWS

Adult James River spiny mussels are tagged to help track the size of the population in Mill Creek.

Biologists from WSSNFH, the Virginia Field Office of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries joined forces again with the Cowpasture River Preservation Association, Camp Accovac and children from the Mill Creek watershed of western Virginia to help save the James River spiny mussel. Children of all ages had the opportunity to help infest small minnows, chubs and dace with larvae of the James River spiny mussel and then release the fish back into Mill Creek. The larval mussels will parasitize the fish gills for a couple of weeks while they undergo metamorphosis, much like a butterfly. Once metamorphosis is complete, baby mussels about the size of a grain of sand fall to the river bottom to begin their growth to adulthood. This is the second year in a row that the children have released infested fish into Mill Creek, the site for one of the best remaining populations of James River spiny mussel in the world. After a full day of saving endangered species, the children enjoyed a wide

array of fun activities including making fish prints, painting freshwater mussel magnets, searching for crayfish at the Crawdad Hole and wading Mill Creek with underwater view scopes looking for mussels and fish. The partnership hopes to continue these outreach events in the future in Mill Creek and other streams in the spiny mussel's native range.



Matthew Patterson/USFWS

A young boy helps biologists search for the James River spiny mussel.



Matthew Patterson/USFWS

Rachel Mair, WSSNFH, removing larvae from the adult mussels.



Matthew Patterson/USFWS

Cindy Kane, Virginia Field Office, showing children the fish infestation.

## Friends of the White Sulphur Springs NFH

### Friends Announce the Winners of the Freshwater Folk Festival T-shirt Design Contest



1st Place. Ellen Henthorne, age 12, of Lewisburg, WV.

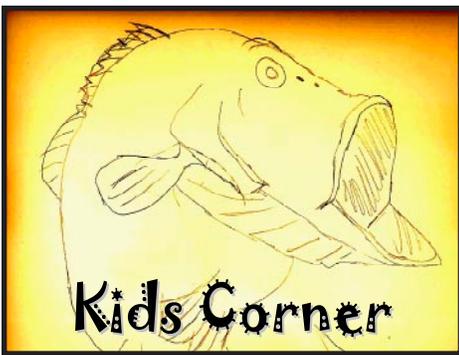
The Friends of the WSSNFH voted last month on the winners for the T-shirt design contest for the 4th Annual Freshwater Folk Festival. An invitation to submit original artwork was sent out to middle schools and high schools across Greenbrier County. The first place winner was Ellen Henthorne (age 12) of Lewisburg. Ellen's first place drawing will appear on the official 2008 festival T-shirt and all of the winners will receive a plaque at the festival awards ceremony on October 4, 2008. Friends would like to thank all the children for their wonderful entries.



2nd Place. Patricia Mosso, age 13, of Ronceverte, WV.



3rd Place. Natalie Blake, age 12, of Hillsboro, WV.



## Fun Fish Facts

### A History of Fishing

Jay Johnson caught his first fish at the White Sulphur Springs NFH Fishing Derby in 2008 but humans have been catching and eating fish for a very long time. The oldest known painting of a fisherman using a rod comes from ancient Egypt and dates back to 2000 B.C. (over 4,000 years ago). In the 4th century B.C., Chinese fishermen used bamboo rods, silk fishing line, hooks made from needles, and cooked rice for bait. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D., Roman historians wrote about

Macedonian trout anglers using artificial flies and gave descriptions of how each fly was made. The rod was only a few feet long until the 4th century A.D. when the earliest references to longer, jointed rods begin to appear. References to fishing can also be found in ancient Greek, Assyrian, Roman, and Jewish writings.



Larry Largay

## Color the Fishermen

Enjoy coloring this artistic depiction of a Macedonian fisherman catching a trout.



## Hatchery Historical Facts

On June 13th, 1963, the White Sulphur Springs Star reported that approximately 100,000 brook and rainbow trout at the White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery were destroyed when one or more vandals shut off the fresh water to the ponds. According to Chester Ambrose, hatchery manager at the time, the Centennial trout that were used as a special attraction for visitors were also killed. The incident killed 85% of the hatchery's fish supply.

## Hatchery Mission

Working with partners to restore and maintain fish, mussels and other aquatic resources at self-sustaining levels for the benefit of the American public. Our seven priority areas include Partnerships and Accountability, Aquatic Species Conservation and Management, Public Use, Cooperation with Native Americans, Leadership in Science and Technology, Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management and Workforce Management.

## Hatchery Information

Established in 1900 to produce fish for the American Public, WSSNFH became part of the National Broodstock Program in 1976. Since then we have shipped millions of disease-free rainbow trout eggs to hatcheries across the country. In 1995, the hatchery added



a new program, freshwater mussel conservation. Today, we provide shelter for mussels threatened by pollution and raise baby mussels to improve wild populations.



## Hatchery Tours

Tours are available free to the public M- F, 8AM to 3 PM. Call (304) 536-1361 one week in advance to schedule a tour.

### For more information:

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