

White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery Newsletter



Issue 14: October - November 2008

Connecting People with Nature

4th Annual Freshwater Folk Festival Draws Huge Crowds

Over 2,000 children and adults from across the state of West Virginia and beyond flocked to WSSNFH on October 4th to enjoy a full day of hands-on educational activities, sweet tunes and tasty treats at the 4th Annual Freshwater Folk Festival (hosted by the Friends of the WSSNFH). WSSNFH and their partners provided up-close and personal encounters with wild animals including red-tailed hawks, crayfish, rattlesnakes, alligators, aquatic insects, screech owls and rainbow trout. Children and their families also enjoyed interactive lessons on the global water cycle, threats to ground water resources, fly fishing, historic pioneer games, oil spills, native plant pollination and more.

All Photos: Heather Bell, USFWS



Clockwise from upper right: 1) A young lady studying crayfish biology at the Crawdad Hole. 2) A Girl Scout checking out the fish hosts at the freshwater mussel propagation facility. 3) A young man enjoying the Game of Graces, an early 19th century game also called the Flying Circle. 4) The WV Raptor Rehab Center provides redtail hawk encounters 5) The Walkabout Still Clowns playing a game of "Catch the Trout" with the kids. 6) Matthew Patterson, WSSNFH, leading a group of Girl Scouts on a tour of the hatchery. 7) A young lady exploring aquatic insects under a microscope at the "Bugs Don't Bug Me" booth.

Partnerships for Aquatic Habitat Conservation

WSSNFH Partners with Undergraduate Students to Propagate Mussels for Habitat Conservation

WSSNFH is partnering with Cheyney University, Drexel University and the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary to restore the native freshwater mussel beds to the Delaware Estuary watershed to help improve water quality and habitat in these impaired river systems. Mussel populations in the Delaware Estuary watershed have declined significantly over the last 30 years due mainly to degraded water quality (12 freshwater mussel species are native to the watershed but only one is considered abundant). Unfortunately, freshwater mussels provide a variety of ecosystem services that are critical to the health of aquatic systems. They help stabilize stream bottoms, provide stable habitat for aquatic insects and fish and keep our



Angela Padeletti/PDE

Matt Gray, a student at Drexel University, extracts larvae from an adult female for propagation.

...rivers clean by filtering enormous amounts of water. A bed of 200,000 freshwater mussels can filter over a million gallons of water per day, free of charge with no fancy filters, scrubbers, or chemicals. The students hope to restore ecosystem services to the estuary by seeding targeted streams with juvenile mussels, monitoring their survival over time and assessing their impact on nonpoint source pollutant removal.

Connecting People with Nature

Girl Scouts Earn Aquaculture Badge at WSSNFH



Girl Scouts from West Virginia and Virginia converged on the Freshwater Folk Festival this year to earn their badge in aquaculture. A total of 86 Girl Scouts (10 Daisies (grades K-1), 46 Brownies (grades 2-3), 8 Juniors (grades 4-5), 16 Cadettes (grades 6-8), and 6 Seniors (grades 9-12)) and their families toured the hatchery, learned how to raise fish, enjoyed close encounters with fish, crayfish, mussels and aquatic insects, studied groundwater and surface waters and took up fly fishing

on their way to earning their badge. The Girl Scout Aquaculture Badge, originally created through a local partnership between WSSNFH, The Sunderland FRO and Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council, has now been adopted on a national level. To earn the aquaculture badge, Girl Scouts across the country must explore the variety of aquatic life native to their area, learn about the habitats and food sources of aquatic animals and explore the many exciting careers available in the field of aquatic sciences.



Matthew Patterson, USFWS

Left: Girl Scouts feeding the rainbow trout by hand on the fish hatchery tour. Right: Two young Girl Scouts get a chance to hold a water snake at the U.S. Forest Service's Cranberry Wilderness booth.

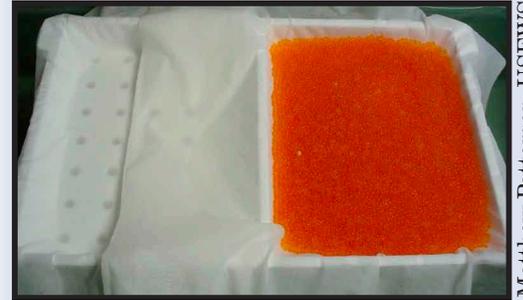


Heather Bell, USFWS

Hatchery Mission

Our mission is working with the community of White Sulphur Springs and our partners to be good stewards of both the environment and the historical significance of White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery by 1) providing recreational fishing opportunities, 2) recovering fish, mussels and other wildlife and their habitats and 3) promoting awareness and appreciation of our cultural and natural resources, for the benefit of all people.

Hatchery Information



Matthew Patterson, USFWS

Rainbow trout eggs ready for shipment.

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.



Rachel Mair, USFWS

1.5 year-old northern riffleshell (a federally endangered mussel) raised at WSSNFH.

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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