

White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery Newsletter

Issue 20: Summer 2010



Connecting People with Nature

Kids and Adults Get Hooked on Fishing at Annual Fishing Derby



Matthew Patterson, USFWS

On Memorial Day weekend, visitors from across the state of West Virginia and other places far flung (Virginia Beach, VA; Winston-Salem, NC and Brooklyn, NY) flocked to the White Sulphur Springs NFH for the Annual Fishing Derby. Co-hosted by the hatchery and the White Sulphur Springs Rotary Club, the derby is a chance for children and their families to rustle up some of the biggest fish the hatchery has to offer. Nearly 200 children (ages 1-14) brought out their Spiderman fishing poles and Barbie tackle boxes to try and take down the big one. At least one child was able to cross “Catch My First Fish” off of his list of things to do in life. It’s these special moments, catching your first fish with family and friends that provide children with lasting memories and a deep connection with great outdoors. Connecting children to nature is one of the hatchery’s top priorities because a kid that plays outside is a healthy kid. Research shows that kids that play outside on a regular basis are less likely to have weight problems, diabetes and symptoms of ADD and ADHD. These lasting memories will continue on after the derby thanks to our sponsors (Shakespeare, Cabelas, National Hunting and Fishing Day, Jim Craft and the West Virginia DNR, White Sulphur

A great time was had by all generations at this year’s Annual Fishing Derby.

Springs Rotary Club, The Greenbrier Sporting Club, Mountain State Sportsmen’s Association, Friends of the WSSNFH and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service) who sent home many of these children with wonderful raffle prizes including fishing poles, fishing lures, bobbers, tote bags and water bottles. Don’t forget to come back to the hatchery on October 2nd for the 6th Annual Freshwater Folk Festival, a full day of hand-picked music, hand-made arts and hands-on educational activities built around the Festival mission to promote understanding, appreciation, and conservation of freshwater resources; and to celebrate the local natural history and culture of White Sulphur Springs and Greenbrier County.



Matthew Patterson, USFWS

Mackenzie Mullins and Megan Godfrey, 2010 Teen Miss and Miss West Virginia Dandelion Festival, show off their catch at the Derby.

Aquatic Species Conservation

WSSNFH Staff Release Six Mussel Species to the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers Including the Federally Endangered Northern Riffleshell.



Rachel Mair, USFWS



Matthew Patterson, USFWS

Top: Federally endangered northern riffleshell released to the Allegheny River. Bottom: Tagged plain pocketbook and fatmucket mussels released to the Ohio River.

siliquoidea, mucket (*Actinonaias ligamentina*), black sandshell (*Ligumia recta*) and washboard (*Megalonaias nervosa*), were tagged and released to the Ohio River near Marietta, Ohio. The mussel release was part of a long-term effort to restore mussel beds to a stretch of the Ohio River that was heavily impacted by a chemical spill in 1999. Biologists determined that wastewater discharges from a ferro-alloy manufacturing facility along the river killed nearly 10,000 fish, 1 million native freshwater mussels and 12 million native snails. The facility agreed to settle allegations that they violated the Clean Water Act and injured natural resources under the Natural Resource Damage Assessment provisions of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. Two million dollars of the settlement will be directed toward restoration and monitoring of injured natural resources in the Ohio River over the next fifteen years.

WSSNFH in partnership with Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge and the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources released six species of juvenile freshwater mussels to the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers this summer. Over 50 sub-adult northern riffleshell (*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*), a federally endangered species, were tagged and released to the Allegheny River at East Brady, PA. This is WSSNFH's second release of northern riffleshell at this site, the first release coming in June 2008. WSSNFH was part of a large scale effort to move over 15,000 freshwater mussels away from the potential negative impacts of a bridge construction project at East Brady. The northern riffleshell collected during the salvage effort were transported to WSSNFH to begin research on propagation technology. Post-construction assessment of the mussel habitat under the bridge was completed in 2009 and paved the way for the return of the adult and juvenile northern riffleshell. The Allegheny River and one of its tributaries, French Creek, are home to the best populations of the northern riffleshell left in the world.

Just one week before the northern riffleshell release, over 300 juvenile freshwater mussels of five different species, plain pocketbook (*Lampsilis cardium*), fatmucket (*Lampsilis*



Matthew Patterson, USFWS

Patricia Morrison (USFWS), Mike Everhart (WVDNR) and Janet Butler (USFWS) prepare to release mussels to the Ohio River.

Public Use

Freshly Upgraded Raceways Set to Increase Fish Holding Capacity at WSSNFH



Michael Whited (Biotech) and Steven Smith (Maintenance Mechanic) install damboards in the new concrete raceways.

Rachel Mair, USFWS

Upgrades to the California raceways at WSSNFH are complete. California raceways are earthen-bottom style raceways that were once widely used for rearing fish at hatcheries across the state of California. Unfortunately, these earthen-bottom raceways require a significant amount of yearly maintenance to control both bank erosion and weeds and plants that grow along the banks. The earthen-bottom also makes the raceways more difficult to clean and sterilize. In May, the California raceways at WSSNFH were concreted and divided with a center wall to help reduce maintenance costs and increase fish holding capacity. Lower costs and increase fish holding capacity will allow the hatchery to produce more rainbow trout and rainbow trout eggs for the American public.

Connecting People with Nature

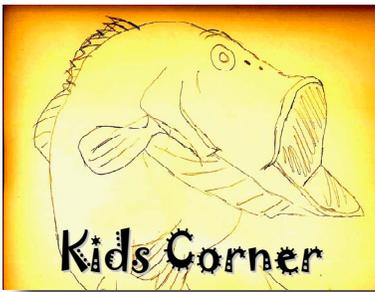
AmeriCorps, Girl Scouts, 4-H and U.S. Forest Service Volunteers Team Up to Build Native Plant Garden at WSSNFH



A group of Girl Scouts and 4-H kids team up to plant a pagoda dogwood in the native plant garden.

Matthew Patterson, USFWS

The new Anniversary Amphitheater at WSSNFH received a facelift this spring thanks to a team of 30 volunteers from AmeriCorps, Girl Scouts, 4-H and the U.S. Forest Service. The amphitheater is now beautifully landscaped with a variety of trees, flowering plants and grasses native to the state of West Virginia. The native plant and butterfly garden was an all-volunteer effort lead by a team of AmeriCorps members from the U.S. Forest Service in Marlinton, WV. AmeriCorps is a federal government program that gives students a chance to learn new skills and earn money for college while meeting critical needs in the community. AmeriCorps requires all volunteers to complete a community project as part of their service and this group decided to design and construct a native plant garden on hatchery property as part of the National Pilot Outdoor Classroom. Volunteers from two local Girl Scout Troops (8157 and 1952) and a local 4-H group (The Lewisburg Strutters) spent the day enjoying the great outdoors, digging in the dirt, and learning about proper planting techniques. As part of the National Pilot Outdoor Classroom, the native plant and butterfly garden will include identification signs for each native plant species in the garden as well as interpretive signs on a variety of subjects including plant biology, the ecological interaction between native plants and their pollinators and the water cycle.



Native Plants

We told you about a volunteer group that built a native plant garden at the hatchery this spring, but what do we mean by a native species? A native plant or animal is a species that occurs naturally in a particular area of the country or the world. Because they have lived in these areas for a long time, they are locally adapted to the weather, soil conditions and the other plants and animals



The Pagoda Dogwood, a plant native to West Virginia that grows in the native plant garden at WSSNFH.

Because native plants are locally adapted to an area, they oftentimes are hardier than non-native species, thus requiring less watering and maintenance. Native plants also provide food and homes for native wildlife including butterflies and songbirds. The word search below includes a short list of plant species that

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 W O W O O D K R J C M K X Z R
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 V I S U J W Y U A L R U M U F
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 D H S I T T E O A E Z L B H M
 O O B J P L C Y D H M C J A A
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| AZALEA | HEMLOCK | OAK |
| CHERRY | LOCUST | SUMAC |
| DOGWOOD | MAPLE | SYCAMORE |

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that live in that area. Its kind of like a person that has spent their entire life in Florida and has gotten used to the very hot weather. They might have trouble handling the cold, snowy winters in a place like West Virginia.

are native to West Virginia. Get together a group of friends and see who can find all the species first. When you are finished look for pictures of each species on the internet and then see if you can find them in your back yard, the school yard or a local park. Happy hunting!

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



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.



Northern riffleshell (a federally endangered mussel) raised at WSSNFH.

Hatchery Tours

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

For more information:

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>
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