



# ALCHESAY-WILLIAMS CREEK NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY COMPLEX WHITERIVER, ARIZONA



## MONTHLY ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

JANUARY 2014

*Bruce Thompson – Complex Manager  
Patti Ferlisi – Office Assistant*

### *ALCHESAY UNIT*

*Gene Okamoto – Unit Leader  
Pete Drevnick – Maintenance Worker/Motor Vehicle Operator  
Jeff Cody – Motor Vehicle Operator  
Joyner George – WMAT Fisheries  
Andy Quay – Volunteer*

### *WILLIAMS CREEK UNIT*

*Bradley Clarkson – Unit Leader  
Russell Wood – Fish Biologist  
Dan Ragen – Maintenance Specialist  
Mike Figueroa – Motor Vehicle Operator  
Jimmy Smith – Motor Vehicle Operator  
Isaiah Paxson – Animal Caretaker*



While much of the eastern portion of Region 2 has been experiencing a colder than normal winter, the western portion has been experiencing just the opposite. The photo, *above*, reflects typical January snow pack at the Williams Creek Unit's main spring enclosure. The photo, *below*, is of the same area now. Snowfall amounts for the year are way below normal so drought conditions are anticipated until the summer monsoon season begins in July.



## ***PARTNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY:***

- All requisite water sampling for EPA was completed for both units. A Chemical Use Report for 2013 was also submitted to the regional EPA office. The Complex received Final NPDES Permits which will become effective on February 1, 2014 and will expire on January 31, 2019.
- Alchesay-Williams Creek personnel participated in the monthly Fisheries Coordination meeting between AZFWCO (Arizona Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office) and WMAT-WORD (White Mountain Apache Tribe – Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Division).
- Bruce Thompson and Jeremy Voeltz, Project Coordinator for AZFWCO, met with Cheryl Pailzote, Hydrologist for WMAT’s Environmental Protection Office. Bruce and Jeremy gave Cheryl a tour of the hatchery as they discussed options and requirements for establishing a potential rearing program for endangered loach minnow at the Alchesay Unit. To gain further insight, a tour of state-run Bubbling Ponds Hatchery is also being coordinated.
- Complex personnel also met with WMAT personnel who are managing the Christmas Tree Lake “Fish Camp” and “Rent-A-Lake” programs. On the agenda were fish stocking logistics and how the Complex could assist the Tribe with these high revenue-generating enterprises. The annual fishing camp at Christmas Tree Lake is a fully-outfitted fishing camp which provides anglers the opportunity to catch trophy-sized Apache trout and is a big event. The Rent-A-Lake program targets a lake reservation system for Cyclone and Hurricane Lakes. It also includes a set-aside campground at Hawley Lake. All of these waters are located on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR).
- Stewart Jacks, Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Conservation for the Southwest Region, conducted a meeting at the AZFWCO office with members of WMAT-WORD. This meeting provided WMAT an opportunity to voice their comments and/or concerns regarding possible implications to hatchery production as outlined in the Service’s recently published *National Fish Hatchery System – Strategic Hatchery and Workforce Planning Report*.

## ***AQUATIC SPECIES CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT:***

- Hatchery personnel drove 367 miles to deliver 5,000 rainbow trout (averaging 8-inch length) to two different recreation areas on the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation. Stocking trips continue to be consolidated whenever possible.
- The Williams Creek Unit completed Apache trout spawning activities for this season on January 28. In eight spawning sessions, a total of 722,905 eggs were taken from 632 3-year-old females for an average of 1,144 eggs per female. Through the first six spawns, the survival rate to the eyed-egg stage is 86%. Through the first four spawns, the survival rate to fry stage is 77%.

For the first time, eggs were also taken from 2-year-old females. A total of 302,983 eggs were taken from 382 females, resulting in an average of 793 eggs per female. We achieved an average survival rate of 70% to the eyed-egg stage but survival to fry stage fell to 46%. The purpose of this experimentation is three-fold:

- 1) Typically, two-year-old females are ready to spawn earlier in the season than three-year-old females. With the additional time for grow-out, a larger number of 9-inch catchable Apache trout would be available for release the following year.
- 2) Ensure that 160,000 eyed eggs are available for shipment to Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) hatcheries by the end of January. In the past, later egg shipments have resulted in diminished survival rates and posed rearing problems for the state.
- 3) Studies will be conducted to determine if the inclusion of eggs from two-year-old females in our production program will provide flexibility in achieving the program's target goals. This will also provide an opportunity to evaluate alternative stocking strategies by utilizing fed fry that do not impact actual production numbers.



Russ oversees the Jennsorter<sup>®</sup> as it works its sorting magic, *left*. The eggs, *above*, are separated into buckets with the good eggs on the left and bad eggs on the right.

We would like to give a huge thank you to Jennifer Johnson, Fish Biologist for AZFWCO, for her assistance this year with the arduous task of spawning. The process is very time-consuming, yet daily routine fish culture activities must continue. All of the Williams Creek staff, along with Gene Okamoto, deserves a huge round of applause for their efforts.

- Apache trout eggs were shipped to AGFD's Sterling Springs Hatchery. The first shipment was 40,290 eggs on January 23 and 60,690 eggs were shipped on January 30. The last shipment will be on February 6. AGFD will raise and stock these Apache trout into various sport fishing waters outside of the FAIR yet within their historical range in the White Mountains of Arizona.



To ship these eggs, Russ first poured eggs into a foam tray lined with a damp cheesecloth-like fabric, *far left*. A full tray of eggs, *middle left*. The eggs are covered with more damp cloth, *middle right*. Two trays were then stacked and packed into the shipping container, *far right*.

### **PUBLIC USE AND OUTREACH:**

- Alchesay High School Special Education students continue to provide valuable assistance with all manner of fish culture duties.

### **WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT:**

- Andy Quay continues to provide valuable volunteer hours to the Alchesay Unit. He provided 110 hours this month performing fish culture duties as well as building and grounds maintenance.
- Bradley Clarkson and Gene Okamoto completed FBMS training for Custodial Property Officer. Bradley will oversee property at the Williams Creek Unit and Gene will oversee property at the Alchesay Unit. Gene and Bradley encountered and persevered through a multitude of challenges in this process ranging from access issues to navigational issues to functionality issues.
- Bruce Thompson completed the Sustainable Practices Database for FY13 and is working on the FAC Fleet Survey for the Complex.

- Isaiah Paxson completed a two-week Coldwater Fish Culture class in Phoenix. The class was presented by the Service's National Conservation Training Center. The graduating class is represented in the photo *below*.



### *FACILITY MAINTENANCE:*

- The remodeling of Quarters 5 has been completed but final inspection has yet to be scheduled. The next phase will begin with demolition of Quarters 4.
- Pete Drevnick began repairs to the Alchesay Unit's leaking water control structure. Pete developed a method to complete these temporary repairs without shutting off the water supply to the hatchery. The fish on station are extremely grateful to Pete for this stress free repair!

Happy, stress-free fish at the Alchesay Unit



- Construction was completed on the cover over A-bank raceways. Installation of screening around the raceways will begin next month. The screening is necessary to inhibit avian predation of the smaller fish housed in these raceways.



*Clockwise from top: supports arrive; supports are set; close-up of supports being set; roof truss being set; all trusses in place; roof panels installed.*

