



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



## MONTHLY ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

April 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  
Chadwick “Sharkey” Amos – 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*



Photo credits: Patti Ferlisi

**The Alchesay Diner’s lilac bushes provide lunch to a plethora of visitors**

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

- All requisite water sampling for EPA was completed for both units.
- 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).
- Both the Alchesay and Williams Creek Units received their annual fish health inspection by personnel from the Southwest Native Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center in Dexter, NM. Jason Woodland, Dave Hampton and Ashlie Rademacher conducted the inspection at Williams Creek Unit on April 1, 2014, *right*. The inspection at the Alchesay Unit was conducted by Teresa Lewis and Marlene Rodarte on April 15, 2014. Both units received “A” classification ratings (no reportable pathogens).
- The Williams Creek Unit received 81,000 rainbow trout eggs from White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery in White Sulphur Springs, WV.
- The Complex received a request from Eastern Arizona College for assistance with a project defining populations of porcupines in the state of Arizona. The request included forms to document any sightings and encompasses behaviors, feeding habits, shelter structures and movements. While hiking Mt. Baldy in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, Dan Ragen encountered two of the creatures on the trail. After a brief stand-off to determine who was “sharpest”, they wandered off to shelter under a large downed tree, and Dan continued on his way.
- Should it become necessary, Alchesay Unit’s Pond 5 and Williams Creek Unit’s Pond 3 will be made available to serve as “dipping ponds” to assist in wildland firefighting efforts during the 2014 fire season. There are a number of environmental concerns regarding indiscriminate dipping such as lake drawdowns, inadvertent sportfish species transfer, habitat degradation, invasive species introduction, and potential disease pathogen introduction/transfer. Both hatchery ponds will be empty of production fish, filled with excess running water from the facilities and pose no safety concerns (trees or power lines in the immediate vicinity) for medium helicopter access. Having suitable water available for firefighting efforts during these extreme drought conditions is paramount.
- The water temperatures continue to rise and water flows continue to decrease as the season progresses. Efforts continue to reduce the numbers of fish held at both stations.

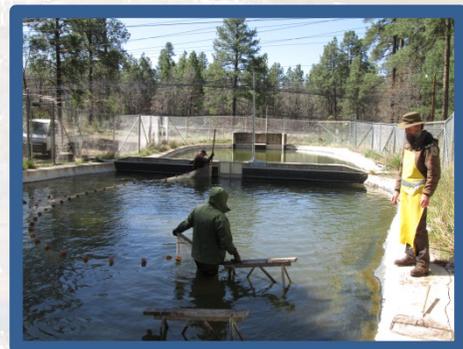


## AQUATIC SPECIES CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT:

- Hatchery personnel drove 6,971 miles in 36 trips to deliver 34,416 brook trout at 1 inch in length; 43,189 rainbow trout at 5 inches in length; 120,382 rainbow trout at 6 to 9 inches in length; and 66,616 Apache trout at 9 to 17 inches in length. These fish were stocked in the waters of seven separate reservations including 22 different recreation areas on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR). Stocking trips continue to be consolidated whenever possible. Early fish transfers from the Williams Creek Unit to the Alchesay Unit consisted of 50,000 3.5 inch rainbow trout fingerling.

A savings of approximately \$800 was recognized by reducing the number of distribution trips to one of our New Mexico tribal partners while still meeting our stocking obligations. Nice job, Gene! Thank you to the entire staff as well, for transporting a total of 314,666 fish in a very short time.

- Excess Apache trout broodstock were stocked into WMAT's Christmas Tree Lake for their upcoming fish camp, *right*.
- A local veterinarian was contacted to prescribe Aquaflor for treating bacterial coldwater disease in the Apache trout fry at the Williams Creek Unit. A prescription is required by feed companies for the manufacture of specialized medicated feed.
- Gene Okamoto and Joyner George seine Pond 4 at the Alchesay Unit as Pete Drevnick stands by to record the data, *below left*. The fish are being transferred from the pond to raceways due to deteriorating water quality in the pond.
- Some of the crew at the Williams Creek Unit seining Pond 4, *below right*. These fish are slated for stocking into waters on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.



- Bruce Thompson and Gene Okamoto joined Jess Newton and Jeremy Voeltz of AZFWCO, Steve Spangle of Ecological Services, and Cynthia Dale and Cheryl Pailzote of WMAT for a tour of Arizona Game and Fish Department's Bubbling Ponds Native Fish Facility. This hatchery has a very advanced loach minnow propagation program and the tour was intended as research for a possible loach minnow propagation program at the Alchesay Unit. We would like to thank our host, Matt O'Neill, for his hospitality in sharing his wealth of knowledge regarding propagation of this species. Thanks, Matt!
- The Alchesay Unit's WMAT Animal Caretaker, Joyner George, averted a catastrophic loss when he noticed the fish in Pond 2 were stressing because there was no incoming water during raceway loading of hatchery trucks. He quickly refilled two raceways which in turn restored water flow, and the oxygen level, to the pond. The fish recovered and there were no mortalities. Great job, Joyner!!

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

- A total of 193 people visited the Williams Creek Unit in April and approximately 412 people visited the Alchesay Unit.
- Two classes of approximately 100 Head Start students visited the Alchesay Unit on April 16, 2014, for a bit of pre-Easter egg hunting. In addition to egg hunting, the students toured the hatchery and enjoyed lunch at the adjacent park. Thank you, Patti, for showing these students around!
- Mike Figueroa guided a tour of the Williams Creek Unit for 60 students from Cibique Elementary School on April 3, 2014.
- On April 14, 2014, four guided tours were given to Whiteriver Elementary's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class.
- Whiteriver Elementary School's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class visited the hatchery on April 24, 2014. Jimmy Smith provided a guided tour to the 20 students and three teachers.



## WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT:

- Andy Quay continues to provide valuable volunteer hours to the Alchesay Unit. He provided 133 hours (valued at almost \$3,000) this month performing fish culture duties as well as building and grounds maintenance.
- Pete Drevnick and Dan Ragen performed routine maintenance and repairs on several vehicles this month. The vehicles are getting a good work out as they are constantly on the road. Stocking trips are being performed “non-stop” in an effort to reduce the number of fish on station before water quality issues force our hand.
- Jennifer Johnson, Fish Biologist with AZFWCO, loaned her electroshocking skills to the Williams Creek Unit so that “escaped” rainbow trout could be collected, *right*. Typically, these fish have can achieve a rather large size and are stocked out as incentive fish.



## FACILITY MAINTENANCE:

- So-long, Quarters 4! The building was scheduled for demolition, and has been completely razed.



## LEADERSHIP IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

- Work continues on the installation of a liquid oxygen system at the Williams Creek Unit. Concrete was poured for the parking pad. Pete Drevnick and Dan Ragen screed the concrete, *below left*. The tank is set, *below right*. This system is much more efficient and reliable than the oxygen generator that was previously in use. The generator will be maintained as backup to the liquid oxygen system.

