



ALCHESAY-WILLIAMS CREEK NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY COMPLEX WHITERIVER, ARIZONA



MONTHLY ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

October 2014

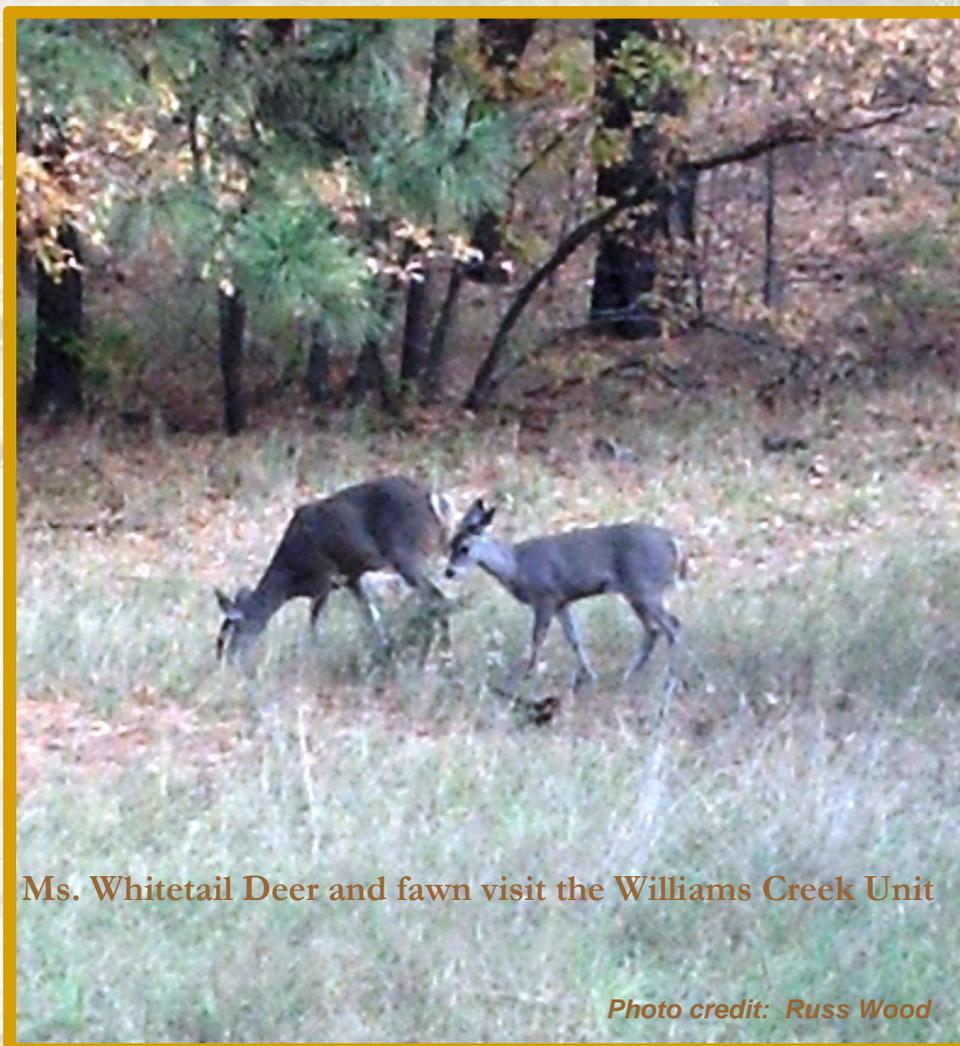
*Bruce Thompson – Complex Manager
Carrie Gregory – Administrative Technician*

ALCHESAY UNIT

*Gene Okamoto – Unit Leader
Pete Drevnick – Maintenance Worker/Motor Vehicle Operator
Jeff Cody – Motor Vehicle Operator
Joyner George – WMAT Fisheries
Chadwick “Sharkey” Amos – Volunteer
Travis Taylor – Laborer*

WILLIAMS CREEK UNIT

*Bradley Clarkson – Unit Leader
Russell Wood – Fish Biologist
Vacant – Maintenance Specialist
Mike Figueroa – Motor Vehicle Operator
Jimmy Smith – Motor Vehicle Operator
Isaiah Paxson – Animal Caretaker
Mary Zyllo – Volunteer
Carol Walker – Volunteer*



Ms. Whitetail Deer and fawn visit the Williams Creek Unit

Photo credit: Russ Wood

PARTNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

- All requisite water sampling for the 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).
- The Alchesay Unit was under Level 2 Emergency Action Plan evacuation status due to a potential breach of the dam at Hawley Lake. Level 2 indicates the conditions at the dam could rapidly escalate into potentially large flow releases or potential dam failure. In addition to ensuring all personnel were informed of evacuation protocols, precautions were taken regarding the hatchery grounds. Measurements of the elevation at strategic points around the hatchery grounds, including ponds and raceways, were taken to determine how/if each site would be affected.

The conditions at the dam necessitated an emergency 100% drawdown of Hawley Lake via three 8,000 gallon-per-minute pumps. On October 8, 2014, Bruce Thompson attended the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council meeting to voice concerns about the possible impacts to hatchery operations. The following week, Richard DiValentino and Waylon Truax of WMAT's Department of Lands visited the Alchesay Unit to witness first-hand, and discuss concerns with, the turbidity levels. The Complex's operational needs and the economic value of our fish to both Tribal and local economies was also discussed. Many meaningful dialogues continue between all entities involved in the Davis Dam Emergency Repair project. Currently, despite intermittent high turbidity levels, overall fish health remains good. Let's hope that trend continues.

Below, the North Fork of the White River during the drawdown of Hawley Lake for dam repairs culminates in poor water quality at the Alchesay Unit. Scheduled fall transfers from the Williams Creek Unit to the Alchesay Unit grow-out station are being delayed due to these poor water quality conditions.



- The Complex provided assistance to WMAT-WORD with fish salvage at Hawley Lake. Over the course of several days, Joyner George and Jimmy Smith provided assistance using smaller fish distribution trucks to relocate the fish to tribal waters in close proximity to Hawley Lake. Over 10,000 trout were salvaged. A large number of these fish were trophy-size brown and rainbow trout.
- Lightning protection was installed at the fueling station at the Williams Creek Unit, *below*. Safety bollards were also installed around the fueling station pumps and an adjacent propane tank as part of the Safety Modification Project for the unit.



- The Alchesay Unit has taken first steps in a project that will include plantings to attract a wide variety of winged pollinators to the hatchery. The plants will be placed around and between the production ponds. As well as beautifying the grounds, the plants will provide food and shelter for the pollinating insects and birds.

AQUATIC SPECIES CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT:

- Hatchery personnel drove 2,112 miles to deliver 35,600 rainbow trout (~7" length) to San Carlos Apache, Jicarilla Apache, and Navajo Nation Tribal partners. In addition, 148,346 5" rainbow trout were transferred from the Williams Creek Unit to the Alchesay Unit during the first half of the month. As noted above, fish transfers have now been halted pending improvement in North Fork water quality due to the pumping operation at Davis Dam. There are currently approximately 160,000 rainbow trout at the Williams Creek Unit awaiting their move to the Alchesay Unit for further grow-out.
- As cooler weather sets in, the Williams Creek Unit has to be creative in their critter deterrent methods. Protective screens are being constructed to place over the raceways to prevent raccoons and great blue herons from feasting on the easily accessible fish. Bird spikes along the bottoms of fences were also incorporated in an effort to dissuade all avian and mammalian piscivorous predators.

- Preparations and logistical planning continue for this season's Apache trout spawning activities. Both male and female broodstock have been placed on enhanced feed. In the past, the enhanced feed has proven to be beneficial in boosting egg and milt production, as well as viability.

PUBLIC USE AND OUTREACH:

- The Williams Creek Unit received 128 visitors this month. Included were 32 visitors from The Meadows in Wickenburg, Arizona, and 12 visitors from the WMAT's Rainbow Treatment Center.
- The Alchesay Unit received 25 visitors this month. As the weather gets colder, fewer and fewer people come to visit the hatchery, hike the trails, utilize the picnic areas or pursue other recreational activities.

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT:

- Williams Creek volunteer Mary Zylo managed to provide 11 hours of valuable assistance at the Williams Creek Unit despite her preparations to move to the Grand Canyon area. Mary's always-smiling face and positivity will surely be missed, but we wish her all the best in her new adventures.
- Carol Walker continues to provide valuable assistance at the Williams Creek Unit. She provided 133 hours this month with fish culture duties, as well as building and grounds maintenance. Carol measures and weighs fish feed, *below*.



- To ensure continued computer access to DOI systems and programs, all staff have completed the mandatory DOI "Smartcard"/PIV recertification process.
- Annual Employee Performance Appraisal Plans have been completed for each employee.

- Pete Drevnick and Travis Taylor prepared Alchesay's Pond 5 to receive transfer fish from the Williams Creek Unit. The fish waste from the pond bottom was removed and the sides were contoured to ease the removal of the fish at stocking time. Monofilament bird wire was also installed over the pond in an effort to deter avian predators.

LEADERSHIP IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

- Pete Drevnick and Travis Taylor continue with Pond 3 modifications. The water control structure and sheet pile walls are coming together, *below*. This project is over 85% complete.

