



White Sulphur Springs

National Fish Hatchery

Conserving America's Fisheries



Mission

Working with partners to restore and maintain fish, mussels and other aquatic resources at self-sustaining levels for the benefit of the American Public. Our seven priority areas include Partnerships and Accountability, Aquatic Species Conservation and Management, Public Use, Leadership in Science and Technology, Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management and Workforce Management.

Hatchery Information

Originally established in 1900 to produce fish for the nation's lakes and streams, the hatchery became part of the National Broodstock Program in 1976. Since that time, we have been shipping millions of disease-free rainbow trout eggs to state and federal hatcheries across the country.



In 1995, the hatchery added a new program, freshwater mussel conservation. Protecting freshwater mussels is important because they help keep our rivers clean by filtering enormous amounts of water every day. Today, hatchery staff provide shelter for adult freshwater mussels threatened by pollution and raise baby mussels to help improve wild populations.

Contact Information

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Aquatic Habitat Conservation

WSSNFH and the USFWS is working with their partners (WV, IN, KY, The Nature Conservancy, Marshall University, National Park Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, Ecological Specialists) to restore habitat for fish and other aquatic animals by initiating a new partnership under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) called the Ohio River Basin Mussel Habitat Partnership (ORB-MHP). Fisheries



professionals with states, tribes and federal agencies, along with industry and angling groups created the NFHAP to protect and restore the nation's habitat and improve the quality of life for the American People. The goal of the ORB-MHP is to re-establish freshwater mussel beds as the key ecological player in restoring water quality and healthy fish populations to the Ohio River Basin. Freshwater mussels are filter feeders and have historically helped keep our rivers clean by filtering enormous amounts of water every day. A community 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. An average metropolitan city spends close to \$35,000 a day to treat 100 million gallons of water; that's close to \$13 million per year. Imagine how much money local communities could save in water treatment costs if native mussel communities were restored? Unfortunately, freshwater mussels are the nation's most imperiled animals and the free ecosystem services they provide have been severely diminished by large-scale habitat loss. By restoring mussel beds, the ORB-MHP will provide cleaner and cheaper drinking water, better fishing, nicer areas for swimming and improve the quality of life for people across the Ohio River Basin.

Aquatic Species Conservation

The James spiny mussel (*Pleurobema collina*) got its name from the small spines that can sometimes be found on the outside of the shell. This unique mussel species has been lost from much of its historic range and was listed as federally endangered in 1988.



James spiny mussel. Photo by John Alderman

The Virginia Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service along with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and WSSNFH is planning an outreach event in the Mill Creek Watershed of Western Virginia to provide landowners the opportunity to learn more about this species and the techniques used to help restore their numbers in the wild. The ultimate goal of the restoration effort is to some day remove the James spiny mussel from the endangered species list.

Cooperation with Native Americans

WSSNFH is organizing the 6th Biennial Symposium of the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society to be held in Baltimore in 2009. The symposium will be designed to broaden the membership of FMCS by attracting Native American tribe members as well as international researchers working on freshwater mollusks.



Public Use

Excerpt from **“Making a Big Splash”**
Craig Springer, USFWS

A recent peer-reviewed study conducted by James Caudill, an economist at the Fish and Wildlife Service, shows that fishing for rainbow trout produced by the National Fish Hatchery System sends ripples through economies, making a splash in the tills of businesses and government. Caudill conducted his research on fish stocked by 11 national fish hatcheries that produced more than 15,000 pounds of rainbow trout in fiscal 2004. Those hatcheries raised 9.4 million rainbow trout, providing nearly 4 million angler-days on the water. Retail sales on items related to rainbow-trout fishing - food, gas, lodging, guide fees, bait and tackle - amounted to \$172.7 million. That spending provided jobs for 3,502 people and income of \$80 million.



Rainbow Trout Photo by Craig Springer

Those wage earners contributed back to public treasuries - \$2.9 million in state income taxes and \$10.6 million in federal income taxes. The bottom line, according to Caudill's study, is fishing for rainbow trout generated an economic output of \$325.1 million in one year. Taxpayers who fund the National Fish Hatchery System paid \$5.4 million to produce rainbow trout in 2004. This means that for every budget dollar spent on rainbow trout production, that dollar moves through the economy fueling \$32.20 in retail sales and \$36.88 in net economic value. This is not an actual cost-benefit analysis, but it is clear that rainbow trout coming from the national fish hatcheries provide a profound economic stimulus with significant returns to public treasuries.

To read the full article please visit:
<http://www.govexec.com/features/0506-01/0506-01advp1.htm>

Free to the Public!

Tours

Tours of the trout spawning and mussel propagation facility are open to the general public Monday through Friday, 8AM to 5 PM. Please call 304-536-1361 1 week in advance to schedule a tour.



Touring the hatchery. Photo by Beth Smith

Freshwater Folk Festival

The Annual Freshwater Folk Festival has been set for September 29th. Bring the whole family for a day of music, dance, food and fun activities for the kids.

Fishing Derby

WSSNFH annual fishing derby is not that far away. Mark your calendar for June 2nd and come enjoy the fishing!

Friends of the WSSNFH



Friends of the WSSNFH help by organizing the Freshwater Folk Festival, education and fundraising.

If you have an interest in being a Friend or receiving information about the Friends Group, please contact: Matthew Patterson 304-536-1361

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Fun Fish Facts

Mekong Giant Catfish!

On May 1, 2005, the largest freshwater fish ever caught came from the Mekong River in Thailand. This catfish weighed 646 pounds and measured almost nine feet long!!



To learn more about the Mekong River visit www.mrcmekong.org.

Color the Snorkeler!

Hatchery biologists search for mussels in the river by snorkeling. This little boy wants to be a biologist and help find some mussels, but he needs some color! Can you give him some color!

