



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Friends of the Neosho National Fish Hatchery

The Friends of the Neosho National Fish Hatchery is the cornerstone to the outreach and volunteer program at the Hatchery. The Friends Group co-hosts events including the Annual Open House Celebration, Annual Kid's Fishing Clinic/ Derby, Annual Fishing Outing for the Elderly and Physically Challenged, as well as the Annual Friends Picnic.

The Friends of the Neosho National Fish Hatchery is a nonprofit citizen's organization dedicated to conserving fishery resources and providing support for activities conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Neosho National Fish Hatchery. Such activities whether independent or in cooperation with other organizations or parties will benefit fish and other aquatic resources.



Neosho National Fish Hatchery and the Friends of the Neosho National Fish Hatchery sponsor the Annual Fishing Outing for the Elderly and the Physically Challenged which attracts about 80 participants (above) and the Annual Fishing Derby for 8 - 12 year olds (below).



-USFWS photos

As the years passed, the City of Neosho grew around the hatchery and generations of people adopted it as one of their favorite places to visit.

The Neosho National Fish Hatchery (NFH) is the oldest operating Federal fish hatchery in the nation. Established in 1888, Neosho NFH is located in the Ozark Mountain Region of Southwest Missouri. It is one of 69 hatcheries operated by the Fish and Wildlife Service with a mission to conserve and protect our nation's fishery resources.

Neosho NFH was established just outside the small town of Neosho, Missouri, because of the availability of the gravity flow spring water and a railroad spur for transporting fish in specialized railcars as far west as the Rocky Mountains.



-USFWS Hatchery manager David Hendrix (back, center) works with the Friends of the Neosho National Fish Hatchery to prepare fishing poles for annual fishing clinics and derbies. About 200 fishing rods and reels were donated by the Friends Group to loan out to participants.





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Aerial view of the Neosho National Fish Hatchery (2002). Note the red text and arrow that indicate the site of the future visitor center. The Hatchery is located in the center of beautiful Neosho, Missouri.

Neosho NFH has -

produced more than 130 different species of fish since it was established, and can produce cold, cool, and warm water fish. The current hatchery focuses are rainbow trout mitigation for Lake Taneycomo, near Branson; endangered pallid sturgeon production for the Lower Missouri River; walleye exchange for other services from the State of Missouri; and freshwater drum host fish for mussel work in the Ozarks.



Neosho NFH's New Visitor Center

The future "Visitor Center" at Neosho NFH will encompass 9,500 square feet of floor space. It will include an audiovisual room for viewing videos and presentations/seminars; historic exhibits on the Hatchery and the railcar era in fisheries; aquariums; an Ozark cavefish exhibit; a wet lab and a library; and an outdoor deck that will extend over hatchery Pond 11. The visitor center will also house much needed office space for the hatchery staff and a bookstore that will be operated by the *Friends of the Neosho National Fish Hatchery*. The new visitor center is expected to increase hatchery visitation from 45,000 to more than 100,000 visitors annually.



-USFWS
Friends Group member Bob Gofourth applies primer to the antique concrete rainbow trout before its final painting.



-USFWS
Friends Group members travel to Booneville, Missouri, to observe the first stocking of Neosho NFH raised endangered pallid sturgeon into the Missouri River.



-USFWS
Friends Group members join forces with Shoal Creek Preservation to restore the old limestone Arch located on Hatchery grounds.

Visitors are welcome at the hatchery Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and walk-through gates are open later for walkers and visitors after hours and on weekends.

For additional information about the *Friends of the Neosho National Fish Hatchery* and visitation and outreach opportunities at the Neosho National Fish Hatchery, contact David Hendrix at:

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