

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## Jordan River NFH Accomplishment Report

### *Partnerships and Accountability*

#### **Jordan River Staff Reaches Out to Six Mile Lake Residents**

On November 16, Rick Westerhof and volunteer Dan Myers attended a meeting of the Six Mile Lake Association and Chain of Lakes Coalition. One of Michigan's finest natural resources is the Chain of Lakes in Antrim County, located just west of the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery. By invitation we were put on the agenda to provide information about the formation of a friends group for Jordan River NFH. Michelle Nerone, Coalition Chair, had attended our friends organizational meeting in September, and she was instrumental in getting our message out. Rick's presentation has not yet netted any response from this group or their partners. Failure? No, we are looking for quality not quantity, so we'll just keep plugging away and we will eventually encounter the right people. Case in point: as a result of a similar meeting the week before, some new acquaintances have expressed a tentative interest in taking on leadership roles in our future friends group.

- Tim Smigielski

#### **Johnson's Pond Partnership Worth the Effort**

When some citizens from Mancelona, Michigan called the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery for some advice for improving a pond on municipal property, they had no idea what they were getting into nor whom they were about to be dealing with. The group envisioned dredging an area adjacent to a man made dike, stabilizing the bank, and creating better fishing access for kids, while also improving fish habitat. Sounds good, huh? The pond and property were donated to the village some years back for a youth fishing pond. Tim Smigielski, Lead Biologist at the Jordan

River NFH, met with the group on site. Tim agreed that the area had been abused and needed attention, but still had great potential. Tim found that the pond has an existing population of bluegill and largemouth bass, but the lack of depth would surely cause a winter kill one of these years. He also learned that, years ago, some stocked rainbow trout had survived over the winter. So Tim encouraged the group to proceed (cracked the whip!) and secured a challenge cost share grant for the project. "The effort that it takes to organize and implement even a small project such as this is really surprising," said Joan Moore, one of the lead cooperators in the project, adding "We certainly could not have done it without Tim's skills." "Tim Moore, of the



Inspecting the rip rap installation prior to laying down the new topsoil, mulching, and seeding. -Photo by Joan Moore

Mancelona Bass Festival Committee, one of the lead cooperators, was the ‘foreman’ who really deserves the lion’s share of the credit,” said Smigielski. Johnson’s Pond, now sporting over two hundred feet of new rock rip rap shoreline and “water deep enough for fish to swim”, will be showcased for the first time this spring. Hundreds of children are expected to line the new shoreline in hopes of hooking an opening day trout during Michigan’s season opener on the last Saturday in April.

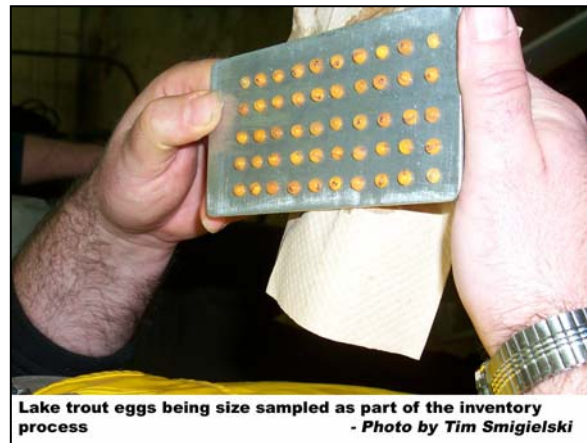
*-Tim Smigielski*

## ***Aquatic Species Conservation and Management***

### **Egg Receipts**

We began receiving shipments of eyed lake trout eggs for the 2006 / 2007 rearing season on November 9. As of the end of December, we had in excess of five million eggs / sac fry on station. We anticipate receiving another 350 to 400,000 in January. If survival is similar to last year’s, slightly less than 70% will make it to the first feeding stage.

These eggs are delivered to our facility from our brood stations in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula (Sullivan’s Creek NFH), Northern Wisconsin (Iron River NFH), and Wyoming (Saratoga NFH). They will remain in our care for the next 1 ½ years, at which time they will be released into Lakes Michigan and Huron.



Lake trout eggs being size sampled as part of the inventory process - Photo by Tim Smigielski

*-Wayne Talo*

### **Hatchery Tank Room and Visitor Center Restrooms Get a Makeover**

Paul Haver put the finishing touches on the visitor center restrooms in December, painting the entrance doors and stalls with sky blue latex paint leftover from repainting the tank room. This completed a major facelift for our basement, which hadn't received new paint in many years. The project began in the fall, when the outside surfaces of the basement tanks were pressure washed and primed before receiving two coats of paint. The new paint and primer contain much needed mold-inhibiting additives that we hope will prevent the ugly mildew that had previously stained parts of the tanks.



*-Wayne Talo*

### **Public Use**

#### ***Fish are Fun Begins Anew***

Tim Smigielski is once again hosting his monthly children's educational program called *Fish are Fun*. This event is part of a concentrated effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to increase public awareness concerning the Service's mission and programs in the Great Lakes region. The programs are held in the evenings and begin with *Hatchery Happenings*, which is an interpretive tour of current activities at the hatchery. There are hands-on activities, as well as an animated presentation about the "Fish of the Month." The one and a half hour programs began December 20th at 6:00 pm. The remainder of the programs will be held the third Tuesday of the month at the same time. Refreshments will be available.

*-Tim Smigielski*

### **Newspaper Article**

A December article published in several northern Michigan newspapers, including the Boyne City Citizen Journal, the Antrim County News, the Kalkaska Leader, and the Elk Rapids Town Meeting, highlighted the hatchery's outreach efforts, contrasting our current focus on customer service with the minimal hospitality efforts of years gone by. Writer Jane Booze interviewed Project Leader Rick Westerhof and Lead Biologist Tim Smigielski for the article, titled *Fish Hatchery Snowmobile-Friendly*. Although its main thrust was our desire to become a popular spot for winter snowmobile tourism (as well as year-round tourism), the article also discussed our annual fish production cycle, the Hatchery Fest, and the friends group, explaining the



mission of a friends group and making a pitch to those potentially interested in becoming involved to contact the hatchery.

*-Wayne Talo*

## ***Cooperation with Native Americans***

(Nothing to report).

## ***Leadership in Science and Technology***

### **Jordan River's own Tim Smigielski Hosts the 2005 Region 3 Fish Culture Meeting**

Staff from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) hatcheries within our region ("Region 3" includes Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, and Ohio) annually gather to present their work and exchange ideas about aquaculture science, current hatchery issues, and various methods to enhance public use at our facilities. Each year, a different hatchery takes the lead in hosting the event. This year, Tim Smigielski, lead fisheries biologist at the Jordan River NFH, chaired the event, which was held at the Hampton Inn in Gaylord, Michigan on December 13 and 14.

This year's conference was very informative, as we had multiple presentations from six Service hatcheries, the USFWS Alpena Fisheries Resource Office, the USFWS Washington Office, as well as a presentation and tour of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Michigan Fisheries Visitor Center and Oden State Fish Hatchery. Fish health, nutrition, rearing practices, public use and outreach, oxygen supplementation technologies, and water quality issues were just some of topics presented and discussed by the biologists. We were also honored to have with us Dr. Don Garling, professor of Fisheries and Wildlife at Michigan State University, who presented *The Status of Aquaculture in the U.S. and Great Lakes Region*.

Great efforts were made to be fiscally responsible while still providing comfortable and professional surroundings. The 2006 conference will be hosted by Pendills Creek NFH in Brimley, Michigan, tentatively in December 2006.

*-Wayne Talo and Tim Smigielski*

### **Education at 2005 Region 3 Fish Culturists Meeting**

The 2005 Region 3 Fish Culturists Meeting can be very educational, especially for Dan Myers, a volunteer at Jordan River NFH. There were so many things that Dan learned about mussels, sturgeon, trout, etc. that made it definitely worth taking time off of school to go to. He also learned stuff about the budget and politics of the USFWS. He met a lot of amazing people from

all over Region 3 and wants to thank them all for letting him come to the meeting, as it was a great experience for him.

*-Dan Myers*

## ***Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management***

(Nothing to report).

## ***Workforce Management***

### **Dan Myers' Views as a Volunteer at the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery**

I've been a volunteer at Jordan River National Fish Hatchery since April 2005. I usually come in every Saturday that I am available, although I had to take a break this fall due to the Cross Country season. I live in Charlevoix, which is about forty minutes away by driving and go to school at Charlevoix High. I am in eleventh grade and I'm co-president of my class.

There are many reasons why I decided to become a volunteer at the hatchery and I am glad that I did it. Mainly, I wanted a job that would be meaningful and fun, even if I didn't make any money from it. I definitely found this at the hatchery. Also, I was starting to think about my future life and decided that it would look good to colleges, jobs, etc. if I had volunteer experience, especially in a field similar to that which I want to explore. There also was discussion about a requirement of forty hours of community service to receive the MEAP scholarship (about \$2500) when I decided to volunteer here, although that requirement never came through. I've worked here far more than forty hours now and have learned more than I did last year in school.



**Dan Myers cleans a rearing tank full of lake trout fingerlings at the Jordan River NFH - Photo by Wayne Talo**

My experience as a volunteer has been very fun and beneficial. I've gotten to do a ton of amazing things, such as cleaning tanks holding tens of thousands of fish, riding in a tanker truck carrying a cargo of lake trout to be loaded on to the *Togue* for stocking, and filling feed buckets and trucks. I've also done some really cool things such as sample counts. Whenever I wake up at 5:30 am Saturday mornings I always think "Yes, I get to go to the hatchery today!"

While volunteering at the hatchery I have worked with a lot of wonderful people. I've had a great experience working with Rick Westerhof, the manager of the hatchery. He does a good job at keeping people together. I've also had a lot of fun working with Denise and John Johnston. I've



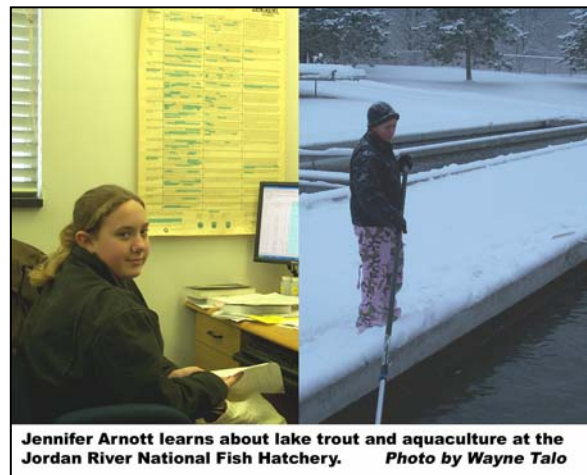
even had the opportunity to work with the Lead Biologist, Tim Smigielski who knows the most about fish out of anyone I've ever met. I'm always glad to work with him. I've learned a lot working with Wayne Talo and Paul Haver, the biologists. Perhaps one of my favorite people to work with is Chris Olds, a college student who eats a lot and is always good at finding work to do. I've also worked with Bob Petersen, who always has stories about the outdoors that are interesting. Though I haven't had to work with her much, it is obvious that Clarice Beckner does an excellent job at keeping track of things in the office. I've enjoyed working with some other volunteers too, such as Dan Sutherland and John O'Brien, who is a student from Hocking College in Ohio.

It's amazing how much these devoted people can accomplish with the budgets and resources of today. This last spring and early summer 2.15 million lake trout were released into the Great Lakes by this hatchery alone. The quality and efficiency of work getting done here is astounding and could never be matched by normal personnel. Everyone at the hatchery gives easily their 100%. I only have positive things to say about this place, and I am proud to say that I have given my part in the restoration of Lake trout in the Great Lakes.

*- Dan Myers*

### **Student Volunteer**

Jennifer Arnott, eighth grade student at the East Jordan Middle School, has been volunteering at the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery to learn about lake trout. She is enrolled in a student leadership program which requires that she complete a science project and do community service work. For her science project, she chose to report on the life cycle of the lake trout. At this time of year, the hatchery provides a good setting to see lake trout at both the fingerling and egg stages. Jennifer assisted with our receipt and inventory of eggs in November. She also gained first-hand experience with adult lake trout by volunteering at the Sullivan's Creek National Fish Hatchery this fall during spawning season as part of a 4-H Club project. Most recently, on a cold and snowy morning of December 4, she fulfilled part of her community service commitment by helping to clean raceways. It's unusual to see this level of commitment in a person this young. Our staff appreciates her involvement and we are glad to be of assistance with her project.



*-Wayne Talo*