

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## **Jordan River NFH Accomplishment Report**

### *Partnerships and Accountability*

#### **Friends of Jordan River NFH Hold First Executive Board Meeting and General Membership Meeting**

June 28 was a wonderful evening filled with anticipation and excitement. The board met to discuss old and new business, hammered out a few more details in regard to the by laws and then it was “off to the races”. About fifteen prospective members joined the board for an open membership meeting. President Bob MacCord delivered a motivating speech outlining the potential of the group and what the future holds. Other speakers included Rick Westerhof, Project Leader, and fish biologist Tim Smigielski. The attendees were a good cross section of those who have been involved with the hatchery in some way. The Friends Group Treasurer, Peg Myers, has been instrumental in preparing meeting notes, announcements and materials for posting on our Friends Group webpage (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/JordanRiver/friends.htm>). Meetings are held the last Wednesday of the month. The Executive Committee meets at 6:00 p.m. and the General Membership meets at 7:00 p.m. The annual meeting is each October. Dues are \$10-individual, \$15-family, \$30-business, and \$1 for student.

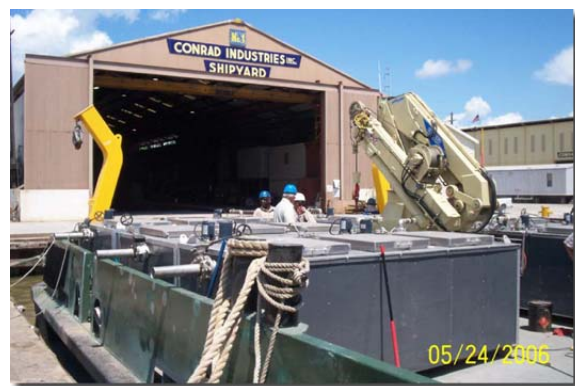
*-Tim Smigielski*

### *Aquatic Species Conservation and Management*

#### **Final Stages of Construction and Tests Before Delivery of the *Spencer F. Baird***

In May, Conrad Shipyard was in the last stages of construction and testing on the *Spencer F. Baird*. Paul Haver from the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery and the vessel engineer were present during the dock trials which included operating all the equipment aboard the vessel.

With the fish tanks placed onboard and the support systems operating, Paul pointed out a few minor corrections that had to be done to make the fish tanks operate correctly and be more fish friendly. The support systems, which include the chillers, oxygen concentrators, and pumps, all worked correctly.



Fish tanks being set onboard for testing.

- Photo by Bob Bergstrom

## *Jordan River NFH, May through July 2006*



All the assessment equipment was also placed onboard which included trawl winches and net reels. These systems also operated without major changes having to be made.

During sea trials, all electronic navigation equipment worked as required. Problems with the propulsion system and anchoring needed to be corrected and the final painting of the vessel had yet to be completed.

*-Bob Bergstrom*

### **Great Lakes Program Leader Visits the Jordan River NFH**

Bob Adair, Regional Great Lakes Program Coordinator, visited the Jordan River NFH on June 8. He was able to participate in loading lake trout for a stocking trip and also rode along with staff driving out of Jordan River. The trip took them to Charlevoix where they met the *Togue*. Bob observed the operation and helped load some lake trout onto the vessel. We appreciate Bob coming out to the field and sharing his valuable time with all of us.

*-Tim Smigielski*

### **Completion of Lake Trout Distribution**

On June 23, we released our last group of yearling lake trout into Lake Huron, finishing the 2006 fish distribution season. This year, we released nearly two million lake trout averaging 6.7 inches in length. 57% were released into Lake Huron, and the remaining 43% were released into Lake Michigan. Overall, 90% of the fish were released offshore from the M/V *Togue*. This was the last year of service for the *Togue*, as its replacement, the M/V *Spencer F. Baird*, is scheduled for



The M/V *Togue*

*-Photo by Rick Westerhof*

delivery later this summer. We'd like to thank all those that assisted with our fish distribution this year: Angie Baran, Steve Redman, and Kurt Schilling from the Iron River NFH; James Anderson and John Shuman from the Pendills Creek / Sullivans Creek NFH Complex; and Captain Mike Perry, Engineer Bob Bergstrom, and Emergency Hire Amos Perry of the M/V *Togue*.

*-Wayne Talo*

### **Transfer of Fingerling Lake Trout to Pendills Creek NFH**

Over the period from May through June, we transferred approximately one million lake trout at an average length of 2.5 inches to the Pendills Creek NFH. These fish will be raised there over the course of the next ten months and released next spring into the Great Lakes.

*-Wayne Talo*

### **Delivery of the M/V *Spencer F. Baird***

The pride of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Great Lakes Lake Trout Restoration Program, the M/V *Spencer F. Baird*, arrived at the U.S. Geological Survey dock in Cheboygan, Michigan on July 20. This new vessel was built in Morgan City, Louisiana by Conrad Industries over the course of 19 months at a cost approaching 7.5 million dollars. Funding such an expensive project wasn't easy and wasn't taken lightly. Money came from the USFWS base budget, so USFWS-funded offices from across the country had a hand in making this happen.



The M/V *Spencer F. Baird* arrived in Cheboygan, Michigan on July 20, 2006.  
-Photo by Aaron Woldt

This boat will replace the aging M/V *Togue*, the condition of which has been in steady decline for quite some time, despite significant investments in maintenance and repairs. Safety is of the utmost importance, and the *Togue* just wasn't as safe it needed to be. Due to its poor condition, Captain Mike Perry had to be very conservative in making determinations regarding whether to make offshore stocking runs if even moderately inclement weather was forecast.

The *Baird* was constructed according to U.S. Coast Guard safety specifications, so it will be able to safely handle higher seas than the *Togue* could. The *Baird* is slightly larger than the *Togue* and will haul roughly 25% more fish. It will also be used extensively by our offices in Green Bay, Wisconsin and Alpena, Michigan for offshore fisheries assessment work. This will involve the deployment and retrieval of large gill nets, trawl nets, and trap nets.

One may assume that a vessel constructed in Louisiana could be delivered to Michigan via the Mississippi River, but because some of the *Baird's* radar and radio equipment is too tall to pass under some bridges spanning the Mississippi, it had to be delivered via the Atlantic Ocean, traveling 4,200 miles over the course of 20 days with stops in Florida, Massachusetts, Nova Scotia, and Quebec.

The *Spencer F. Baird* will be officially dedicated on September 7, 2006 in Traverse City, Michigan.

-Wayne Talo

### **Jordan River NFH Project Leader Pulled in Many Different Directions**

Near the end of July, Rick Westerhof was being pulled in all directions, in particular east and west. On July 18, 19, and 20 Rick attended the Lake Huron Technical Committee (LHTC) Meeting in Alpena, Michigan. Rick is the current chair of the Lake trout task group for the LHTC. He facilitated the agenda for the Lake trout task group session and also provided an update on the Service's new vessel the MV *Spencer F. Baird*. The very next week Rick headed west to Traverse City, Michigan to attend the Lake Michigan Technical Committee Meeting. While there, Rick update the group on the recently completed Lake trout stocking season and presented information on the status of the *Baird* at this meeting too.

-Tim Smigielski

### **Regional USFWS Fisheries Leadership Visit the Jordan River NFH**

On July 25, while in the area to inspect the M/V *Spencer F. Baird* and make preparations for its official dedication in September, the Region 3 Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries, Gerry Jackson, Chief of Hatcheries Todd Turner, and Fisheries Supervisor Mike Oetker made a detour to the hatchery to review the facilities, brief staff on current issues, and take questions from staff. We appreciate the opportunity to meet with them and showcase our facility, and we hope to see them again soon.

-Wayne Talo

### **Raceway Maintenance**

Pressure washing algae-coated surfaces, replacing peeling strips of sealant, and repairing cracks in the walls and floors of our outside raceways are typical summertime maintenance jobs at the Jordan River NFH. As of the end of July, we still have eight raceways that need to be pressure washed. These particular ones were left for last because we won't need to use them until early 2007. Repairs are ongoing in the other raceways, into which we intend to put our 2006 year class of lake trout beginning in mid-August.



John Johnston prepares a crumbling concrete raceway floor for repair.  
-Photo by Wayne Talo

-Wayne Talo



## ***Public Use***

### **Jordan River NFH assists with the Oden State Fish Hatchery's Kid's Fishing Clinic**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Miller Van-Winkle Chapter of Trout Unlimited held their first annual Kid's Fishing Clinic at Oden State Fish Hatchery in Oden, Michigan on May 6. Hatchery Manager Rick Westerhof and Student Temporary Experience Program (STEP) student Chris Olds assisted at one of the eight stations set up for the kids. The event was free of charge and was limited to the first 100 kids between the ages of 9 and 14. The eight learning stations covered topics such as fishing laws and ethics, fishing techniques, fly-tying, Great Lakes fishing, live bait demos, and fishing. Rick and Chris worked the fishing pond where the hatchery keeps 80-100 of their excess broodstock brown trout and rainbow trout for the kids to catch and release. The fish ranged in size from 20 to 30 inches and weighed 3-10 lbs. Rick claims that his fishing expertise resulted in more kids catching fish than Chris' students, but Chris disagrees. Most of the kids at the fishing clinic had never seen a fish as large as the broodstock they were catching. One young girl who caught the largest fish in her life at the clinic actually came back with tears in her eyes wanting a hug from Chris who would not let her give up for her pursuit of a big brown trout after many failed attempts to land one.

Rick and Chris made some great contacts with Trout Unlimited and invited them to participate in the Jordan River NFH Hatchery Fest in 2006. All the kids that participated enjoyed the wonderful day and had a great time learning more about fishing. The two hatcheries have been working together for the past two years assisting with each others public outreach events. Last year Oden State Fish Hatchery came to Hatchery Fest 2005 and set up a booth.

*-Chris Olds*

### **Cornerstone University Students Visit Jordan River NFH**

Students from Cornerstone University, Grand Rapids, Michigan received a tour from STEP student Chris Olds and volunteer Dan Traynor at the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery on May 19. As a part of a required class for their environmental science degree, five students from Cornerstone University took a 1,100 mile road trip around Michigan, visiting attractions like the Pigeon River State Forest, Seney National Wildlife Refuge, Tequamenon Falls, and then finally the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery. The students were very interested in aquatic nuisance species, the lake trout restoration program, and the Jordan River Valley. They also found the water supply of the hatchery to be very unique in how the water is all gravity fed, and that there is 5,000 gallons per minute of water coming into the hatchery every day. The students were on the last leg of their trip and would be returning back to Cornerstone later that day to take their final exam.

*-Chris Olds*

### **Mancelona Students Take Fish Anatomy 101 at Jordan River NFH**

The summer school program students from Mancelona High School participated in a presentation on fish anatomy and were treated to a tour during their visit to Jordan River NFH. Fisheries Biologist Paul Haver and STEP Student Chris Olds led the class through a dissection of lake trout. Paul provided the students with information on the function of the organs and structures the students were to identify. This is always a popular and interesting program put on by Paul.

*-Tim Smigielski*

### **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Water Watch Student Congress in Traverse City**

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Water Watch Student Congress was held in Traverse City, Michigan on May 19. The workshop focuses on water uses and issues across the Great Lakes. Approximately 20 other agencies and organizations joined the Jordan River NFH in the event. The students came from nine schools in the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District. Students from grades 6 through 12 chose the class they wanted to attend. Each class runs for one hour and twenty minutes and is presented in the morning and afternoon. This year, Rick Westerhof and Paul Haver teamed up to provide a brief overview of the hatchery program and guided the students through a fish dissection. Rick covered the hatchery information and Paul covered the fish dissection.

*-Tim Smigielski*

### **Kindergarten Field Trip**

On May 24, 125 Kindergarten students (plus chaperones) from the South Maple Elementary School of Gaylord, Michigan toured the hatchery. They were divided into five groups of 25. Each group learned about a different station for twenty minutes before moving on to the next station. In the visitor center, they learned about sea lampreys and other invasive species, our brood stations, and our offshore stocking vessel. In the tank room they viewed the youngest fish on station, saw what we feed them, and learned about the daily work involved with raising them. At the Six-Tile water supply, they saw where our water, and our black fly population, comes from, and they learned about our seasonal water temperature variability and its effect on fish growth. At the outside raceways, they saw fish at release size (six to seven inches total length), learned about our feed truck, raceway cleaning practices, and they got to see how we use our fish pump to load fish distribution trucks. Lastly, they got a chance to have a snack of goldfish crackers, pretzels, and orange Hi-C (courtesy of the Mancelona McDonald's restaurant) while they colored pictures



Kindergarten students from Gaylord, Michigan toured the Jordan River NFH on May 24. Here, Tim Smigielski explains about raising young lake trout in our tank room. *-Photo by Andy Pavelek*

of lake trout. This is the second year in a row that the kindergarten teachers have chosen the Jordan River NFH for their final spring field trip. They plan on a third annual trip in 2007.

*-Wayne Talo*

### **Science Class Fish Dissection**

Wayne Talo and Chris Olds conducted fish dissections for four eighth grade science classes at the Boyne City (Michigan) Middle School on May 25. In addition to learning about fish anatomy, the students also learned a little about invasive species and the lake trout restoration program in general. A total of approximately seventy students participated in the exercise. Thanks very much to the teacher, Ms. Susan Martin, for inviting us to present to her classes.



Wayne Talo (left) and Chris Olds (right) guide Eighth Grade students through the dissection of lake trout at the Boyne City Middle School on May 25.  
*-Photo by Ms. Susan Martin*

*-Wayne Talo*

### **Jordan River NFH Parades Down Main Street**

Jordan River staff participated in the annual Mancelona Bass Festival Parade on June 3. Project Leader Rick Westerhof, Fishery Biologist Tim Smigielski and Volunteer Ray Puroll represented the hatchery in the parade. Ray's daughter Megan and son Dylan along with Tim's kids Luke and Jill did a great job keeping up with the hatchery truck while giving out candy to the hundreds of onlookers. The parade ended at Palmer Park where Jordan staff set up a table offering fish tattoos and more candy to the visitors. It was a beautiful day for the Service and our partners.



The Jordan River NFH participated in the Mancelona Bass Festival parade.  
*-Photo by Tim Smigielski*

*-Tim Smigielski*

### **Adopt-a-Highway**

We held our second roadside cleanup of the year on July 11, picking up seven bags of trash from both sides of two miles of US131. Thanks to Marilyn Barber of the East Jordan Snowmobile Club for her help.

*-Wayne Talo*

**Jordan River NFH Biologist at “Paws, Claws, Scales and Tails” Public Library Summer Reading Program**

Fishery Biologist Tim Smigielski presented a PowerPoint "What About Lake Trout?" on July 11 at the Otsego County Library. Over 100 children and parents were in attendance during the summer reading program called “Something Fishy”. Kathy Johnson, the education coordinator at the library, learned of the Fish Are Fun presentations at the hatchery and just had to have one. The first group of 58 children and parents attended an 11am presentation and Tim put on another at 2pm for the remaining 40 plus kids and adults. Many parents asked about Fish Are Fun and hatchery tours. Certainly we'll be seeing some of these folks again at the hatchery. Again on July 12 Tim presented a PowerPoint “Exotic Invaders” and displayed many specimens of aquatic nuisance species that plague the Great Lakes. This time he was at the Mancelona Public Library, in Mancelona, Michigan. Tim did one show for about 30 summer readers and adults.

*-Tim Smigielski*

**Tim Smigielski Represents the Jordan River NFH at the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery “Fish Fest” Open House**

The Michigan DNR’s Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery in Mattawan, Michigan held their annual outreach event called “Fish Fest” on July 15, and Tim Smigielski was on hand to represent the USFWS and the Jordan River NFH. It was a hot (93 degrees in the shade) busy day, with many visitors eager to learn about invasive species, the Jordan River NFH, and the Great Lakes Lake Trout Restoration Program. Tim had over 100 visitors to the booth.



Fisheries Biologist Tim Smigielski staffs a booth at the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery's "Fish Fest" Event in July. -Photo by unknown

*-Wayne Talo*



### **Wooden Pony Preschool Tours**

On July 26 and 27, about 20 kids (plus chaperones) per day from the Wooden Pony Preschool of Williamsburg, Michigan toured the Jordan River NFH. John Johnston organized the effort and was assisted by Wayne Talo, Chris Olds, and Andy Pavelek. The kids enjoyed seeing the fish and learning about the hatchery. The first group of kids even made a nice fish-themed mobile for us as a token of their appreciation.

*-Wayne Talo*



Volunteer Andy Pavelek talks about raising lake trout at the Jordan River NFH.  
*-Photo by Wayne Talo*

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

(Nothing to report).

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

#### **Jordan River Biologist Tags...Salmon?**

Paul Haver, “*exotic species* fishery biologist” from the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery, provided his coded wire tagging expertise to an environmental studies class from Boyne City schools. Mr. Lochman’s class is part of a state-sponsored *Salmon in the Schools Program*. Paul helped the students administer coded wire tags and adipose fin clips to several hundred Chinook salmon. The Chinooks were raised by the class to fingerling size from eggs provided by the Michigan DNR hatcheries. The fingerlings were later released into the Boyne River. Anglers have captured and returned coded wire tags from Mr. Lochman’s Chinooks released by his previous students.

*-Tim Smigielski*

## **STEPs and Volunteers Assist with Lake Sturgeon Assessment Project on St. Mary's River**

In June, STEP student Chris Olds and volunteer Andy Pavelek from the Jordan River NFH traveled to Sault Sainte Marie to help the Alpena Fisheries Resource Office (FRO) Biologist Scott Koproski and Alpena STEP Student Meghan Kline with their Lake Sturgeon assessment project in the St. Mary's River. Chris and Andy worked for two days setting and pulling set lines and collecting data. After all the lines were pulled and reset, they began tracking the previously caught lake sturgeon. Any sturgeon that was caught with a length over 50 inches received a tracking unit that was surgically implanted. This allowed Meghan to track the daily movements of individual fish. Seven fish were captured in the two day time period. Two of the seven sturgeon met the 50 inch criteria, so tracking units were implanted. On the last day, Andy pulled up the first female sturgeon of the year. Ten lake sturgeon had been captured previously and all of those were males.



Chris Olds and Andy Pavelek show off a newly radio tagged lake sturgeon just before releasing it back into the wild. -Photo by Scott Koproski

*-Chris Olds and Tim Smigielski*

## **Lake Whitefish Survey Assistance**

On July 13<sup>th</sup>, Andy Pavelek, Jordan River NFH volunteer, spent the day assisting the Alpena FRO with their Lake Huron whitefish survey. Andy worked with Jerry McClain, Scott Koproski, Adam Kowalski (wow...all these 'skis) lifting and resetting gillnets near Rogers City, Michigan. This was Andy's first experience with fish sampling. To do it on the Great Lakes was "awesome". Andy enjoyed the day and the word was "he did well".

Jordan River NFH STEP student Chris Olds and Fisheries Biologist Wayne Talo also made brief trips to Alpena to assist with the whitefish survey during July. By providing this kind of assistance to our other offices, we benefit as much as they do. This work was very educational for us, and we will certainly draw upon this experience when talking about the overall Lake Trout Restoration Program with hatchery visitors. The Jordan River staff looks forward to assisting Alpena FRO as much as possible in the future.

*-Andy Pavelek and Wayne Talo*

## **Jordan River NFH Leader Attends Great Lakes Fish Commission Meeting**

Rick Westerhof, Project Leader of Jordan River NFH, participated in the Great Lakes Fish Commission meeting in Traverse City the week of June 5<sup>th</sup>. Other Service representatives were

Director of Region 3 Robyn Thorson, Alpena FRO Project Leader Jerry McClain, and Bob Adair, Region 3 Great Lakes Program Coordinator.

*-Tim Smigielski*

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

### **Jordan River NFH Biologist Attends Annual Fish Passage Meeting**

Regional fish passage staff and partners met in Alpena, Michigan, May 9-11. Fishery Biologist Tim Smigielski participated in this workshop. Tim has been working in the Jordan River watershed with many partners who are interested in stream restoration and local fisheries issues. It is no secret that the role of National Fish Hatcheries staff in Region 3 has been expanding under current leadership. Tim's interest and experiences, his geographical location, and his work with partners in the watershed could prove to be advantageous to the growing program in the future.

*-Tim Smigielski*

## ***Workforce Management***

### **Volunteer at Jordan River NFH Going into Conservation Law Enforcement**

A recent innovation to Jordan River's volunteer program has been providing diverse opportunities to students and volunteers interested more than just fish culture. Travis Smith, a student enrolled at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, assisted with fish culture duties and learned about hatchery operations while volunteering May 22-27. While here, Project Leader Rick Westerhof scheduled Travis for a ride-along with Michigan DNR Conservation Officer (CO) for Antrim County, Andrea Albert.



Travis Smith

-Photo by Wayne Talo

Travis saw a day in the life of a Conservation Law Enforcement Officer. Andrea, a recent recruit herself, was able to give Travis some very useful information from her own experiences. Travis recently interviewed for the CO Academy and did very well. Certainly this fisheries experience will help him in his future career.

*-Tim Smigielski*