

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Jordan River NFH Accomplishment Report

Partnerships and Accountability

Adopt a Highway Draws Volunteers to the Hatchery

On September 13 Jordan River NFH staff and volunteers completed the two mile highway cleanup on US131. Eight student volunteers from the Concord Academy Charter School participated for this fall cleanup. The students ranged from high school freshmen to seniors. Everyone went through a short orientation session which included a safety video. Once everyone was trained the students and staff donned the fashionable orange vests and work gloves and “Hit the Road.” US131 is a main thoroughfare through Western Michigan where it runs north and south bound from the Indiana border to Petoskey Michigan, about 30 miles north of the hatchery. The crew filled over a dozen bags of litter. The highway cleanup program occurs state-wide in spring, summer and fall. The students and other frequent volunteers come together to reach a common goal and to set an example for the public about our commitment to the resources. After the work is done, everyone goes back to the hatchery for a cook-out lunch. Those who are interested receive a tour of the facility and are given an opportunity to participate in daily work activities, such as weighing feed buckets, feeding tanks or raceways or even folding brochures for the visitor center. This event is not only a benefit to the environment but a benefit to all who participate.



“Too Cool for School” Concord Academy students show off their fashionable highway cleanup vests. - Photo by Tim Smigielski

- Tim Smigielski

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

Assistance with Lake Whitefish Surveys

Fisheries biologist John Johnston and volunteer Hannah Edwards participated in lake whitefish population surveys on Lake Huron during the month of July. This work is carried out by the USFWS Alpena Fisheries Resource Office (FRO). Thanks to Scott Koproski, Adam Kowalski, and Jerry McClain for providing the opportunity to gain new experiences and knowledge.

- Wayne Talo

Jordan River NFH Staff Welcomes Ludington Station Staff during the Jordan River Sea Lamprey Treatment

In early September, Jordan River NFH volunteer Hannah Edwards gained some valuable experience assisting the sea lamprey control survey crew. The crew was out on the Jordan River determining larval sea lamprey densities and locations. Back again in mid-September, the USFWS Sea Lamprey Control program staff was out in full force “Continuing the Battle.” This time they were here right in our backyard. Ludington station staff performed a chemical treatment of the Jordan River during the week of September 10. Hatchery staff cooperated with sea lamprey control field staff, providing access to our discharge manhole (a chemical introduction point) and supplying a vacant residence that was used for lab analysis. We understand that the treatment went well. Treating this watershed is a major undertaking, and the lake trout rehabilitation program surely appreciates the effort.



Biological Science Technician Katrina Glascock of the USFWS Ludington Biological Station at her TFM introduction station at the Jordan River NFH
- Photo by Tim Smigielski

- *Tim Smigielski*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Midwest Region, Environmental Compliance Audit Team Assists National Fish Hatcheries in 2007

Central to the primary mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Midwest Region fisheries program is the production, distribution, and assessment of aquatic species of concern for the American people. Secondly, but of no less importance, is the mandate that we will carry out these and other missions with the least amount of impact to the natural environment. Since early 2000, when Executive Order 13148, Greening the Government through Leadership in Management was signed, the federal government has instituted an ambitious monitoring program to ensure compliance with all applicable environmental laws and regulations. This program, which is carried out at Service facilities, examines a wide range of operational and administrative practices to ensure that all Federal and State regulations are being properly implemented. In addition to regulatory findings, audit teams evaluate practices to ensure that procedures and record keeping practices are within “policy” guidelines set by other guidance such as Executive Orders, Departmental or Service policies, or best management practices. Within the Midwest Region, the fisheries division, in cooperation with the division of Safety, carries out scheduled inspections of all Service fish hatcheries under a proactive approach to ensure adherence to environmental laws and guidelines. During late August 2007, a regional three person team composed of safety and environmental experts visited the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery (NFH) in Elmira, Michigan for a scheduled Environmental Compliance inspection of the facilities. The team, working with station staff, completed the inspection over a several day period. The audit considered eleven major environmental categories which include Federal, State, and Local Regulations, Required Practices, and Management Practices. The inspection team noted a handful of findings categorized as minor in

nature. These findings will be addressed at the facility and regional levels over the next several months to ensure the hatchery meets all required standards. The staff of Jordan River NFH is especially appreciative of the assistance that the regional inspection team of Patrick McDermott, John Hoffman, and Craig Nibbe offered in the form of suggested solutions and best management practice changes. For further information about this project or other programs offered at Jordan River National Fish Hatchery, please contact Roger Gordon, Hatchery Manager at 231-584-2461 or roger_gordon@fws.gov.

-Roger Gordon

Public Use

Au Sable Institute Students Enjoy Educational Opportunities at Jordan River NFH

The Au Sable Institute is an educational institution of higher learning. The students who often attend programs at the hatchery are from various backgrounds and many different colleges and universities. Au Sable's curriculum emphasizes field experiences and hands-on projects in environmental studies. Annually, several classes stop at the hatchery and tour the facility. Staff speak to the students about careers and education, and there is usually a specific program topic, for instance aquatic invasive species. Three classes visited the hatchery during the last week of July. The students were studying field biology, ecology, and environmental stewardship. Great stuff! Fisheries Biologist John Johnston and STEP student Chris Olds provided tours. Jordan River NFH will continue to work with Au Sable to enhance the partnership in learning and continue to engage our future resource professionals.



Students and staff from Au Sable Institute take a moment to pose for the camera at the Jordan river NFH - USFWS photo

- Tim Smigielski

Jordan River National Fish Hatchery Hosts "Michigan Autumn Series"

The Jordan River National Fish Hatchery hosted its first of three informational seminars scheduled for fall 2007 on the evening of September 5. These programs, under the heading of "Michigan Autumn Series," highlight interesting topics related to the environment in the Great Lakes region. The series is hosted by the Friends of Jordan River National Fish Hatchery and is targeted to adults and children who are interested in the natural world of the Upper Great Lakes. The first installment of the series was titled "Geology of the Jordan River Valley" and was presented by Janet Smigielski, a Senior Geologist with the Michigan Geological Survey Division of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The speaker covered a wide range of geological topics relating to the formation of the Upper Great Lakes with special emphasis to the geomorphology of

Michigan. Attendees were treated to Ms. Smigielski's considerable knowledge of local formations and land types and many interesting questions were answered. In addition to the presentation, an extensive display of eye catching rock and mineral samples were available for the audience to handle and ask questions about. Given the reaction of the guests and the amount of questions raised and answered, this is an event that will be repeated in the future! For more information about this or any of the other programs sponsored by Jordan River NFH, please contact Roger Gordon at 231-584-2461 or e-mail at roger_gordon@fws.gov.

-Roger Gordon

Wooden Pony Daycare Visits Hatchery

On August 8 and 9, staff and children from the Wooden Pony Daycare of Williamsburg, Michigan visited the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery. STEP student Chris Olds and Biologist John Johnston provided tours. The kids did some arts and crafts, making colorful trout for the hatchery, and they had a picnic here before returning home. The Wooden Pony Daycare also paid us a visit last year, so we take it as a complement that groups such as this make seeing us an annual event.

- Wayne Talo

Former Jordan River NFH Volunteer Speaker at Autumn Series

Scott Rozanski, of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, presented information about the weather patterns of Michigan's northern lower peninsula on the evening of September 18. A small but interested crowd gathered around a fire pit to learn about lake effect snow, Doppler radar, and the challenges of forecasting Michigan's weather. We were especially appreciative of Scott's willingness to present, as he was actually filling in for a scheduled speaker who could not attend. The originally scheduled theme for the evening was *Michigan's Shining Stars* (a discussion of astronomical observations seen from Michigan and upcoming celestial events).

-Wayne Talo



Thanks to the Wooden Pony Campers for visiting the Jordan River NFH and for making such wonderful artwork for our staff. - Photo by Wayne Talo

Annual Hunting and Fishing Expo a Busy Day for Biologists

Once again the Northland Sportsmen's Club Family Hunting and Fishing Expo was well attended. The expo was held at the sportsman's club on Sunday September 9. More than 800 children were registered for the event, and an estimated 400 adults enjoyed the beautiful day and the wonderful, well organized event. The day featured the ever popular trout fishing pond, BB gun range, wild game snacks and of course the USFWS Jordan River NFH display. John Johnston and Tim Smigielski could not compete with the cotton candy vendor but their display came in a close second. John explained everything from aquatic nuisance species to "What do you feed the fish?" Tim frantically replaced depleted literature and applied trout tattoos onto the arms, hands and faces of the excited kids. This is the fourth year in a row that Jordan River NFH has been asked to attend the expo. This event is an ideal environment to tell our story and promote USFWS programs.



Fisheries Biologist John Johnston educates the public about aquatic invasive species in the Great Lakes at the Northland Sportsman's Club Expo. - Photo by Tim Smigielski

- Tim Smigielski

Michigan "In the Woods" at Jordan River NFH

As part of a guest speaker series held at the hatchery, Greg Gatesy, with Michigan DNR Forest Management Division was on hand the evening of September 11. Greg, who has been a forester and fire officer for over twenty years, started his presentation with a slide show of a variety of woodland scenes. The rest of the evening turned into an "Ask the Expert" type of forum. Greg fielded questions regarding clear cutting, thinning, timber management for wildlife, private land timber management, old growth forests, the Jordan River Valley, and wild fires. Greg was very laid back and his dry humor was well received. The most popular topic was the recent "Sleeper Lake" area fire which burned 18,000 acres in Michigan's Upper Peninsula near Newberry, Michigan. Greg was on-site coordinating control efforts. He told some interesting and exciting stories, which were both entertaining and informative. The fire was ignited by a lightning strike. There were thousands of lightning strikes across the Upper Peninsula over the weekend that the fire started. The crowd was surprised to hear Greg say that this fire was "beneficial" to the ecosystem, since it burned through primarily marsh grasses. Together with the USFWS and other agencies Greg helps protect and manage the woods and watersheds of Michigan. Just days later new green growth was visible in the



Michigan DNR Forester Greg Gatesy entertains new friends group Members Ron and Mary Belanger at the Jordan River NFH during the "Autumn Series" - Photo by Tim Smigielski

burn area. Everyone let Greg know that we appreciate what he does for the resource and for the people of the State of Michigan.

- *Tim Smigielski*

Northern Classical Academy Students Learn About the Service

On September 27 nineteen students from an educational organization near Grand Rapids, Michigan enjoyed a tour at Jordan River NFH. The students ranged from 7th to 12th grade. They arranged for one of the focus presentations offered through outreach at the hatchery. Lead Fishery Biologist Tim Smigielski lead the tour of the facility starting at the water sources and ending with explanation of effluent water treatment and everything in between. The staff of the academy was particularly interested in aquatic invasive species in the Great Lakes. Tim discussed the lake trout rehabilitation program and the sea lamprey connection. Tim also talked about the complex and ever-changing ecosystem in the Great Lakes and how the public can assist resource agencies in reducing the further spread of aquatic invasive species and diseases.

- *Tim Smigielski*

Cooperation with Native Americans

(Nothing to report).

Leadership in Science and Technology

Sunlight Inhibition Study Undertaken at Jordan River NFH

Beginning in September 2007 and continuing through June of 2008, Jordan River NFH staff will be conducting an investigation of cataract incidence in cultured lake trout at the facility. High prevalence of “nuclear” cataracts in the Seneca Lake strain lake trout has been documented during pre-stocking health and quality examinations in the past. Cataracts could possibly inhibit their survival. Staff at Jordan River NFH hypothesize that sunlight in open raceway conditions causes the formation of cataracts and increases the development of existing cataracts. Two separate lots of Seneca Lake strain



Lake trout fingerling

USFWS photo

fish were formed from fingerlings representing all egg takes from the fall of 2006. The treatment group is being kept indoors in a “sunlight inhibited” or dark environment. The other group, the control, is being reared under standard conditions out-of-doors in the open raceways. Throughout

the rearing cycle, random samples will be collected with a total of 600 pairs of eyes to be examined from each group per month. The eyes will be categorized with regard to the presence of and stage of cataract formation. A final report will be available by September 2008.

-Tim Smigielski

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

(Nothing to report).

Workforce Management

Hatchery Volunteers and STEP Move on to College

Volunteers Hannah Edwards and Dan Myers left their work at the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery to begin their college careers at Michigan State University (East Lansing, MI) this fall. Hannah volunteered full-time for more than two months here. During her tenure, she also gained experience in fisheries survey work with the Alpena FRO and in sea lamprey control with the Ludington Biological Station. Dan Myers has volunteered at the hatchery since April 2005, helping take care of fish and serving as a board member of the Friends of the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery. Chris Olds has been in the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) at Jordan River since 2004. He is in his junior year at Lake Superior State University (Sault Ste Marie, MI), where is studying in the fisheries biology program. Chris has recently been hired into the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). This means he has been hired as a permanent employee. So congratulations, Chris! Hannah, Dan, and Chris are excellent workers and surely have great careers awaiting them.



Volunteers Hannah Edwards (left) and Dan Myers (right) and STEP student Chris Olds (center) were presented Certificates of Appreciation
- Photo by Wayne Talo

- Wayne Talo

Jordan River NFH Biologist on Education Advisory Committee

Fisheries Biologist Paul Haver has been asked to give his time on an advisory committee formed to have input with the Boyne City High School curriculum. Natural resources instructor Don Lochman formed the committee late this summer. The committee will have input on class activities, employment opportunities, job shadowing and volunteering in natural resource fields. The committee, comprised of local natural resource professionals, will meet two to three times annually. Paul will also be assisting the class with *Trout In the Class Room*. The class will be raising a couple dozen lake trout this year. Mr. Lochman brings his classes to the hatchery every year for a tour and for specialized programs regarding careers and education. This year was no exception, as Paul led the students through the hatchery on October 3 explaining hatchery operations, lake trout rehabilitation, careers with the USFWS and many other topics.



Fisheries Biologist Paul Haver assists students in the dissection of lake trout. - USFWS photo

- *Tim Smigielski*