



SUBMITTED PHOTO

An artist's rendering shows what the completed hatchery complex at Big Springs in Uintah Canyon is expected to look like when it's completed.

Ute Tribe fish hatchery planned at Big Springs

By ViAnn Prestwich
Uintah Basin Standard

Construction is ready to begin at the Big Springs recreational area in Uintah Canyon on a fish hatchery that will be operated by the Ute Indian Tribe.

The tribe's Fish and Wildlife Department is partnering with the Utah Reclamation, Mitiga-

tion, and Conservation Commission to build the new facility. Federal stimulus money will provide \$5.5 million for the project. Jay Groves, fisheries biologist for the Ute Tribe, confirmed that the tribe will contribute approximately \$1.7 million.

Big Springs Pond is roughly 14 miles northeast of White-rocks in Uintah Canyon and has been a popular recreation fishing spot. Groves said construction on the hatchery should not discourage those who still want to take their families up for a day of fishing.

"We're going to try to limit a lot of the work on the weekends," he said. "This will allow recreational fishing to remain open. This is a long-term project and we want to keep fishing open as much as possible."

Groves said most of the work will be done behind the pond and the road between the two locations will be closed to tourists.

The Big Springs hatchery

will raise traditional sport fish such as rainbow trout, brook trout, and brown trout for tribal fisheries on the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation. It will also produce conservation species like Colorado River cutthroat trout for projects on the reservation.

The hatchery is expected to have a production capacity of 16,000 pounds of cold water fish annually.

Included in the five-acre project will be a hatchery building for egg incubation, hatching, fry-rearing units, indoor spawning, and brood fish holding. There will also be outdoor rearing units, a discharge treatment pond, a manager's residence, a trailer pad for temporary staff, and a visitor information kiosk.

The tribe's Fish and Wildlife Department will administer and operate the hatchery. Eventually there will be two full-time positions and one part-time position needed to staff the facility.