



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Connecting Children with Nature

*Southwest Region
Division of Fisheries*



Recreational Fishing and Outdoor Education Program
Highlights 2011

The Southwest Fisheries Program has implemented creative ways to connect youth and young adults with nature

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SOUTHWEST REGION DIVISION OF FISHERIES

Connecting Children with Nature

Recreational Fishing and Outdoor Education Program Highlights 2011 Review

Starting in 2010 the Recreational Fishing and Outdoor Education Program (RFOEP) has effectively delivered the following activities to young people in Region 2. Joaquin Baca, Environmental Education Specialist served as Coordinator for the RFOEP. The Coordinator dedicated time to:

- Provide expertise and support to the Southwest Region Fisheries staff so they can provide outdoor activities and experiences to connect youth with nature
- Correlation of Native Fish in the Classroom curriculum to state education science standards
- Coordinate events with other FWS programs and with State and Tribal efforts
- Expand aquatic education and outreach efforts across the region
- Develop and maintain a library of educational books and materials that can be checked out by field stations
- Develop interactive displays, outreach, and activities to be shared among the stations
- Develop statewide fisheries brochures
- Fisheries website maintenance and updates.

With RFOEP funding we were able to purchase the following for our field stations:

- Second printing of statewide brochures & rack cards that highlight each of our field stations
- Fishing poles and equipment for fishing derbies and clinics.
- Brochures, coloring books, stickers and posters,
- Native Fish in the Classroom aquariums and related supplies.
- Cameras and media equipment.
- Classroom fish dissection kits for 3 hatcheries.



• We were also able to support the following programs and events:

- Biologist-in-Training and Native Fish Identification courses – at three National Fish Hatcheries (NFH) and one field office.
- Hatchery Outdoor Program that provides hands-on wildlife learning experiences for local fifth grade students – Inks Dam NFH
- Restoration and opening of two additional interpretive trails– Inks Dam NFH
- Participation in several summer camps and youth practicum that targeted Native American youth – New Mexico Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO)
- Youth fishing derbies at Kaibab Paiute Indian Reservation and Fort Apache Indian Reservation – Arizona FWCO
- Participation in the National Fisheries Friends Partnership and local Friends Groups at Tishomingo NFH, Inks Dam NFH
- Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) Programs at five FWS stations and the Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery
- Restoration and dedication of Environmental Education Center – Inks Dam NFH.
- Archery on the hatchery – Mora NFH



Engage - Recreational Fishing Opportunities



Jennifer Johnson, USFWS

Aldo Leopold Day in New Mexico

Aldo Leopold, the father of wildlife management and a pioneer in land ethics and wilderness conservation, accredited his profound admiration for nature and ecology to spending countless hours in the woods, prairies, and rivers of Iowa as a youth. Following Aldo's paradigm, the U.S. Forest Service in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (NMFWCO and Mora NFH), and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish; held its third annual Kid's Fishing Derby and Festival at Lake Roberts in June. More than 80 kids participated in the event and took part in angling, fly-tying, aquatic insect identification, and casting competitions. As an extra bonus this year, Mora NFH stocked 230 Gila trout (ranging from one to four pounds) that were retired from the Gila Trout Recovery Breeding Program.



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More than 80 kids participated in the Derby and Festival.

Fishing Derby Hosted by Uvalde NFH

The Uvalde NFH Annual Fishing Derby is similar to the Fourth of July or Christmas. It's a time for having fun and expecting a big surprise! A few weeks before June, plans were in the works to get one of the ponds ready for kids to come enjoy a few hours at the facility. With them brought hopes of catching the biggest fish ever. The amazement in a child's eyes when they saw their catch at the end of their pole, the smiles, laughter and excitement made it all worthwhile. The importance of protecting our natural resources was emphasized by fishery staff in hopes that the kids fishing today will one day return with their kids and do the same.



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A young girl waiting for the big fish to bite

Tishomingo NFH Participates in Several Derbies

In addition to hosting their 17th annual fishing derby in June, the Tishomingo NFH also transported channel catfish for kids fishing derbies to the Fort Sill Military Base and the Broken Arrow Optimist Club in Oklahoma; the first fishing clinic at the Tishomingo NWR; and the inaugural fishing derby in Lubbock, Texas, which was sponsored by the 100 Black Men of West Texas and the Texas Game Wardens' Association. Fishing derbies provide a free fishing experience that teaches children about recreational fishing and why healthy aquatic ecosystems are important to people and the environment. The Tishomingo NFH is proud to work with partners sponsoring a growing number of outdoor events that provide America's youth the chance to connect with nature in such a positive way.



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A proud daughter shows her father catfish she caught at the annual Tishomingo NFH Fishing Derby.

Trout Fishing at Willow Beach NFH



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Anglers line up at Lake Mohave's fishing piers to catch rainbow trout stocked by Willow Beach NFH.

Willow Beach NFH stocks 12" rainbow trout into Lake Mohave 52 weeks a year. The trout provide outdoor recreational opportunity for the local and surrounding community, drawing anglers from up to 100 miles away. There has been a significant increase in angling, particularly from families with children, since completion of the Willow Beach Marina Renovation and the Hoover Dam Bypass. Providing an avenue for the public to connect with nature is paramount to supporting conservation and the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Fishing Derby – AZFWCO

Jennifer Johnson represented the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the first annual “Every Kid Counts Open High School Fishing Tournament” at Roosevelt Lake. Volunteers provided boats and guiding assistance, while AZFWCO provided fishing tackle and digital cameras for prizes. The Arizona winners competed at the 2011 High School Fishing World Finals in Russellville, Arkansas.



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Participants in the first Annual Arizona High School Fishing Tournament.

Educate - Environmental Education and Outreach



Karin Eldridge USFWS

Native Fish in Classroom, Arizona FWCO

For the second year Arizona FWCO was able to place aquaria in local classrooms. The Native Fish In Classroom program is an interdisciplinary project-based curriculum in which students in grades 2-7 learn about cold-water conservation while raising native Apache Trout from eggs to fingerlings in a classroom aquarium. AZFWCO partnered with State and Local agencies to provide the program which culminates in a field trip to release trout in native river habitat.

Highlights from the NFIC program and other outreach and education events can be found on the AZFWCO Facebook page.
www.facebook.com/AZFWCO.



Jennifer Johnson, USFWS

AZFWCO's Jennifer Johnson Fish Biologist explains the rules for the aquarium.

Native Fish in the Classroom, New Mexico FWCO



Joaquin Baca, USFWS

Angela James, Sara Blocker, Fish Biologists, drop off an aquarium at Phyllis Perry's Classroom.

For the first year NMFWCO placed aquaria in 4 local classrooms. NFIC is an interdisciplinary program in which students in grades 2-7 learn about water conservation while raising native Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout and other native New Mexico fish species from eggs to fingerlings in a classroom aquarium. Partnering with NM Game and Fish the program culminates with a student field trip to release the fish in native river habitat. Additionally Angela James and Sara Blocker produced the Southwest Region NFIC Curriculum Guide for participating schools. What a great way to get kids involved in conservation!

Fish in the Classroom – Dexter NFH

Dexter NFHTC research staff routinely assists local educators with environmental education and science based curriculums. These students learn about what is done at the Center and what they can do now and in the future to help protect our natural resources. To aide in peeking the youth’s interest, Dexter NFHTC is able to provide direct support with supplies needed for specific classroom activities. For example, a 45 gallon salt-water aquarium complete with live sand, fish and invertebrates was purchased for the Dexter High School Science Classes. Dexter NFHTC staff completed the set up and the high school science teacher now uses this aquarium as a teaching aide to help motivate and excite her students.



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Staff at Dexter NFHTC provide equipment and technical assistance for use in environmental education

Chub in the Classroom – AZFWCO



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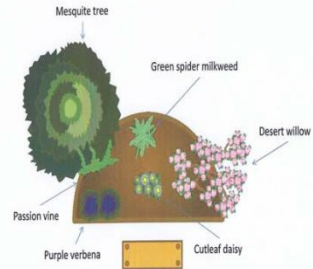
Students saying goodbye to their roundtail chub.

AZFWCO’s “Chub in the Classroom” project came to an end in May. The students sadly said goodbye to the Roundtail Chub for this school year. Before saying goodbye, the students participated in an art contest with the winner’s artwork being featured on the front of the “Chub in the Classroom” t-shirts, which were given to each student.

Pollinator Gardens - Inks Dam NFH

Inks Dam NFH's 2011 YCC crew completed the plans for a pollinator habitat at the hatchery. The habitat plan included a total of five pollinator beds that contain native drought resistant plants, two short trails, hummingbird feeders, bee boxes, two benches and interpretive markers. Sign boards were constructed to highlight important pollinator species such as the Rufous hummingbird. Pollinator efforts at Inks Dam comprised the second highest point total for the 2011 USFWS Pollinator Challenge.

Plants were donated by the Highland Lakes master naturalists and master gardeners and the Texas Native Plant Society.



A drawing and picture of the pollinator habitat installed at Inks Dam NFH



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Arizona Game & Fish Department Outdoor Expo – AZFWCO

Jennifer Johnson, Tammy Knecht, Jim Walters, and Marina Dazen ran a booth at the annual Arizona Game and Fish Department Annual Outdoor Expo in Phoenix, Arizona. The AZFWCO booth included live Apache trout, native fish trivia, there were chances for youth to try their hand at being fish biologists, and lots of brochures and handouts. More than 42,000 people participated in the event.



Tammy Knecht and Jim Walters helping students fill out datasheets, remove fish from gill nets, measure fish, and locate tags on fish they "caught."

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Archery - Mora NFH

Partnering with Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge, Mora National Fish Hatchery held their first Archery Class on November 5, 2010. The class was open to all age groups, with a focus to quickly and efficiently teach individuals the basic skills and needed techniques to begin archery. As a true family event, archery is a sport that teaches patience's, focus, and team building. It allows everyone, regardless of physical ability, to participate and enjoy.



Teresa Martinez USFWS

Above, local students learn archery. Below, hatchery staff receive National Archery in the Schools Program training.



Joaquin Baca USFWS

Environmental Education Center – Inks Dam NFH



Joaquin Baca USFWS

Environmental Education Center

In 2011 renovation of a 70-year old stone cottage, formerly owned by the Lower Colorado River Authority, for an Environmental Education building was completed. The Friends of Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery completed the education building interior renovations and landscaping, donating a total of 934 hours of work. The purpose of the Environmental Education building is to provide interpretive and educational materials and programs that will enhance the visiting public's appreciation of our Nation's fish and wildlife resources and thus encourage the use of the recreational opportunities provided by the hatchery. In 2011, 10,000 youth were reached by over 50 education and outreach events.

Student Biology Workshops - Dexter NFHTC



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Fourth graders learn about fish anatomy

Dexter NFHTC staff participated in “Superday”, a series of workshops offered at Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell for gifted fourth through sixth grade students in the Roswell Independent School District. Staff conducted workshops for four groups of students. Throughout the day, students enjoyed learning about the importance of genetic variation and the role that fish hatcheries play in the conservation of fishes. A hands-on activity was used to help students understand how extensive phenotypic variation could be generated using only the four DNA bases. Students were able to create a wide variety of “fish” by choosing strands of “DNA” with different base pair combinations to code for physical traits such as body shape, color, and tail shape.

Cub Scouts – Dexter NFHTC

While monitoring the health and wellbeing of hatchery and wild fish populations is the primary focus of the work accomplished by Dexter NFHTC Fish Health Center staff, educating the public about the importance of the Service’s Fish Health mission is also an important part of the job. Such was the case when Cub Scout Troop #214 came for a visit. The scouts received a tour that focused on fish culture and fish health. In the Fish Health Parasitology laboratory, the troop viewed several species of fish parasites. Troop #214 also observed samples being processed for whirling disease testing. As always, looking at tapeworms was considered the highlight of the fish tour.



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Cub Scouts visit the Fish Health Lab at Dexter NFHTC

Biologist-in-Training (BiT) Program Continued at AZFWCO

Biologist-in-Training (BiT) is an exciting program designed to guide students through a fun, hands-on exploration of aquatic habitats. The activities are adaptable to fit a variety of needs. Several stations in the region have used portions of the program in their educational programs.

Arizona FWCO staff presented a BiT course to 30 students (grades K-3) at the Successful Beginnings Charter School and to 15 youth at the Sequoia Village School “Panther Pals” After-School Program. The students learned about fish anatomy, assembled a fish out of people, and created their own fish to take home. Staff also presented a BiT course to 120 summer campers (ages 5-12) at the Flagstaff Athletic Club. Students learned about native fish conservation and fish anatomy and morphology. Students went home with many prizes ranging from new fishing poles to native fish bookmarks and stickers.



Students learn about fish anatomy by making a fish out of people during a BiT course.

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Tishomingo NFH Conducts BiT Educational Clinics



Kids learning about the fins, colors, and body shapes of fish during a BiT course.

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Tishomingo NFH staff developed and conducted two new clinics for youth. The first class, “Native Fish ID”, focused on proper identification and collection of common native fishes. Children learned to net and seine fish from a display pool then participated in hands-on activities related to proper fish identification. Hatchery biologists guided kids and participating parents on a tour of the hatchery, followed by activities and games that focused on conservation of aquatic resources. At the end of the course children received BiT completion certificates and stickers.

Johnson County Fair – Tishomingo NFH

The Tishomingo NFH set up informational booths for two different annual events in September. Biologists provided outreach materials and information at the Johnston County Fair, located in Tishomingo, OK, and the annual Oklahoma Wildlife EXPO located in Guthrie, north of Oklahoma City. Both events featured a “Kid’s Day” which invited all school aged children from local areas to attend. A pictorial display of hatchery projects provided a background for the live alligator snapping turtles display. Another show stopper included a three month old alligator gar that kids and adults loved to watch through aquaria glass. Biologists received many questions about the fish pointing out differences between the alligator gar and the three other native species of gar found in Oklahoma.



Kids observe a juvenile alligator gar

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New Outdoor Education Center and Trail – Uvalde NFH



Karin Eldridge and the Outdoor Classroom under construction.

As a complement to the new wildlife pond developed during 2010, Uvalde NFH staff continued construction of a new outdoor education classroom, interpretive trail, bird viewing pier and gazebo that will offer nature lovers and local students another venue to observe the area’s abundant wildlife. By the time the trail is complete, Says Grant Webber, it will include benches and tables for picnics for tourists and folks who might be close enough to take a lunch break beside the lake.”

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Kiss the Critter – Dexter NFHTC

Dexter NFHTC staff participated in the Dexter Elementary School's "Kiss the Critter" event in May. Each year, the entire school raises money by holding a penny drive. The funds raised are used toward obtaining a guest speaker who visited in the fall 2012 semester. To make it fun, the class who raised the most pennies got to silly string the class that raised the least amount of pennies. In addition, the teacher whose class raised the least amount of pennies had to kiss a fish. Dexter NFHTC provided the 2-pound fish that Principal King had to kiss.



Dexter NFHTC provided this years fish to kiss

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School Tours – Dexter NFHTC



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Staff from Dexter NFHTC discuss hatchery and tech center operations with 4th graders from a local school

School tours resumed at the Dexter NFHTC. Groups from Valley Christian Academy, All Saints Catholic School, and Hagerman High School toured the Molecular Ecology, Physiology & Pathobiology, Fish Health labs, and Fish Culture facilities. Information was shared about Dexter's current research, diagnostics, genetics, fish culture, and conservation programs. Students were able to observe many of the species reared at Dexter. After the tour, the Hagerman High School FFA students were interested in learning more about culturing fish and plan to set up a culture system at their school.

Friends Group - NFH

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Alligator snapping turtle hatchlings at Tishomingo NFH

The Tishomingo NFH has a new friends group, Friends of the Alligator Snapping Turtle (FAST). The group is comprised of biologists from state agencies and academic institutions in support of the alligator snapping turtle program at the hatchery. FAST has already secured \$11,000 in funding from the Delta Foundation. The donated funds will be used to purchase an environmental chamber to expand hatchling production, tracking equipment for research and monitoring, and heat pumps for the alligator snapping turtle recirculation system at the hatchery. Through their contacts throughout the nation, FAST plans to continue searching for donations to support the turtle program at the hatchery by improving research and assessment abilities with the goal of reestablishing and managing this species throughout its range.

Graduate Research Projects at Dexter NFH&TC

The Molecular Ecology Laboratory at Dexter NFHTC is working with several graduate students from New Mexico State University (NMSU). The most recent is Rene Galindo (pictured) who is a first year Masters student of Dr. Colleen Caldwell at NMSU. Rene is using the facilities at Dexter to conduct population genetic studies on Rio Grande chub from New Mexico, southern Colorado, and Texas. Dexter is also working with Krista Heideman, a Ph.D. student of Dr. Michele Nishiguchi, in the Department of Biology at NMSU. Krista is conducting genetic research at both the population and taxonomic levels on several different species of chub (*Gila* spp.) that occur in the Colorado River Basin. Both students are working to finish research products that will help in the conservation of their respective species.



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NMSU students using facilities at Dexter NFHTC for graduate research projects

Dragonfly Festival Roswell, New Mexico

Juliana Halvorson



Kids trying to catch a dragonfly with a little help from a FWS employee.

Dexter NFH&TC staff participated in the annual Dragonfly Festival at the Bitter Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. A living stream display was set up with razorback sucker, bonytail, and Colorado pikeminnow for the public to see. Staff described Dexter's program to the visitors and answered questions concerning the Centers activities and mission. An estimated 2,000 to 2,500 people attended.



Tishomingo Summer STEM Teacher Program

Tishomingo NFH staff setup educational booths at Murray State Park and the Greater Southwest Historical Museum in Ardmore, OK. The event at Murray State Park reached 150 children from four area schools in OK. Each class of fourth graders spent approximately 25 minutes at the booth while biologists described and answered questions on why and how each species is reared at the hatchery.



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4th Grade Class at Murray State Park after completing a course on aquatic ecology.

Hatchery Tours at Tishomingo NFH



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Local girl scouts check out the fish rearing raceways at Tishomingo NFH.

The Tishomingo NFH conducts about 50 scheduled hatchery tours per year, but this year it saw a 40% increase in visitation by academic/civic groups during the busy quarter. Besides welcoming many unscheduled visits during this period, the hatchery conducted first time tours for the Ichthyology Department of Fort Hays State University, the Herpetology class of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, the Trinity Lutheran Senior Citizens group, and a local Girl Scout troop. The Tishomingo NFH uses these tours to speak about the role that the Service and the hatchery play in species conservation and environmental stewardship.

Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Sanctuary - NMFWCO



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Amy Biehl Charter High School students help with non native plant species removal

NMFWCO and Amy Biehl Charter High School, along with several other partners have teamed up in developing the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Sanctuary Environmental Education Center located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. October of 2011 was the first sanctuary site visit for the Amy Biehl students, 10 freshman students spent the afternoon removing and learning about invasive non-native vegetation. Students will continue to spend time each month for the 2011-2012 school years at the sanctuary doing site volunteer work. Future duties will include; non-native species removal, sedimentation build up removal, pollinator garden design and planting, cotton wood tree protection against beavers and trail design and construction.

Professional of the Year Award – AZFWCO



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Jennifer Johnson receives Professional of the Year award.

Congratulations to Jennifer Johnson who was presented with the Arizona/ New Mexico American Fisheries Society (AFS) "Professional of the Year Award" at the recent AZ/NM AFS Annual Meeting held in Pinetop Arizona on February 3-5, 2011. Johnson, a Fishery Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Arizona Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (AZFWCO), was recognized for her considerable efforts in fisheries research and management, and for developing, and increasing fisheries education programs in many important and creative ways.

Dedicated RFOEP Coordinator – Southwest Region

Starting in 2011, Southwest Region hired a dedicated RFOEP Coordinator. The position titled Environmental Education Specialist includes some of the following responsibilities; provide expertise and support to the Southwest Region Fisheries staff so they can provide outdoor activities and experiences to connect youth with nature, coordinate events with other FWS programs and with State and Tribal efforts, expand aquatic education and outreach efforts across the region. Development of curriculum and state education standard correlations. Fisheries website maintenance and updates.



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Joaquin Baca and sons

Volunteers at our Hatcheries

Many of our stations host and reach out to local volunteers. Volunteer duties include; hatchery maintenance, hatchery staff duties and environmental education. The following are just two examples.

Inks Dam NFH, with the help of the Balcones NWR and Bosque NWR, developed a volunteer program in order to bring together skills and knowledge for opportunities aimed at serving the specific needs of the hatchery and refuges. The volunteer group has nearly 40 members with over half regularly contributing time at the hatchery. Additionally, two volunteers stepped into the part-time roles of Office and Maintenance assistants, adding 20-hours each week of valuable volunteer time.

Volunteers at Uvalde NFH work on projects that include wiring, plumbing, construction, project design, running errands, caring for Texas wild-rice, feeding fish, assisting with fish tagging, assisting with pond harvesting, taking photos and videos, and collecting water quality data. The amount of money saved in two years is estimated to be ten's of thousands of dollars. Volunteers stay on the hatchery from November through March and work approximately 650 hours each for the time they are here. It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Randy Nador, one of Uvalde NFH winter volunteers. Randy and his surviving wife Sharon each logged over 1,300 volunteer hours and saved the station thousands of dollars in the past two seasons. In addition to Randy's hard work and dedication towards conservation, he was a great person and had a huge impact on the staff, the station, and those that he met. He will be greatly missed.

Karin Eldridge, USFWS



Randy and Sharon Nador, Uvalde NFH



Volunteers help repair holes in seines and other nets, Inks Dam NFH

Wade Wilson, USFWS

Employ - Youth in Conservation Careers

My Summer at the Hatchery

My summer experience at the Williams Creek Fish Hatchery was incredible. I heard about the 8-week internship with the YCC (Youth Conservation Corps) from my mom's friend Dan Ragen. Since I'm interested in Marine Biology, it was the perfect opportunity to start gaining work experience and knowledge for my future career.

On the first day I learned how much work went into a fish hatchery. Complex medicines, water temperatures, food measurements, and many other factors had to be controlled down to the exact number. One small adjustment to fish life styles could cause a massive fish kill. Each day different jobs were assigned among the workers and the four YCC kids.

My favorite job was stocking. The first place I went to was Cibecue. Fish were weighed, then loaded into trucks with tanks and driven straight to the rivers/streams. Then they were carried to the water in individual nets, spread throughout several locations until the tank was empty. It was fun to see all the beautiful areas in Arizona I wouldn't have seen otherwise and be apart of something that brought so much joy to people when they saw us coming.

Other tasks at the hatchery were feeding the fish in the inside tank houses and outside raceways. When I worked outside, to get the food from one raceway to the next we would drive a feed truck or the tiger trucks. The tiger trucks were stick shift, which I had not learned yet. Neither had the other youth, giving us the chance to learn a useful life skill.

A few of the other jobs were grading fish, moving tanks, cleaning tanks, fin clipping, pressure washing, loading fish, and picking mortars. There was always something to be done. I defiantly built some muscle and got dirty.

All of the YCC and me are still really good friends and I'm so glad I got to work with them this summer. We all have memories we will never forget. The employees at the Williams Creek and Alchesay Fish Hatchery supported and taught us so much. They even threw us a party on our last day of work. Every day brought something new and I never stopped learning. My experiences this summer were amazing and they will follow me for the rest of my life.

Rachael Grena



Southwest Texas College Visits Uvalde NFH



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Students visit Uvalde NFH for a tour of the facilities

Southwest Texas Junior College's zoology class toured Uvalde NFH in late March. Students were excited to complete a report based on the tour and asked many questions during the tour to help with their assignment. We discussed basic fish husbandry, disease prevention, and why it became necessary to keep and propagate the specific species we have on station. In part due to the tsunami and nuclear exposure concerns in Japan, we also discussed benefits and health advisories concerning fish consumption. Students were enthusiastic and seemed to really enjoy the experience. The class presented the hatchery with a framed picture signed by the students. The College's microbiology class will be the next to tour the hatchery.

Career Fair – Dexter NFHTC

Dexter NFHTC participated in the annual POS-i-Tive Change Career Fair at the Dexter High School. Staff members met with students (grades 8-12) in a round table discussion of multiple career opportunities and answered student's questions concerning training required for the different professions represented. The feedback from the students was superb, and many students inquired how to apply for upcoming Youth Conservation Corps positions available at the Dexter NFHTC during the coming summer months and how they could help conserve, protect, and enhance natural environments for future generations.



Dexter NFHTC staff interact with students from Dexter High School

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Tribal Youth Conservation Corp – Mescalero, New Mexico



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YCC constructed 7-miles of trail between the fish hatchery and the Head start Center.

For the fifth consecutive year, the Tribal Youth Conservation Corps (TYCC) was an essential component that made fish rearing and delivery operations and special projects a reality. Of primary importance were the excellent training opportunities our youth were afforded during the summer. Some of the presentation changed minds and direction of the youth. The youngsters were responsible, accountable, and eager to take on even larger tasks throughout the summer. They were able to accomplish and exceed all basic daily operation and maintenance functions.

Youth Hires - AZFWCO

AZFWCO continued their youth hiring program in 2011. Of the 14 positions filled this season 10 were STEP students and of the 14 positions hired, 7 were tribal members. Crew members completed important work for the Apache Trout Recovery Program. This included eight barrier evaluations, seven population surveys, and removal of nonnative fishes from three streams. Crew members also assisted with fish surveys on other reservations in Arizona as well as other projects across the state. AZFWCO also hired one STEP student to work on the giant salvinia project at the Parker office.



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2011 Youth Hires, AZFWCO

Middle Rio Grande Tribal YCC – NMFWCO



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Fish passage crossing construction on the Rio Paguete.

The 1st Annual Middle Rio Grande Tribal Youth Conservation Corp (TYCC) was sponsored by New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NMFWCO). The TYCC crew was exposed to a variety of projects and learned about how each Native American Tribe manages their natural resources. They were provided a lot of hands of training, interaction, and communication with multiple departments. At the conclusion of the program, a few individuals expressed an interest in majoring in natural resources and becoming biologists/managers. Most important, each student indicated they gained a better appreciation for Mother-Earth and her surroundings, and the time and effort natural resource managers spend on conserving & protecting natural resources.

Santa Ana Pueblo Tribal YCC - NMFWCO

The 1st Annual Santa Clara Pueblo Tribal Youth Conservation Corp (TYCC) was sponsored by New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NMFWCO) and hosted by Santa Clara Pueblo – Office of Environmental Affairs (SCP-OEA). Unfortunately, on June 29, 2011 the Las Conchas Fire altered all field projects scheduled for the Santa Clara Canyon. The Las Conchas Fire had consumed much of the Santa Clara Creek drainage. In preparation of post-fire flooding events, the TYCC crew assisted and participated with SCP-OEA and Pueblo community with the filling of sandbags, and stacking sandbags along barrier walls to protect their homelands.



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TYCC fixing corral fencing.

Youth Conservation Corp – Dexter NFHTC



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The 2011 Dexter NFHTC YCC crew.

Dexter NFHTC hosted a YCC program. This year's crew included five high school students from Dexter and Hagerman High Schools and a volunteer crew leader. The YCC participants performed a variety of maintenance tasks and fish culture and distribution activities. In addition to their work, they were provided with environmental education on a variety of topics each week. Specific work performed by the YCC crew included: cleaning up bird netting, assisting in pond cleaning, assembling office furniture, harvesting fish, stocking catfish, routine vehicle maintenance and grounds keeping activities.

Youth Conservation Corp – Uvalde NFH

Two YCC students were hired at Uvalde NFH, Ford DuBose and Robert Hearn. The students aided in the tagging and feeding of fish, removing predators and other daily routine activity. Says, Rick Echols Fish Biologist, "It makes a big difference to have kids who are truly interested in what we're doing. The paycheck they receive isn't huge or anything. They don't seem to be working specifically for that, but for the greater good the work provides".



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YCC hires, Ford Dubose and Robert Hearn (right)

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**U.S. Department of the Interior,
Fish & Wildlife Service**

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January 2012

