

Creston

National Fish Hatchery



Creston National Fish Hatchery scenery / USFWS

National Fish Hatchery System

The National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS) is comprised of 70 Fish Hatcheries, 7 Fish Technology Centers, and 9 Fish Health Centers nationwide. The NFHS, operated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service), has a unique responsibility to help restore native aquatic populations, mitigate for fisheries lost as a result of federal water projects, provide fish to benefit Tribes and National Wildlife Refuges, and recover species listed under the Endangered Species Act. The NFHS works closely with other programs in the Service, States, Tribes, and the private sector, to complement habitat restoration and resource management strategies for maintaining healthy ecosystems that support healthy fisheries.

Creston National Fish Hatchery

Creston National Fish Hatchery (NFH) was established in 1936

as the Glacier Park National Fish Hatchery and was originally tasked with providing fingerling trout for stocking waters in Glacier National Park. Today, the Creston NFH has four main purposes: provide trout for fishery management objectives on all Tribal Reservations in Montana, stock fish for mitigation purposes under the Hungry Horse Dam Fishery Mitigation Program, stock trout for cooperative management programs with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and provide fish and expertise for outreach and educational programs.

Throughout the years, the species and strains of fish raised at Creston have changed as management objectives change. Currently, two fish species are being reared at the hatchery:

- rainbow trout
- westslope cutthroat trout



Westslope cutthroat trout / USFWS

In fiscal year 2010, approximately 870,000 fish were distributed into 80 Tribal and State managed waters. As a result of Creston NFH's stocking efforts, annual economic benefits weigh-in at over 156,000 angler days valued at over \$6.69 million! Nearly a hundred jobs are supported as a ripple effect of the hatcheries fish production, with job income exceeding \$3 million.

Recent renovations at the Creston NFH have produced a state of the art fish production facility. The Service constructed a water treatment plant to disinfect the water supply to ensure that Creston NFH remains disease free. In addition, a water treatment plant was constructed to ensure that clean production water flows into Mill Creek.

How Does the Hatchery Help the Fishery Resource?

Creston NFH fish production benefits the Montana fishery resource in many ways. Creston is a major producer of quality trout which helps fulfill Tribal and State fishery management



Refurbished hatchery building and new effluent treatment plant / USFWS

objectives. These fishery programs help replenish lost recreational opportunities and encourage the restoration of native fish to sustainable populations, all of which will increase angling opportunities for recreational users. As the aquatic habitat changes due to natural or human influences, the reproduction of fish in the wild has declined. Stocking of fish is just one of the many successful management strategies used by biologists to help maintain fish populations for years to come.

Public Use Opportunities

Open to the public; Creston NFH always welcomes visitors to visit the hatchery for a close-up view of the fish production process. With over 3,000 visitors annually, the knowledgeable staff at the hatchery will be available to answer questions. Visitors are invited to walk around the grounds and raceways where the trout are held, and visit the hatchery building where eggs and small fish are reared.

Educational programs and tours are provided for the public and school groups when scheduled in advance. When visiting the hatchery, be sure to explore additional recreational opportunities around the hatchery. Try your luck fishing on the Mill fishing pond, enjoy a picnic near the Jessup Mill Pond, hike the nature trail, and take in the beautiful mountain views. Please be sure to



Creston National Fish Hatchery raceways / USFWS

bring your binoculars and camera for wildlife and bird watching.

Partnerships Make it Happen!

Creston NFH operates with support from many partners, including: Montana Tribes, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Glacier National Park, Bonneville Power Administration, other State and Federal hatcheries, and the Creston Hatchery Partners, (a community support group for the hatchery). In addition, the hatchery proudly supports local schools with fishery and resource educational programs, and participates in the Hooked-On-Fishing program. These dedicated partners help keep Creston NFH operating to bring recreational

opportunities and healthy aquatic ecosystems to you, your families and all the future Montana generations! Creston National Fish Hatchery is located at the Creston Fish & Wildlife Center in Flathead County, Montana. To locate the hatchery from Kalispell, travel State Highway 35 East to Creston, then continue East on Highway 35 for approximately one mile. Turn North on Creston Hatchery Road and follow the road approximately one mile to the hatchery. Come prepared for a day of fun!

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 6**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
PO Box 25486
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225**

**For State relay service
TTY / Voice: 711**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>**

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Successful day at Creston NFH National Fish Week Event / USFWS

