



VOL. 11 website: friendsoftheleadvillennialfishhatchery.org **2022**

Hatchery Happenings

March: The Winter Fun Day

Friends and community members were invited to the first Winter Fun Day at the hatchery since the outbreak of COVID-19. Sadly, the turnout was low this year. We hope more people will enjoy this day of outdoor fun and s'mores 2023.



Enjoying s'mores around a campfire.

May: Pathways to Fishing

Pathways to Fishing was back in 2022. FLNFH board members, FLNFH friends, and hatchery staff along with the US Forest Service, Trout Unlimited, and CMC Fly Fish Guide students welcomed fifth graders to the hatchery for a day of outdoor fun and learning.



Mark Cole at the knot tying station.



Bob Deister, John Wells, and Jeanie Beckmann serving a hot dog lunch.

June: Lake County Sports Hall of Fame 5K Fun Run

The Friends staffed a booth at the 5K, allowing us to tell people about the hatchery and its history. Once again, the turnout was a small fraction of what it had been prior to COVID-19. On the bright side, every runner received a prize: the kids got spinning rods and reels while the adults received Hatchery Friends mugs purchased by the Sports Hall of Fame.



A small group of runners starts the race.



Leadville, from the hatchery, on the day of the race.

July: A New Trail

A crew from the Volunteer Vacations program of the American Hiking Society was onsite for 4 work days and built a little over one mile of new trail. The trail begins on the service road that leads to the Rock Creek Trail and the diversion dam. It is near the short connection trail between the west part of the nature trail and the service road. The new trail was initially envisioned and laid-out by board member Jim Lyall. It was completed due to the collaborative work done by our hatchery manager, Josh Homer, with the American Hiking Society. Enjoy!



August: Boom Days and Basketball Standard Installation

Former hatchery manager, Ed, built a pirate ship as a float for one of the Boom Day Celebrations that was canceled because of COVID. The pirate ship sailed for the first time this year when Boom Days was reestablished, and our new manager, Josh, brought it out of storage. The Friends walked with the float and passed out Swedish Fish candy, a perennial favorite.



Hatchery staff, turned pirates and miners, sail Ed's ship

Also, during the late summer, the hatchery maintenance technician, Andrew, replaced the old worn-out basketball standard with the new one which the Friends purchased with donations given in honor of Ed Stege.



New volleyball standards and net



New basketball standard.

For several years, the pavilion has been in high demand. Throughout the summer and fall, it is reserved on weekends and even during the week. This is something the Friends celebrates, but we acknowledge that it adds workload for the hatchery staff, including set-up and cleaning. Unless someone asked for the electricity to be turned on, use of the pavilion had been free. Now we have chosen to instigate a fee schedule, which is still affordable. Reservations made prior to December 2022, will be grandfathered. Below is the new fee schedule.

General Public	
Under 10 people	Free
Groups of 10 and over	\$30
Weddings	\$100
Non-Profits, Schools, Gov., etc.	Free (and no fee for power)
Commercial Businesses	\$100
Power	Additional \$30 to any reservation

December: Parade of Lights

Josh reimagined and reworked the pirate ship into a sleigh for Ms. Claus (Paige) and the Grinch (Evan Homer), pulled by a trout. He painted the sleigh white, removed the gun ports, and illuminated it a glorious number of twinkling lights.



FLNFH Projects

The renovation of the volleyball court will be finished this summer. Our new standard volleyball court is the equivalent of half of a soccer pitch, allowing young people to use the court for either volleyball or soccer. Sometime this summer, a temporary soccer goal-net will be available for check-out.

Josh researched and the Friends purchased new fish food feeders which will be more robust than the current dilapidated ones. Josh will build new receptacles for them.

The next project on our horizon is the creation of a pollinator garden. 2023 will again be a year of planning.

We held our annual morning clean-up, potluck lunch, and members' meeting in June. Several members attended. A good time was had by all. Please consider joining us in 2023.

Hatchery Happenings as reported to the FLNFH board

By Josh Homer, Project Leader

Our hatchery hosts different populations of trout. Here are synopses of how three of them are doing.

Greenback cutthroat trout

Spawning and maintenance of endangered greenback cutthroat trout has been a joint project of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery (USFWS), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), and CSU fisheries. The spawning itself occurs at our hatchery. Then the eyed eggs are sent to the Colorado state hatchery in Salida. This year, we harvested 45,000 eggs plus milt. This provided more than enough fertilized eggs to meet needs for stocking and broodstock. However, not all the eggs survive to fry or fry to adults. CPW and USFWS staff met early this year to discuss changes to how the eggs and fry are handled to increase survival rate. Several changes have already been made at our hatchery including:

- Installation of circulation pumps in tanks to increase self-cleaning and to provide direct flow for fish "exercise;"

- Replacement of experimental tanks with larger multi-use tanks;

- Studies of diet;

- Handling with nitrile gloves;

- Use of Formalin treatments to control fungus;

- Recruitment of a conservation geneticist;

- Rebuilding of de-gassing columns to remove dissolved nitrogen more efficiently from water in the main hatchery building.

A bright spot with the greenbacks is that the individuals introduced to Herman Creek have been reproducing. Two different age classes have been observed in the creek.

Hayden Creek Trout

South Hayden Creek was inundated with mudslides after a forest fire several years ago. Being cognizant of this possibility, CPW sent staff to the creek to collect the unique trout living there. They are not greenback cutthroats, nor are they the typical Colorado River cutthroat. They may share genetics with the extinct yellow fin trout. Descendants of some of these recovered fish are at our Leadville hatchery. The population in "captivity" is doing well. In 2022/2023, our hatchery

will keep 600 broodstock fish on station, with 20,000 more going out for stocking once they mature. Keeping a broodstock may even become unnecessary in another two years.

Rainbow trout

The rainbow trout on site are what we use to stock the local creeks and lakes. Trout which are stocked are usually 10 inches in length. 50,000 10-inch trout were stocked in 2022. However, 100,000 are on the station for stocking in 2023. Furthermore, in November the hatchery received 80,000 two-to-three inch rainbows which we will grow to maturity and use for stocking in 2024. This is an experimental project. In the past, our 10-inch stockers have come from the national hatchery at Hotchkiss, Colorado. Of late, the quality of these stockers has declined due to the small size of the raceways at Hotchkiss. We took delivery of the 80,000 fingerling rainbows earlier than usual and will grow them here while also managing a fish growth monitoring study.

Endangered Wyoming toads

The Wyoming toad rearing program at the hatchery has been moth-balled. The number of toads reared here was minimal compared to the number reared at the Saratoga National Fish Hatchery in Wyoming, and Ecological Services had not been utilizing the Leadville hatchery for meaningful research that can push the program forward. Furthermore, funding has been reduced to the Wy. toad program as a whole and no funds have been provided to our hatchery to support our work, which entailed receiving tadpoles from Wyoming, raising their food, providing an environment suitable for them, monitoring their health, and returning mature toads to Wyoming for release. The rearing facility will be maintained for future use when the need arises.

Outreach

The pavilion continues to receive heavy use including a summer reading program with the Lake County Public Library. Schools from all over the state visit for tours.

You may notice some changes when you visit. We will be installing a security camera with posted signs saying, "Under 24 hour-surveillance." Currently a snow berm has been pushed to the middle of the lower parking lot. This spring, large rocks will be placed in the middle of the lower parking lot to deter people from doing donuts there. There is a new gate at the entrance to the road up to the pavilion and treatment plant which we keep locked. Sadly, there has been an increase in vandalism on the hatchery grounds. We hope these measures will end these issues.

How to Contact the Friends

Email: flnfh15@gmail.com

Write: Friends of the LNFH, P.O. Box 1194, Leadville, CO 80461

View our website at: <http://friendsoftheleadvillenationalfishhatchery.org/>

Find us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTheLeadileNationalFishHatchery/>

Our Current Board of Directors, January 2023

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