



EarthWatch Rhode Island



Topic: Trout Hatchery Tours Offered as Part of Great Outdoors Pursuit
Date: Friday, June 19, 2009
Location: Lafayette Trout Hatchery, North Kingstown

Background

The Department of Environmental Management is inviting the public to visit the Lafayette Fish Hatchery in North Kingstown on Saturday, June 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The open house is also part of the Rhode Island Great Outdoors Pursuit, a DEM effort to encourage Rhode Islanders to enjoy the recreational resources and outdoor activities our state parks have to offer - while moving toward a healthier lifestyle. Additional information about the Pursuit follows below.

The Lafayette Fish Hatchery is one of four hatcheries where DEM raises fish until they are stocked in the state's waters. The event will include a 30-40 minute self-guided tour that allows participants to observe and enjoy the fish at their own leisure. Staff from DEM's Division of Fish and Wildlife will be available throughout the program to explain the functions and procedures of the Hatchery as well as the life stages of fish.

Once known as Goose Nest Spring, the Lafayette property was purchased by the state in 1921 and developed for the sole purpose of raising trout. While remnants of the original hatchery can be observed, the property and hatch house have been rebuilt to increase fish production and bring the Rhode Island hatchery system into the 21st century. With the recent modernizations, Lafayette Trout Hatchery raises over 120,000 pounds of rainbow, brook, and brown trout. The trout raised at Lafayette, as well as the other hatcheries around the state, are stocked into over 110 ponds, streams, and rivers throughout Rhode Island for anglers throughout the fishing season.

Here's a quick overview of what tour participants will see on Saturday's tour:

1. Look up at the top of the hill and you will see large black columns delivering 1300 gallons/minute of water to the hatchery. There are three deep water wells located around the hatchery and pumped to this one location. Not only do these columns help add oxygen to the water, but they also are packed with media that decreases nitrogen and carbon dioxide levels, elements which impede the survival of trout. The water flows from the columns to first the hatch house and then the fry-line. Since the hatchery is a flow-thru system, the hatchery relies on gravity to deliver the water to the fish.
2. The hatch house is Lafayette's newest addition. The hatch house is the site where trout eggs are put in incubator systems and hatched out to fry, between 2-6 inches long. Depending on the species, modifications in the water quality are made to increase the survival rate.

3. When you exit the Hatch house, look forward and you will see two fenced and cemented areas. They are known as raceways where fish. Specifically, these areas are the fryline where the fry reach a length of 4-6 inches. These raceways receive the best quality of water to increase the rate of trout growth.
4. Now take a look at the long fenced in cement raceways across the driveway. This is the production line. At the height of the growing out season 11 raceways are used to feed, grade (sort fish according to size), and grow trout out to at least a pound a piece. The average length of time that it takes a trout egg to reach a stockable size is 18 months.
5. The stocking truck used to deliver fish to over 110 public fishing areas around the state can be seen. The truck is fitted with plenty of oxygen to transport the trout. The hatchery staff net the fish from the raceways to the truck and then, once a stocked area is reached, they attach the houses and shoot the fish into the water.

Great Outdoors Pursuit

The 2009 *Rhode Island Great Outdoors Pursuit* is a contest that encourages Rhode Islanders to enjoy the recreational resources and outdoor activities our state parks have to offer - while moving toward a healthier lifestyle.

With the first event at Lincoln Woods State Park attracting more than 295 teams with 1,252 participants, the Department would like to get even more families involved for upcoming guided and self-guided events. There is no cost to register and all activities are either free or low-cost. The general public who do not wish to register are also invited to participate in activities, but are not eligible to win contest prizes.

The game takes Rhode Island families to up to seven different state parks and forests this summer, where they will participate in outdoor adventures such as hiking, biking, fishing, camping or swimming, among other activities. Events will be either "guided" or "self-guided." Guided events will include numerous activities led by DEM, game partners and exhibitors. A self-guided event allows teams to visit a designated park or participate in an activity whenever they can during the 12-week period.

Teams receive points for participating in each event and will be eligible for prizes of outdoor equipment donated by local retailers at the finale on August 23. Prizes include a complete camping gear and vacation package, a kayak, a mountain bike and others yet to be determined. The full 12-week schedule and game rules are posted on the **program website**: **www.riparks.com**.

The next *guided* event will be held on **Sunday, June 28**. The location is secret and can be discovered by clues provided by DEM. These clues, along with more information and directions, are available on the program website at **<http://www.riparks.com/RIOutdoorsPursuit/Home.htm>**.

Support for the project comes from numerous game partners, including the Rhode Island Department of Health, UnitedHealthcare, Macy's, Hasbro, Inc., Kids First, REI, Reserve America, Burlingame Corporation and Whole Foods Markets.

Interviews:

Peter Angelone, Manager of the Lafayette Trout Hatchery, explained how trout and other fish are raised for stocking state waters, and gave a preview of the self-guided tours offered on Saturday.

Steven Wright, Superintendent of State Parks, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, provided an overview of the Great Outdoors Pursuit and details of upcoming events.