

Fish Tales Newsletter

West Virginia's Aquaculture Newsletter is produced to help inform, educate, and update those interested in producing quality aquatic products, in a sustainable manner, for the recreational and food fish markets.

West Virginia Aquaculture Association Holds Elections

A board of directors' meeting for the West Virginia Aquaculture Association was held in Flatwoods, W. Va., on Saturday, March 19, 2005. During the meeting, the current slate of officers were re-elected: **Fred Hays** as President, **Mike Godby** as Vice President, and **Mike Nardella** as Secretary- Treasurer. **Ken Semmens**, **Julie Delabbio**, **Diane Ludwig**, and **Jody Ours** round out the Board. Items discussed at the meeting included: IRS tax status, Aquaculture Forum 2006, Senator Helmick's fish stocking initiative, and developing a display for the W. Va. Hunting and Fishing Days event at Stonewall Jackson Lake Resort in September. The idea is to feature products and services offered by WVAA members.

Rockhouse Springs, a.k.a. West Virginia Aqua, continues to increase the amount of fish being processed at the new plant in Man. By September, the weekly harvest from the farm will reach 6,000 pounds. Much of the product is Boston bound, with one client asking for 3,000 pounds per week of processed product.

Old Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) Treatment Plant Becomes a Fishing Park in Marion County

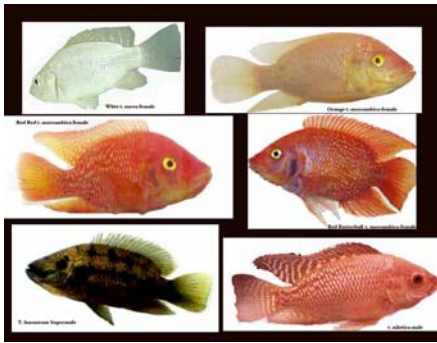
In April 2005, the Marion County Commission became proud owners of the old Guyses Run AMD facility just south of the city of Fairmont. The inauguration of the new county park occurred on April 30 with the Trout Bonanza. The 40 participants who braved the threatening weather were rewarded with some of the best fishing of the season (photo at right). One father-and-son team caught 50 brook trout in a four-hour period. The director of the 11 parks in Marion County, **Dan Talbott**, was enthusiastic about the potential of the site, which is already stocked with channel catfish, largemouth bass, hybrid striped bass, and hybrid bluegill. The transfer of the property required action from the Office of Surface Mining, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, Eastern Associated Coal Company, and the Marion County Commission.



Mr. Talbott and the County Commission have asked West Virginia University researchers, who were instrumental in the original stocking of the site in 2001, for a recommended priority list to help develop the site into a quality fishing and educational park. **Dr. Chad Pierskalla**, assistant professor of forestry, who previously organized Kid's Fishing Day and Senior's Day at the facility, may use the almost 70-acre site as a class project for his park development class this fall. Efforts are already under way to create a brochure on the history of this site and the evolution of how its resources have been used. The new park is a safe and convenient way to introduce young and old alike to the many joys of fishing, without much waiting for the fish to bite. We will keep you informed on the progress at this site.

Did YOU KNOW?

A tilapia producer in the United States has tons of competition from imports. How much competition? During the first six months of 2004, more than **58,000 tons** of tilapia was imported into this country. That piece of reality has forced many U.S. tilapia producers to sell live tilapia in specialty markets.



The endemic paddlefish is a protected species in West Virginia. For the past five years, during the month of April, the Division of Natural Resources, with the help of **Dr. Ken Semmens**, has successfully spawned mature paddlefish at the Palestine Hatchery in Wirt County. In six months, this rapid growing species will reach a length of 14 to 20 inches. Each year a few thousand paddlefish are stocked into the major rivers of West Virginia by the WVDNR.

Fresh Paddlefish Caviar



Two Awards Given to WVU Researchers

At the 2005 Aquaculture America meeting, **Mohamed Salem**, a WVU researcher, was awarded \$200 and a plaque for the second best student poster presentation. The title of his poster was *Differential gene expression of different proteolytic pathways in rainbow trout spawning-induced muscle atrophy*. In his poster, Mohamed showed that there is a genetic explanation for deterioration of muscle mass and muscle quality in spawning trout. In case you ever wondered why the market size for rainbows is 1 to 1.5 pounds, it is because the reproductive process in trout has a negative impact on meat (muscle) quality and quantity. Most trout are able to reproduce before reaching 2 pounds. Hatcheries are able to produce sterile trout by manipulating genetic factors that make them sterile. This allows the sterile trout to convert energy into muscle rather than eggs or sperm. The result is bigger fish having higher quality meat on their bones. Three cheers for Mohamed for a job well done.

At the same meeting, **Melody Danley**, another WVU student researcher, was awarded \$200 and a plaque for the second best student oral presentation. The title of Melody's paper was *Use of AQUI-S™ with aeration: Efficacy decrease over time*. The presentation focused on a commercial fish anesthetic, derived from clove oil, for use when fish are being harvested or transported. The results showed that trout tolerated supposedly lethal levels (10 -17 mg/l) of *AQUI-S*, and some regained equilibrium, indicating that higher levels may be needed. She also suggested that different doses may be needed for use when transporting versus harvesting. Melody has previously won awards for her research conducted as a student at West Virginia University. Good job, Melody!

Volunteers Help to Stock Cheat River with Trout

A few people interested in improving the quality of fishing along the Cheat River took action a few years ago that has resulted in regular stockings of large trout along a 13-mile section between Pringle Run and where Route 50 crosses the Cheat River. **Art George** is passionate about the idea, and he has coordinated the collection of water temperatures, donations, volunteers, and stocking schedules so that the Cheat River is now tasting fishing lines from all of our neighboring states. This story begins with the first stocking in 2002.

Although 90% of the trout stocked are rainbows, a few hundred brown trout were stocked that first year only. **Trout for Cheat Inc.** is the official name of the group of volunteers that put every dollar collected into the purchase and transport of fish for stocking in this 13-mile section of the Cheat River. They focus on BIG trout. We are talking 2- to 10-pounders! (see next page for a photo) Unlike the Division of Natural Resources (DNR), (continued on Page 3)

(Continued from Page 2 – Cheat River)

Farmer Profile

Eston Teter is owner of **Buckhorn Trout Farm**, just off Route 33 by Fort Seybert, in Pendleton County. Eston is 86 years young and has been operating a fee-fishing business for 23 years. With a 300 gpm spring, the farm hatches up to 25,000 rainbow trout each year. Buckhorn Trout Farm is a great value because the price is the same today as it was in 1982, only 18 cents per inch. There are three ponds of about one-half acre each, four raceways, and a trout hatchery. Fee fishing is open March 1 to Labor Day from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. All caught trout are kept. Some fishermen use light line to catch trout. Eston's comment on that is "you don't hunt deer with a sling shot so why use light line."

Eston advertises with brochures and flyers in his region. He also asks anglers how they learned about the business. A six-room lodge with a private bath is available for rental. It comes with access to 1000 acres of private land. Eston can be reached at 304-249-5253.

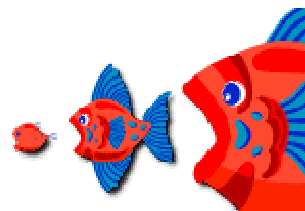



Trout for Cheat, Inc. does not give advance notice of where the stockings occur. This allows the rumor mill to flourish, and this spring Art was told that a big brown trout and a few rainbows were caught along this section (which is not stocked by WVDNR) BEFORE any fish were stocked. That is the confirmation that there is "carry over" from one year to the next. Visitors who raft the Cheat are now returning with fishing gear. And Art is happy to tell them where the many public access points are, where to park, and where to weigh their harvest. This kind of effort goes a long way to increase the tourism that benefits many small businesses in the mountain state. Trout for Cheat Inc. can be contacted at **P.O. Box 635, Reedsville WV 26547 (304-329-1784)**.

This project could not occur without the volunteer participation of the **ChalleNGe Academy from Camp Dawson**. The Academy, which is staffed by the National Guard, provides high school-age kids a second chance to earn a high school diploma through a disciplined educational program. The kids are tough and will tackle the steepest slopes and heaviest loads to stock the fish into the river, says Art. Another major help was the Governor's Digest funding that allowed the stockings to occur eight times per year. That source of revenue is no longer available.

As more information becomes available, we will write about it in future editions of *Fish Tales Newsletter*.

The photo on the right shows Art George with one of the many rainbow trout that were stocked into the 13-mile section of the Cheat River. It is people like Art that make us proud to be West Virginians. He has the perseverance to take a good idea and implement it by getting others motivated to volunteer.



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We are encouraging contributions to Fishtales newsletter by W.Va. residents. If you are interested in contributing, please contact Dan Miller at dmille31@wvu.edu or call 304-293-4832, ext. 4465. The deadline for the next issue of Fishtales is September 15, 2005.

This publication is available in a printable format, on the web at:
<http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/aquaculture/newsletter.htm>

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