

USFWS Hatchery System in the Columbia Gorge and Current Hatchery Reform Efforts

Mark Ahrens – Assistant Manager/Fishery Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery,
61552 State Road 14, Underwood, Washington 98651, USA
Email: mark_ahrens@fws.gov

Abstract – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been operating hatcheries in the Columbia River Basin since the 1890's. These facilities and their missions have evolved tremendously over 120 years of operation. We've come a long way in terms of operation and the science that guides how our work is done. The objectives of our hatcheries may be unclear to some, but that is often a lack of familiarity with the details and purposes of the hatchery missions.

Hatcheries exist as a management tool to meet both harvest and conservation goals. Harvest goals of course promote commercial, subsistence, ceremonial, and recreational fishing. Conservation goals promote or allow the conservation of indigenous fishery resources. They include endangered species protection and recovery, gene banking, maintaining native stocks as genetic repositories, particularly where natural spawning habitat is lost or limited, and restoring stocks to streams where they have been extirpated. (USFWS – *Pacific Region Federal Hatchery Review - NFH Recommendations: Summary Report*, 2009)

I'll summarize the FWS production programs in the Columbia Gorge region - Spring Creek, Little White Salmon/Willard, and Carson - and highlight some current and ongoing Hatchery Reform efforts including the FWS-Hatchery Review Team (HRT).