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Trout Talk

**Bennett Spring to get
major renovations**
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by Steve Smith

September 2023

Bennett Spring to get major renovations

Groundbreaking celebrates start of multi-year project

STEVE SMITH
SSMITH@LACLEDERECORD.COM

A major renovation project is planned to bring more fish and improved safety to Bennett Spring State Park.

Missouri Department of Conservation staff, state legislators, local officials, and others took part in a groundbreaking ceremony Aug. 2, beginning the construction phase of the renovation project. The fish hatchery supplies trout for fishing at Bennett Spring State Park and other trout-fishing locations around the state.

Cahills Construction Inc. of Rolla is the contractor for the multi-year \$40 million renovation to the hatchery that includes a new intake structure, reconstruction of raceways and water quality improvements that will improve fish production capability and site resiliency. MDC has worked with closely with its design consultant, HDR, Inc., over the past year and a half to get this project ready for construction.

MDC Deputy Director for Business Operations Jennifer Warren said the project is a huge investment in the Department's infrastructure and will improve safety.

"We use mechanical screens that will remove debris from entering the hatchery system, thereby keeping fish safe and healthy," she said. "The recirculation system that's about to be built



LGR Photo/Steve Smith

Missouri Department of Conservation commissioners and officials, elected state and county representatives were among those on hand for the groundbreaking at Bennett Spring State Park. The fish hatchery is undergoing a renovation designed to improve production and safety.

is incorporated into the project and will greatly improve our resiliency and the safety of our fish."

During the multi-year project, fish production at Bennett will be disrupted, Warren said.

"Visitors will notice some of the raceways will be empty and dry while construction activities are taking place," Warren said. "However, fishing will continue at the park with minimal disruption as trout from MDC's other hatcheries will be transported to Bennett to support stocking activities throughout the year."

She said the redesign of the raceways will provide better utilization of the water supply and increase the available breeding area for intermediate size fish.

Conservation Commissioner Margy Eckelkamp said trout fishing has a rich tradition in Missouri that will be able to continue with improved facilities.

"Aging and obsolete infrastructure will be replaced with state-of-the art

facilities that allow for greater access and productivity for our staff while increasing accessibility for all visitors," Eckelkamp said.

Laclede County Presiding Commissioner Randy Angst thanked those involved with the parks and the improvements.

"Whether you're from Laclede County or surrounding counties or from the state of Missouri or somewhere else, we're just glad this project is being fulfilled and we look forward to its completion," he said.

Dallas County Presiding Commissioner John Crawford said the renovations will allow the park to be even more impressive.

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PROJECT

from page 2

"I don't know about you, but when something is good, I like to show it off," Crawford said. "It will make the diamond shine that much brighter."

State Rep. Jeff Knight noted the economic impact of the park.

He said people come to his auction business to buy items and tell him they are in the area to fish at Bennett Spring.

"They eat at our restaurants and they buy things from our stores," he said. "This is just a great project."

Other speakers included Commissioner Mark McHenry and representatives of HDR, Inc. and the Cahills construction company.

According to a Department of Conservation press release, a facility the size of Bennett Spring Hatchery, which produces approximately 350,000 trout per year, cannot be taken out of production without impacting the trout inventory

numbers in MDC's statewide cold-water hatchery system.

"Hatchery staff across the state will be working to manage inventory levels and provide anglers with the best possible angling experience for the remainder of this year and throughout the renovation of Bennett Spring Hatchery," the release said.

Though the hatchery will be closed during the construction phase of the renovation project, anglers will not see any changes to existing seasons, according to the Conservation Department. "Fish transported from other MDC hatcheries will be stocked daily during the regular season at Bennett Spring. The winter catch-and-release season will not be impacted," the Department said in a press release.

In addition to providing recreational activity, the trout produced at the

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Stream View 1

Bennett Spring Fish Hatchery Renovation 2023 - 2025



Bridge View 2



Street View 3

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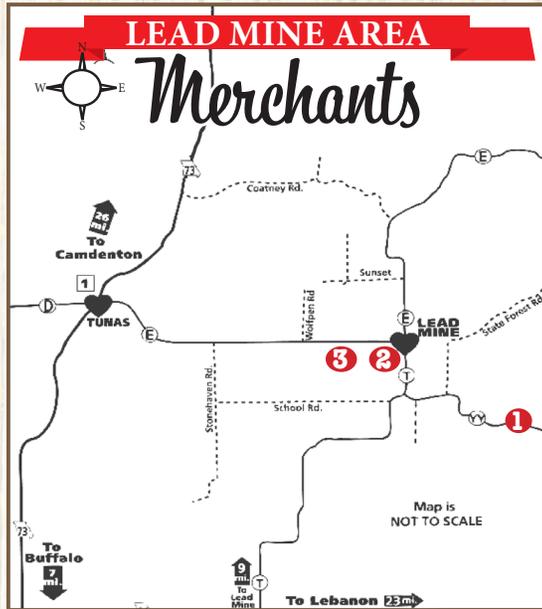
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PROJECT

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Bennett Spring Hatchery also provide economic benefits. Each year, 140,000 people fish at Bennett Spring. These anglers are part of the more than two million visitors the park gets annually, and the economic ripple effect all this activity generates in terms of money spent on meals, lodging, gas, etc. Data from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service indicates that money spent on trout fishing in Missouri generates more than \$187 million in economic impact each year.

Trout fishing at Bennett Spring has a history dating back to the early 1900s. Currently, MDC manages the hatchery and trout fishing at Bennett Spring State Park. The state park facilities are managed by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Missouri Department of Conservation Construction Administration Manager Timothy Anderson said the work will be a comprehensive rehabilitation of the fish hatchery that will improve safety and decrease fish mortality.

The ceremony concluded with a groundbreaking ceremony that included Department of Conservation, state and local officials.



State Rep. Jeff Knight speaks at the groundbreaking ceremony for renovations at Bennett Spring State Park.

LCR Photo/Steve Smith



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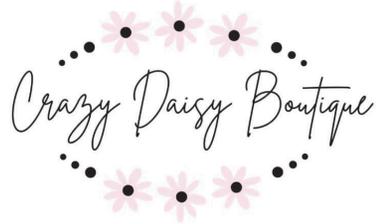
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Bennett Spring area man shares sewing ministry

Jay Reynolds restores old machines that are sent to those in need

LAURA L. VALENTI

Over 30 years ago, Jay Reynolds and his wife, Sharron bought what was to be a weekend residence just outside Bennett Spring State Park. As a Kansas City resident and an avid trout fisherman, it was a dream-come-true for Jay. Ten years later, Bennett became their permanent home. Around that same time, Jay dissected his first used Singer sewing machine as a project to keep himself busy while recovering from knee surgery. And suddenly, he discovered a new and delightful addiction—taking a machine apart, cleaning all the parts, re-assembling them and watching the once-broken machine run again. He began collecting others and soon his basement was full of fishing waders and restored sewing

machines.

In 2008, he met Don Wollard of Abundance Ministries out of Bolivar, a Christian ministry that re-distributes used medical equipment like walkers, wheelchairs, and hospital beds as well as used sewing machines. They are sent to those in need in several Central America countries through well-established missions there. And now, Jay Reynolds had a new destination for some of those restored sewing machines.

Don and Jay worked together for several years before Don lost his personal battle with cancer. His wife, Linda and their two grown children have kept the ministry going and Jay has continued to supply them with restored sewing machines. He has worked on old Singer machines of all

ages and styles, including both electric and treadle sewing machines. In his own personal collection, he has machines dating back to the Civil War era.

“This ministry has grown over the years,” Jay shared recently while taking a break from his workbench where he was working on one of his latest acquisitions. “I never imagined how many people I would meet from all over. A major sewing machine dealer calls me several times a year to tell me he has a load of used machines to donate to the ministry. I have met others who hunt for machines for us at auctions and antique stores.”

Another local couple stumbled onto a plethora of machines at the home of a deceased home econom-

ics teacher who had also collected machines over the years. That couple brought him over 34 donated machines.

“You know, these old cast iron Singers weigh about 40 pounds each so their SUV was squatting as they pulled into my driveway since the machines were all loaded into the back of their vehicle,” he chuckled as he related the story. “I’ve heard from people from Maine to Oregon, Nebraska to California. It’s amazing.”

And of course, there are the individuals who are looking for a place to donate an older machine they no longer need. Jay has worked on many a machine that was once the beloved possession of someone’s

See 'REYNOLDS'/page 9



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REYNOLDS

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grandmother or great aunt but now no one in the family sews and the question remains, what do we do with it now?

"Linda Wollard was just here a couple of weeks ago to pick up another load of 10 machines," Jay concluded. "I've not kept track of how many machines we've worked on over the last many years but because Abundance Min-

istries is a non-profit, Linda has kept good records. She told me we have now donated over 1000 sewing machines through this ministry."

Trout fishing is obviously not the only thing happening at Bennett Spring. To donate a sewing machine toward this ministry, please call 417-532-8703.



LCR Photo/ Laura L. Valenti

Jay Reynolds stands beside a 1909 Singer long shuttle machine that sits on a wood cabinet that was designed at the time for the Drawing Room of the home; in other words to be an elegant piece of furniture as well as an important and practical part of family life.

Upcoming events

Women's Free Fishing Day is Sept. 30

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) invites women to fish for free Saturday Sept. 30 at Bennett Spring State Park's Women's Free Fishing Day event.

At Women's Free' Fishing Day, which will run from 7:30 a.m. to 7:15 p.m., There is no license or daily tag fee. Female anglers can pick up their free daily trout tag at the park store on the evening before or any time during the day of the event on Sept. 30. During the event, a part of the park's Zone 2 and Zone 3 fishing areas will be reserved for female anglers. Volunteers will be available to help anglers throughout the

day, along with members of the Bennett Spring Fly Tying Group who will be hosting live fly-tying demonstrations. Participants are encouraged to bring their own fishing equipment.

This event is sponsored by Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Bennett Spring State Park Store, and the Bennett Spring Fly Tying group. For more information about the event, call the Bennett Spring Hatchery at 417-532-4418 or e-mail Hatchery Manager Ben Havens at Ben.Havens@mdc.mo.gov.

Fly tying demonstrations set

Join volunteers Danny Goldsmith and Donald Ohler at 9 a.m. Sept. 13, 20 and 27 at the Bennett Spring Church of God annex building for a community fly tying demonstration. This event will provide instruction on tying a basic fishing fly and will give participants an opportunity to visit, share stories, and see the art of fly tying with experienced Bennett Spring anglers.

New to fly tying? No problem. Danny and Donald will be available to help out and will provide all items needed, although you are welcome to bring your own.

This demonstration is presented by the Friends of Bennett Spring State Park and is open to all ages. The church annex building is located directly across from the park office, behind the park restaurant.

Program to teach bear awareness

Join park staff in the nature center 2 until 3 p.m. Sept. 10 to learn more about bears and how to stay safe in bear country. This program will include a video about black bears and a presentation of black bear items such as a pelt, a skull

and replica scat. Staff will also provide information about black bear sightings at the park and how to be bear aware.

For more information about this event, call the nature center at 417-532-3925. All ages are welcome to attend.

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Trout Talk

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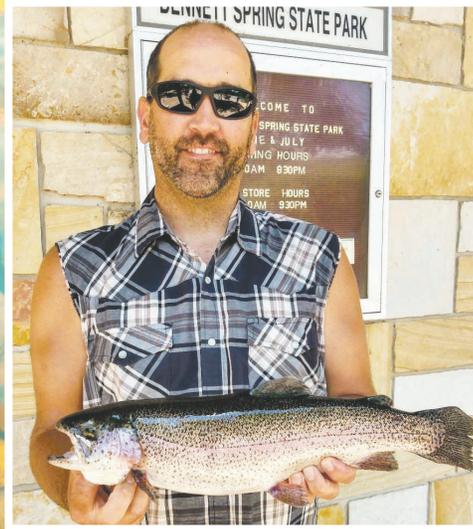
LUNKER CATCHES



Adam Allen from Alton Illinois, 3 pounds, Zone 3, caught using a dough bait.



Carol Mitchell from Warrenton, 3 pounds, Zone 2, caught using a John Deere bait.



Chad Kohlbusch from New Haven, 3 pounds, Zone 3, caught using a Black Trout Magnet.



Dave Salts from Edgar Springs, 5 pounds, Zone 3, caught with a yellow worm (plastic).



Jessica Saeuberlich from St Charles, 3.5 pounds, Zone 3, caught using a stink bait.



James Berryman from Kansas City, 6.25 pounds, Zone 2, caught using a white fly.

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