

Trout Talk



**Hatchery renovation
work moving along
Page 2**

by Laura L. Valenti

July 2024

Hatchery renovation work moving along

LAURA L. VALENTI

Visitors may have noticed the work underway to refurbish facilities at Bennett Spring State Park.

According to Ben Havens, Bennett Spring Trout Hatchery manager, the renovations on the hatchery are moving along.

“We are closing in on one year now,” he explained, as the anniversary of the project which began at the end of July 2023 draws near. “It is a two year construction plan, with a lot of moving pieces,” he added with a slight chuckle.

“We are nearing the completion of the refurbishing of the hatchery administration building. They are getting ready to paint so it is getting closer to being done. They have poured the footing, the base of the new intake or the floor of the new head gate, located directly behind the (coffer) dam. They are also



Photo courtesy of Ben Havens

The newly renovated Bennett Spring hatchery building is 101 years old.

working on removing the old concrete on the hatchery pool series, numbers 18 through 31, making way for the new raceways. Changes there will also

include piping, valves and screens to provide more oxygen to the fish in those pools. That is most of what there is for the public to actually see at this time.”

That is not the only work taking place on the hatchery grounds in general, though, Havens pointed out.

See ‘RENOVATION’/page 3



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RENOVATION

from page 2

"In the hatchery building located by the pools that are being renovated, there is new piping being installed for the chiller units. I'd say that is maybe 80% completed at this time. There is a significant amount of work being completed that the general public does not see. There is even more to be done later this winter when the water needs to be turned off. There is also a new bulk feeder being installed near the park's main entrance just off of Highway 64. Concrete has been poured for that as well. Lots of concrete involved in all of this," he smiled.

"Our hatchery crew is still busy with maintenance concerns at this time of year, such as mowing, maintenance at the Conservation Department river access down off of Highway 64. That has also included some minor repairs due to the recent flooding in that area. This has also given our workers time for some additional training. We are keeping a small number of fish on hand for stocking purposes and still stocking the Niangua River on a regular basis as we always have."

Havens continued. "The main thing is that despite some smaller inconveniences, like changes in parking, we are still stocking and doing our best to keep business going as usual for our visitors and fishermen."

Many may not be aware that the original hatchery building was built more than 100 years ago by a private



Ben Havens

company and then purchased the next year by the state of Missouri as a state park system was established in 1924. There was still a grist mill, built in 1900, standing just across the road from where the current park store is located, past the series of hatchery pools now under renovation. The pools closest to the spring branch at that location, were formed from that mill's original mill race and were still dirt pools until well into the 21st century.

See 'RENOVATION'/page 4



Photo courtesy of Ben Havens

Crews are making progress on the new head gate at Bennett Spring Hatchery.

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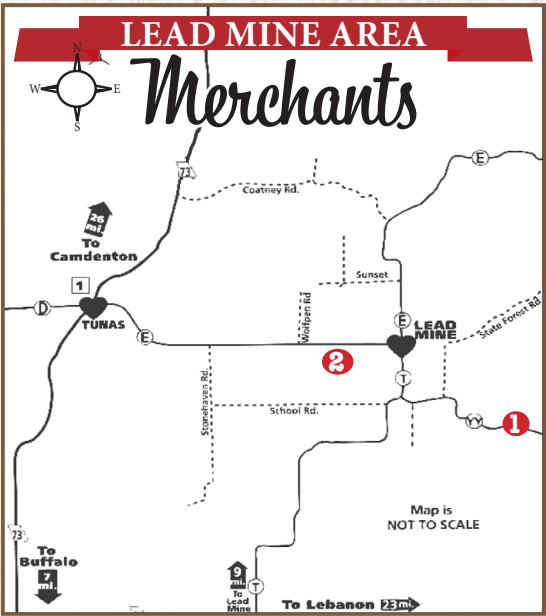
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RENOVATION

from page 3



Photo courtesy of Ben Havens

These new chiller units will be used to keep the water cooler. Water temperature controls egg development. Cooler water can prolong egg incubation and space out fingerling production.

Ben Havens concluded. "This hatchery is sort of like an old farmhouse that has been added on to many times over the years. Now after 100 years, it's time to get down to business, do more than just add on a room here or there but rather pour some new foundations and get things in shape for the next 100 years. In the meantime, we are doing our best to keep our visitors' fishing experience as close as possible to what it has always been."

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1

Park visitors urged to be 'Bear Aware'

JACK SILBERBERG
REPORTER@LACLEDERECORD.COM

The Missouri Division of State Parks wants park visitors to be "Bear Aware."

Here are some bear safety tips, taken from Missouri State Parks's "Be Bear Aware: Bears in Missouri State Parks."

Do not approach bears! Look at them from a distance using binoculars or a spotting scope. Bears are wild animals.

Keep a clean camp.

Dispose all garbage in a trash can or dumpster.

-Store food in your trailer, RV or car. If backpacking or traveling on a motorcycle or bicycle, hang food from a tree limb to keep out of reach. Even items like chewing gum, toothpaste or soap can smell like food to a bear.

Do not feed bears. This can cause

bears to lose their fear of humans, and garbage can kill bears when they ingest plastic and other food packaging.

Keep your pet on a leash.

When hiking, stay on the trail and keep your group together.

Make your presence known. Normal trail noise will let bears know you are coming. Most bears will avoid humans when given the chance.

If a bear comes into your camp, or you surprise one while hiking, do not run. Slowly back away and watch the bear without making direct eye contact. Leave the bear an escape route. If the bear does not leave, make loud noises by banging on pots and pans and yelling.

If a bear should attack, fight back. Hit the bear in the nose and eyes. Kick the bear as hard as you can.

Use any available objects.



LCR Photo/Jack Silberberg

Park visitors learn about the Missouri black bear through a hands-on presentation in the nature center. The presentation followed a short video on the state's black bear reintroduction and resurgence in the state as well as how to share the outdoors with the state's mascot.



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Outdoor-related events set at Bennett Spring

LCR STAFF

Three outdoors-related events are among the activities planned in July at Bennett Spring State Park.

The events are free and open to the public, and there is no need to register. For more information, call the nature center at 417-532-3925.

Pelts and skulls

Set for 2 until 2:30 p.m. July 12 is a program on “Pelts and Skulls.”

Meet at the Bennett Spring nature center to learn about the various skulls that you might find out in the woods, including what animals they belong to. Once we’ve matched each skull to an animal, we’ll learn about these critters’ pelts. We’ll see what each pelt looks like, learn fun facts about each one, and discuss how the pelt impacts the animal’s lifestyle.

Learn about raptors

“Raptors: Day Shift, Night Shift and Garbage Gal” will be from 1 until 1:45 p.m. July 20. Join representatives from the Dickerson Park Zoo at Shelter B to learn about diurnal and nocturnal raptors. Participants will also compare and contrast the turkey vulture with other raptors.

CCC Walking Tour

A Civilian Conservation Corps guided walking tour will be held from 10 until 11:30 a.m. July 26. Join park staff on a walking tour of Bennett Spring’s historic Civilian Conservation Corps structures. During this tour, you will learn about familiar structures such as the gauge house and the bridge, as well as some lesser-known structures located in the woods or under water.

The tour will begin at the parking lot near Shelter A and will end near the



Missouri Department of Conservation photo

Fishing is an ongoing seasonal activity that continues this summer at Bennett Spring State Park.

dining lodge. Participants will return to their vehicles on their own from there. Excluding the walk from the dining lodge, the tour will cover ap-

proximately 0.9 mile. Participants are encouraged to dress for the weather, wear appropriate walking shoes, and bring water and snacks.

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Fishing for free



LCR Photo/Jack Silberberg

During the weekend of June 8, park visitors gathered at Bennett Spring for free fishing. The park hosts several free fishing events throughout the year.

Talking Missouri wildflowers



LCR Photo/Jack Silberberg

State Park Staffer Lindsey Price presents on Missouri wildflowers and their use by the Osage Nation to park visitors Sean and Cassidy Shepherd ("Of the Hills", as Sean put it). The June 31 presentation went over several native (plus one non-native) wildflowers, and the Shepherds left with several food recipes they could use with wildflowers.

Bennett Spring State Park fishing regulations for July

Taken From "Trout Fishing Regulations for Bennett Spring State Park", a pamphlet made by the Missouri Department of Conservation in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Fishing Hours:

June / July: 6:30 (7:30*) AM to 6:00 (7:00*) PM.

*The first time given out of parentheses relates to Central Standard Time, while the second time given in parentheses relates to Central Daylight Time.

Permitted Fishing Zones:

Zone 1

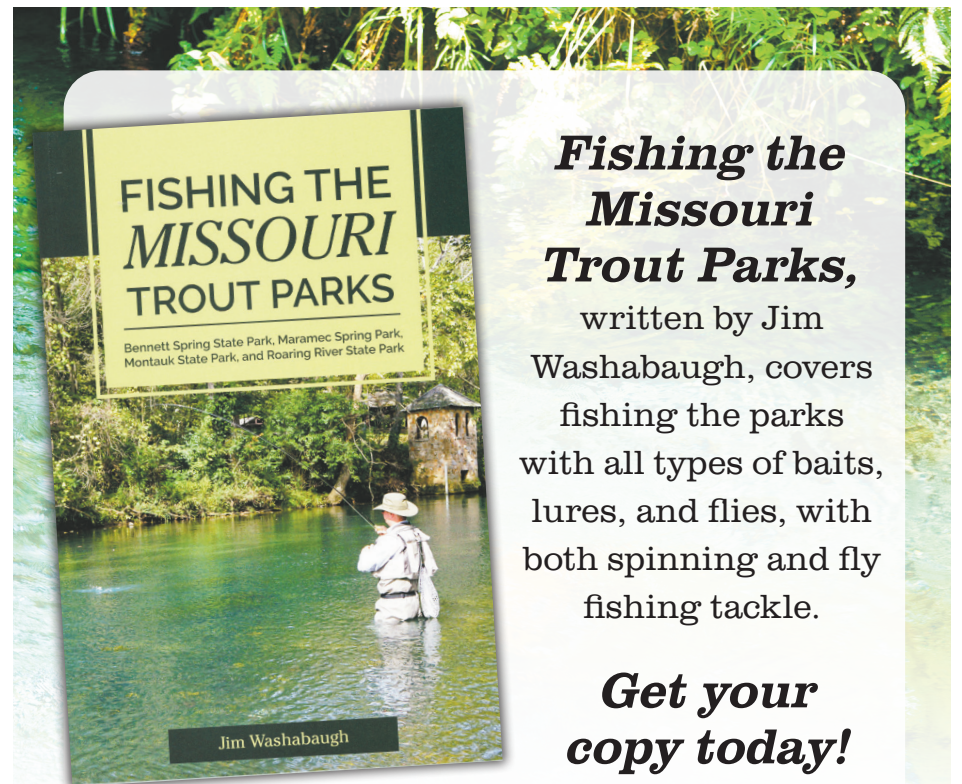
From the Hatchery Dam upstream to the end of the area. Only flies permitted.

Zone 2

From the Hatchery Dam to the Whistle Bridge. Only flies and artificial lures permitted.

Zone 3

From the Whistle Bridge to the Niangua River. Only soft plastic bait (unscented), natural and scented bait permitted. All flies and artificial lures prohibited, even if natural bait or scent has been added.



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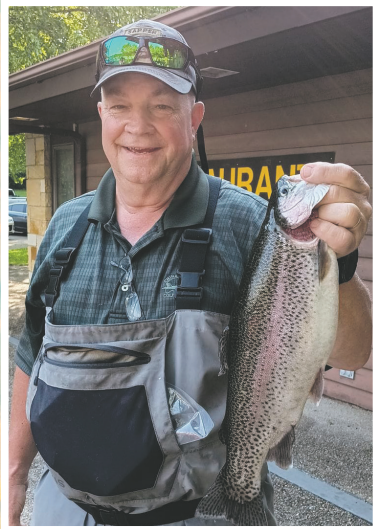
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