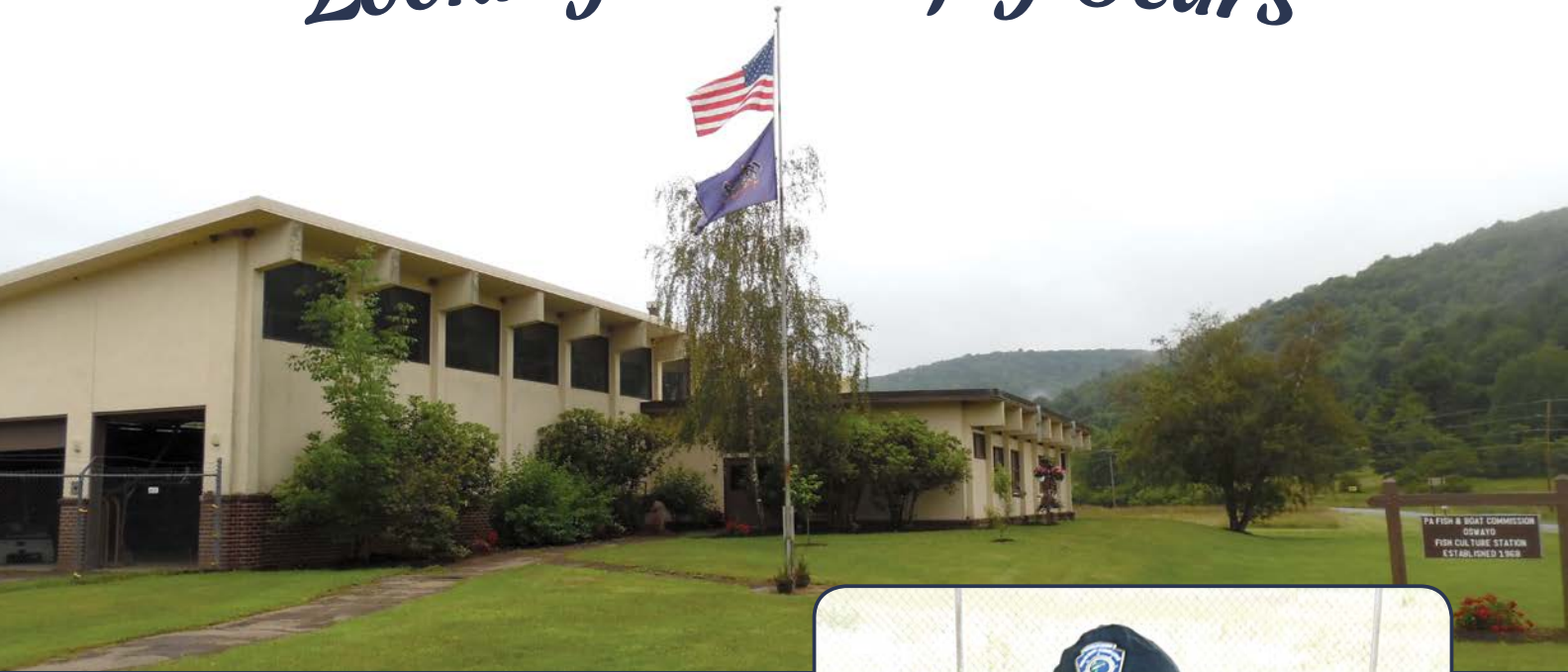


THE OSWAYO STATE FISH HATCHERY— *Looking Back Fifty Years*



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In 2018, the Oswayo State Fish Hatchery celebrated 50 years of operation by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC). Located just east of the tiny village of Oswayo, northern Potter County, this facility raises approximately 250,000 adult Brook Trout, Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout and golden rainbow trout each year for anglers to enjoy. In addition to the adult fish, the Oswayo State Fish Hatchery also rears another 325,000 fingerling trout, which are provided to cooperative nurseries at 36 locations. Currently, the Oswayo State Fish Hatchery provides adult trout stockings in six counties including Potter, McKean, Forest, Elk, Warren and Venango counties, totaling over 85 stocking trips a year. Even though the hatchery opened its doors in 1968, the history of trout culture on this site dates back even further.

As early as 1948, a location in the northern region of Pennsylvania was being sought for the construction of a trout hatchery for PFBC. At that time, two proposed locations were being considered, one near Nelson Run, and the other at the site of the current hatchery. In 1954, PFBC staff were still actively searching for the new hatchery's location and were studying water flow and temperatures of the two springs near the proposed site. Some early articles promote one of the



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two springs as the largest freestone spring in Pennsylvania. Shortly thereafter, in 1955, Harry Mottern began operating a private trout hatchery at the site of the current Oswayo State Fish Hatchery. This took the proposed site as being a PFBC northern trout hatchery off the table, at least temporarily.



The raceways at Oswayo State Fish Hatchery.

The private hatchery near Oswayo continued to operate well into the 1960s, offering fish for sale and fee fishing on the property. In 1968, the private hatchery and surrounding grounds owned by Mottern were purchased by PFBC after several years of negotiations. On June 24, 1968, the purchase was made final using \$150,000 through Project 70 funds. Project 70 was a new program allowing for the borrowing and issuing of bonds to acquire lands that were to be used for State Parks, reservoirs, recreation and other conservation uses. The PFBC's Commissioner Robert Rankin was instrumental in the acquisition of the land and facility. Commissioner Rankin described the long-range plans for the new facility as "a first-class production station" and "quite a tourist attraction."

Trout production began shortly after purchase, using existing equipment and facilities. Ray Merriman was employed as Hatchery Superintendent. In the Spring of 1971, the Oswayo State Fish Hatchery played a full role in propagation and distribution of trout for the upcoming



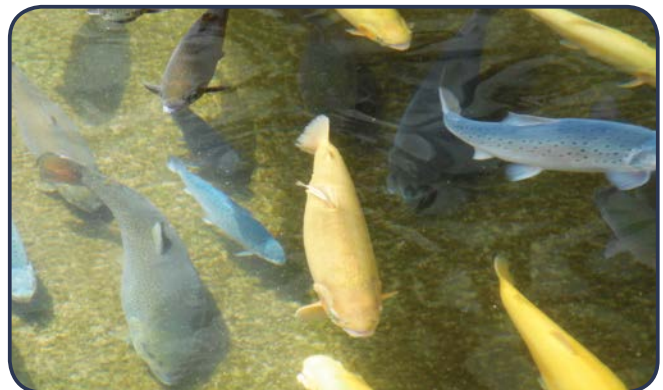
Oswayo State Fish Hatchery provides adult trout stockings in six counties.

trout season. Renovations came to Oswayo State Fish Hatchery in 1973 when a grant was secured for the development of the hatchery and surrounding grounds. A multi-purpose building was constructed, which contain offices, hatch house, a garage and a workshop. Concrete raceways were added to replace the earthen ponds and a water recirculation lagoon was installed. Many of those improvements are still in use today at the facility.

More improvements came in 2001 when several environmental controls were added to the facility. A synthetic liner was added to the hatchery's effluent settling pond, and monitoring equipment was added to the hatchery discharge.

The Oswayo State Fish Hatchery proved its worth in 1974 when a water leak at PFBC's Big Spring State Fish Hatchery required the relocation of 650,000 trout. Using nine stocking trucks, PFBC staff relocated the fish to the Oswayo State Fish Hatchery over the period of four days. Later that year, the fish were returned to the Big Spring State Fish Hatchery once repairs were made.

The Oswayo State Fish Hatchery has come a long way in the past 50 years. As methods and practices in fish culture change, the hatchery has made changes as well. Currently, the hatchery employs a manager, foreman, clerk typist, four full-time fish culturists and one seasonal fish culturist. If you ever find yourself in northern Potter County, stop by and see the hatchery for yourself. Hatchery staff are always willing to show visitors the facility and answer questions. The Oswayo State Fish Hatchery has a Visitor's Center located in the main building, complete with interpretive displays, maps, pamphlets and other publications for the public. In addition, there is a trout pond with all the types of fish raised at the hatchery including a few blue trout. Visiting hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily, and large groups are welcome. Please call ahead to schedule a tour for large groups. ☐



Oswayo State Fish Hatchery Display Pond