

A HATCHERY FOR THE FOWEY

The Committee of the Fowey Rivers Association (FRA) has succeeded in its bid to replace Wainsford Hatchery with one dedicated to overcoming the permanent loss of salmon from the St Neot.

The absence of salmon in the St Neot results from the unnatural flow regime, with high summer flows and low winter flows caused by the operation of the Colliford-Restormel water supply arrangement. This absence was not foreseen when the reservoir was built but it was expected that such unforeseen effects would be dealt with.

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The Environment Agency (EA) and South West Water (SWW) have accepted that the permanent loss of salmon has to be overcome. SWW have succeeded in their bid to secure funding for a hatchery to be run by FRA. After careful consideration of the available options, the EA, SWW and FRA have agreed that a total refurbishment of the mothballed Colliford hatchery is the best way forward as it has:

- A guaranteed water supply which matches the water the fish will be stocked into, ie the St Neot;
- Plenty of capacity to rear 40,000 fish to be stocked at the end of their first summer, ie after the heavy summer releases to Restormel;
- Room for broodstock holding;
- A ready-made secure permanent building;
- A track record of successful sea trout rearing which was replaced by buying out the estuary nets in 2007;
- The continued involvement of SWW as site owners.

Plans for the necessary refurbishment are already well advanced and include:

- Replacement of any necessary pipework and filters;
- Installation of UV sterilisation on the water supply to prevent any disease input;
- Installation of alarms with telephone links to warn of any water supply interruptions;
- Gravity-fed water storage and emergency pumps to overcome any supply interruptions;
- Re-use of existing SWW and FRA equipment which is fit for purpose and purchase of any new requirements;
- An annual operating programme from Autumn broodstock collection through to stocking the following September.

The hatchery will come online in the Autumn of 2016 with first stocking in 2017. Broodstock collection will be either by trapping, rod and line, or a combination of both.

Richard Grieve has agreed to manage the hatchery on behalf of FRA and will lead on :

- Ensuring that the hatchery is fit for purpose by September 2016;
- All operations connected to the hatchery programme;
- Coordinating a team of volunteers to support the project.

In this he has the full support of the Directors of FRA Ltd and we thank him for stepping up.

Later on we will be asking for volunteers to help with this exciting development to help the Fowey salmon fishery.

Bill Smith - Chairman