

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Wolf Creek

## *National Fish Hatchery*

Wolf Creek  
National Fish Hatchery  
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
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*Over a century ago, it was recognized that conservation measures were necessary to maintain good fishing in our public waters. Fishing has always been one of America's leading forms of outdoor recreation. The primary responsibility of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery (NFH) is to raise rainbow, brook and brown trout which will help preserve this tradition for present as well as future generations of Americans.*

*Construction of dams alter the environment within a river. The first and most obvious change takes place when the reservoir fills, but many changes may also take place below the dam. Some of them can be subtle, and others, like those in the Cumberland tailwaters, can be quite drastic.*

*Wolf Creek Dam produced a large, deep reservoir in which the water stratifies into temperature layers during the summer and fall months. The water released into the Cumberland River comes from a deep, cool layer. It caused a loss of the original warm water fish habitat and replaced it with the present cold tailwater.*

### **Welcome to Wolf Creek NFH**

Located off Hwy 127 in Jamestown, KY, Wolf Creek NFH sets just below the Wolf Creek Dam on the Cumberland River.



*Geographic location of Wolf Creek NFH*

### **Background**

In 1975, Wolf Creek NFH was established. It is one of the newest additions to the National Fish Hatchery System.

An estimated 1,000,000 trout weighing 275,000 pounds are produced each year. These fish provide over \$50 million dollars per year in direct economic benefits.



In coordination with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR), fish are stocked into over 120 different public fishing waters within the commonwealth.

The majority of fish are stocked in waters controlled by the Federal Government, such as those within the Daniel Boone National Forest, Fort Knox, Fort Campbell, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers impoundments. No private waters are stocked.

## Hours of Operation

Hatchery: 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

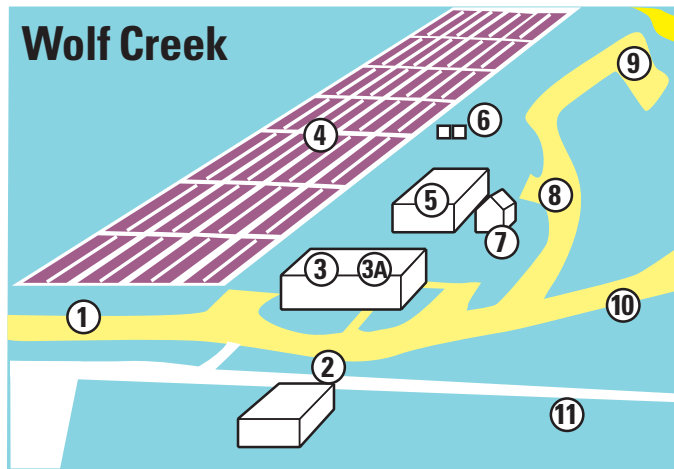
## Visitor Center:

May—October: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Nov—April: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

*All times listed in Central-Standard Time.*

Restrooms, drinking water, and public parking are available for visitors.



*Map representation of Wolf Creek NFH*

## KEY

1. Visitor Parking
2. Visitor/Environmental Education Center
3. Hatchery & Juvenile Fish Rearing Area
- 3a. Shop and Feed Storage
4. Raceway Area
5. Garage & Maintenance Buildings
6. Feed Bins
7. Storage
8. Road— Handicapped Only
9. Hatchery Creek & Accessible Parking
10. Residences— Hatchery Personnel Only
11. Nature Explorer Hiking Trail



## Trout Production

Water is supplied to the hatchery by Lake Cumberland, at depths ranging from 25 to 100 feet below the surface, and with temperatures ranging from 40° F to 65° F, depending on season. Water flows through the hatchery at rates up to 15,000 gallons per minute with the help of gravity.

The hatchery and juvenile fish rearing area, commonly referred to as the “tank room,” is comprised of 20 holding tanks used for trout rearing. This is where the rearing process begins. In this building, it is common to see the early life cycle stages of trout such as eggs, sac fry, and juvenile trout. All fish in this area are under 3 inches long.

Seven different sized feeds are used. Fish are fed up to 6 times per day. The size of the feed, as well as the frequency with which the fish are fed, is dependent upon the size of the fish.

The outdoor area is comprised of 64 raceways used for trout rearing. Fish within the raceways may be between 3 inches and 10 inches in length. Each raceway may contain anywhere from 8,000 to 100,000 fish, depending on size.





### Trout Rearing Process

Wolf Creek NFH receives eyed eggs, termed for the visibly developed eyes of the trout, from one of four federal broodstock hatcheries: Ennis NFH, MT; Erwin NFH, TN; White Sulphur Springs NFH, WV; Saratoga NFH, WY.

The eggs are placed in a iodine solution to prevent contamination. Afterwards, eggs are placed in hatching jars. Water flows through these jars continuously, to mimic natural spawning habitat, to ensure proper oxygenation, and to deter fungal growth.



From the time the eggs arrive, it takes approximately two weeks for hatching to occur. Once the eggs have hatched, the small fish are called alevin or sac fry, termed for the retained yolk sac on the underside of the fish. The sac fry will float to the top of the hatching jar, and travel with the overflowing water from the jar to the bottom of the tank. Here, the sac fry lie on the bottom, absorbing nutrients from their yolk sacs for approximately 2-3 weeks before beginning on feed.



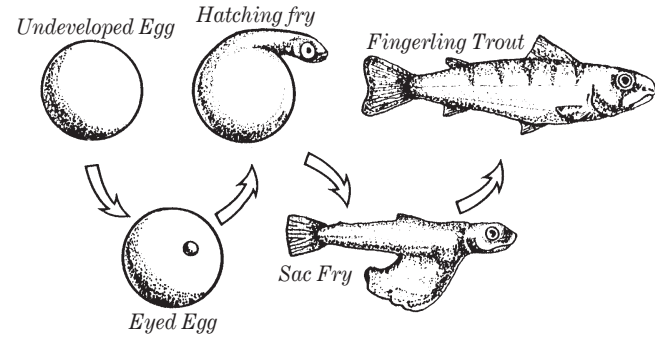
Once fry reach approximately 2-3 inches in length, they are known as fingerlings. Fingerlings are moved from a tank in the nursery to one of the 64 outdoor raceways.



It takes approximately 16 months to raise fish from the egg stage to a stockable size. Once the fish reach the desired length, it is time for stocking. Fish are collected, weighed, and then placed in a holding tank on the truck in preparation for distribution.

### Natural Life Cycle

Trout eggs are deposited in prepared redds, or nests in the gravel of stream beds, and hatch in approximately 8 weeks. A young fish, known as fry, lives for 3 to 4 weeks on nutrients absorbed from the yolk sac.



About the time the yolk is completely absorbed, the fingerling emerges from the gravel and feeds on microscopic aquatic organisms.

From the many eggs deposited in the gravel, only a very few young fish are produced and survive to adulthood. Most of the eggs and fry die from natural causes such as floods, sedimentation, drought and predators. Under natural conditions, relatively few trout reach catchable size to be taken by fishermen.



### Hatchery Creek

In 2016, an extensive rehabilitation and extension of Hatchery Creek was completed. This creek provides pristine habitat for trout spawning and rearing and features riffles, pools, and runs,

as well as a series of step pools for fish to enter from the Cumberland River. It extends over one mile, meandering through various habitats, and providing water/food sources for native wildlife.



### Threatened and Endangered Species

Wolf Creek NFH is actively engaged in the recovery and restoration of many imperiled aquatic species. Recovery and restoration activities include: on-station propagation; reintroductions; field surveys.



Wolf Creek NFH works with fish species such as: tuxedo darter; Barrens topminnow; relict darter; blackside dace; logperch; spotfin chub.



Wolf Creek NFH is also engaged in the recovery and restoration of native freshwater mussels.

Wolf Creek NFH's efforts to conserve freshwater mussels include species such as fanshell, clubshell, Cumberlandian combshell and Northern riffleshell.



**Visitor/  
Environmental  
Education Center**  
Opened in 2006,  
the Visitor/  
Environmental  
Education  
Center was the  
first of its kind to

be built at a National Fish Hatchery. The Visitor Center boasts an interactive exhibit hall, a theater, a classroom, and a gift shop.

**Gain** a better understanding of what Wolf Creek NFH does by viewing the introductory film in the theater.



**Step** into the exhibit hall: to come face to face with the region's underwater friends; to explore karst terrain; to see the inner workings of an active honey bee hive; and to meet Dale, the lifelike animatronic fish biologist.

**Learn** about native wildlife through touch tables, education animals, and taxidermy.

**Schedule** a group tour or attend an event. The Environmental Education team offers onsite and offsite programs for groups. Special events are held throughout the year. Contact an Environmental Education/Outreach Specialist for more information. 270/343 3797



**Purchase** a souvenir from the gift shop to remember all the fun you had during your visit!





### **Events**

Throughout the year, Wolf Creek NFH hosts many events focusing on a variety of topics. It holds five fishing events annually as well as a multitude of environmental education events.

**Ask the front desk for a schedule of events.**

### **Fishing Events**

#### ***Catch A Rainbow***

*Kids' Fishing Derby* - Biggest fish contest, lunch, prizes & more! Open to public. Ages 0-15, held 1st Saturday in June



#### ***Wounded Warrior Fishing Event***

For veterans wounded during service Pre-registration required. Held on weekday closest to September 11th



#### ***Reaching For Rainbows***

*Special Needs Kids' Fishing Derby* Lunch, medals and t-shirts! Coordinated through the Russell, Clinton, Adair, and Cumberland County Schools. Held last Wednesday and Thursday in September

#### ***Catch A Smile***

*Senior Fishing Derby* Fishing, lunch & prizes! Open to public. Ages 62 and older. Held last Tuesday in September.



### **Environmental Education Events**

Annual events include: Earth Day, which celebrates the Earth; Earth Hour, which raises awareness for energy conservation; Longest Day of Play, which celebrates the summer solstice and encourages children to get outdoors.

Monthly programs include: Nature Craft Club, a recycled craft workshop; Fly Fishing Clinics; and Nature Hour, a family-oriented program to connect people with nature.

In addition, the Environmental Education team also offers a variety of workshops and professional development opportunities.



### **Volunteers**

Wolf Creek relies heavily on the contributions of volunteers to maintain its functions and services.

Volunteers are needed year-round. Hours are part-time, and scheduling can be flexible!

In exchange for service, onsite volunteers receive a *free* campsite with water, electric, sewer hookup, WiFi, propane, and laundry facilities.

For onsite volunteers, hours are estimated at 20 to 24 per person, per week. For commuting volunteers, any time is greatly appreciated.



**Interested in volunteering for Wolf Creek NFH? Contact the Volunteer Coordinator: 270/343 3797**

## **Things to Do** **Fishing**

### *Hatchery Creek*

Catch your limit in the upper section of the creek or explore the lower stretches with catch and release techniques. The upper section is accessible, equipped with reserved parking for individuals with handicap permits.

Stocked 3-4 times per week.

*Creel limit is 5 fish per person per day.*

### *Cumberland River*

Fish the Cumberland River below Lake Cumberland for rainbow, brook and brown trout, walleye, sauger, and striped bass.

Considered one of the premier trout fishing destinations in the southeastern United States.

### *Lake Cumberland*

Hook a striper in Lake Cumberland, the 65,000 acres of anglers' paradise, which produces fish in excess of fifty pounds.

Also good for largemouth and smallmouth bass, crappie, walleye, and catfish.

***Federal and state regulations apply. Must have valid state fishing license and trout stamp, if applicable.***

## **Accommodations**

Camp nearby at the Kendall campground available through the Army Corps of Engineers, 877/444 6777.

Lodge at the Lake Cumberland State Resort Park, 800/325 1709.



For more information, visit [lakecumberlandtourism.com](http://lakecumberlandtourism.com).

## **Hiking and Biking**

### *Nature Explorer Hiking Trail*

Hike or bike the 3/4 mile trail, experiencing a variety of habitats just outside the Visitor Center. Challenge yourself with the nature trail scavenger hunt! Check with the front desk in the Visitor Center for more information.

### *Other Trails*

Explore other nearby trails along the Cumberland River.

## **Wildlife Viewing**

Spot native wildlife such as American bullfrogs, red-winged blackbirds, common snapping turtles, white-tailed deer, gray squirrels, Eastern box turtles, and turkey vultures.

*Take care to avoid disturbing wildlife and natural areas. Always observe wildlife from a distance. Never approach, feed, or follow them. Leave plants, rocks, and historical items as you find them for others to enjoy!*

## **Other Activities**

Try our QUEST challenge!

Bring children?

Check out our Biologist in Training (BiT) Workbook.

Ask the front desk for more information.





### **Friends of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Inc.**

The Friends of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Inc. (FOWCNFH) is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to supporting Wolf Creek NFH and its mission. Comprised of

volunteers, the Friends group is vital to the many programs Wolf Creek NFH offers including annual fishing events, workshops, trainings, and environmental education events. In addition, the group provides sponsorships to summer camps for children, establishes scholarship funds for high school students, and manages the gift shop in the Visitor/ Environmental Education Center, which welcomes an average of 1,000 visitors per week from all over the country.



### **Interested in becoming a FOWCNFH member?**

Contact the FOWCNFH Administrative Assistant via email at [friendsofwolfcreeknfh@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofwolfcreeknfh@gmail.com).

### **About the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

As the Nation's primary steward of fish and wildlife resources, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service provides leadership in habitat and wetlands protection; fish and wildlife research and technical assistance; and in the conservation and protection of migratory birds, anadromous fishes, certain marine mammals, and threatened and endangered species.

### **Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation**

As a vital component of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation Division has played an important role in

conserving America's fisheries since 1871. Today it is a key partner with States, Tribes, other Federal agencies, other Service Programs, conservation organizations and private interests in a larger effort to conserve fish and other aquatic resources.

### **National Fish Hatchery System**

The National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS) is comprised of a network of field stations located throughout the nation that work with tribal, local, and state governments, other federal agencies, and foreign nations to conserve fisheries.

### **Southeast Region**

Fourteen hatcheries are managed by the Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation Division of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Southeast Region.

### **What is a cold water hatchery?**

A cold water hatchery raises fish species that live in water temperatures between 40 degrees and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.



*Locations of National Fish Hatcheries within the Southeast Region*