

Oregon's Largest Fish Hatchery Named in Memory of Cole Rivers

Oregon's newest and largest fish hatchery is named for a former state employee.

The hatchery is named in honor of Cole M. Rivers, a fishery biologist for the Game Commission for more than 20 years. It is located on the Rogue River, just downstream from the Lost Creek Dam.

Rivers was an active member of the Oregon State Employees Association. He served three terms as a member of OSEA's Board of Directors as director of District Three in 1961, 1962 and 1963. He died suddenly at his home in 1966.

The hatchery was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to replace the natural fish production potential of the upper Rogue River that will be destroyed by impounded waters behind the 332-foot Lost Creek Dam.

Gov. Tom McCall dedicated the hatchery on June 20. During the dedication ceremonies it was turned over to the Game Commission for operation.

The hatchery is the largest in Oregon and one of the biggest in the nation. It is

larger than all of the other 15 Game Commission hatcheries combined.

Within the 30-acre hatchery complex is a fish ladder, collection pond, six holding ponds, two brood trout ponds, 87 raceways for rearing yearling salmon and trout, 26 outside nursing ponds, 14 small circular tanks in the hatchery building and 58 incubators. The inside tanks and incubators are supplied with both raw water and water through a filtered, heated re-use system.

After hatching in the incubators, young fish will be raised in the 26 outside nursing ponds and then transferred to one of the 87 rearing ponds to complete their hatchery cycle. When sufficiently mature, they will be released via tubes into the Rogue River or trucked to other release points.

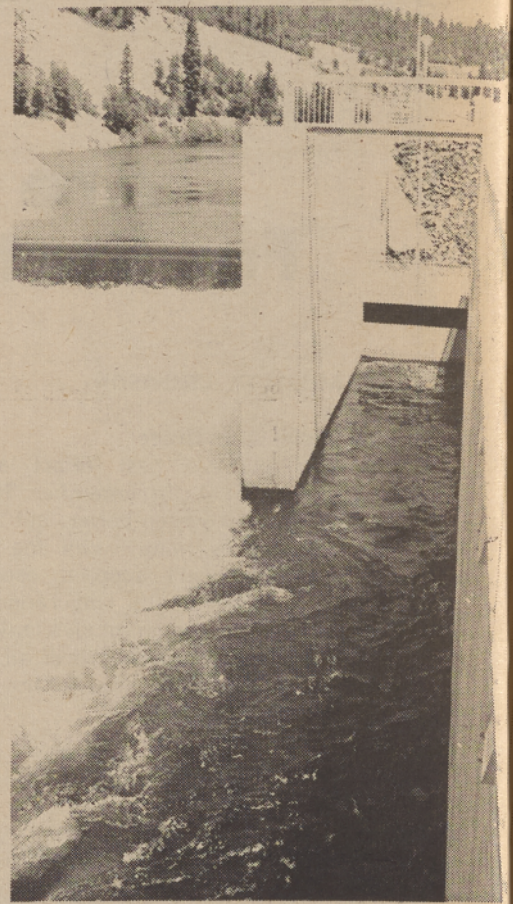
Tentative annual production will include 1.9 million spring chinook, 206,000 coho, 100,000 summer steelhead, 460,000 winter steelhead, 168,000 legal-sized rainbow trout and 2.3 million rainbow and kokanee fingerlings for a total of approximately five million fish weighing 425,000 pounds.

A low barrier dam across the Rogue at the hatchery prevents fish from moving up river and creates a small reservoir. Fish enter a collection pond in the hatchery by negotiating a fish ladder.

After the fish are in the collection pond, a sweep forces them into an anesthetic tank under the salmon spawning building. An electric hoist is used to raise them to a sorting table. From there fish are transferred to the various holding ponds via large fiberglass tubes supplied with water.

At the present time the hatchery has only five employees. That number will increase to 12 when it reaches full production. It has two managers: Ray Culver, formerly manager of the Game Commission's Oak Springs Hatchery near Maupin, and Jerry Fisher, who was assistant manager of the Willamette Hatchery near Oakridge.

The Cole M. Rivers Fish Hatchery is open to visitors. It is located about 30 miles north of Medford, between Shady Cove and Prospect, on highway 62.



Fish are prevented from moving up river by a small barrier dam across the Rogue River at the hatchery. After trying unsuccessfully to leap the dam, fish are drawn by water currents to an opening which leads to a fish ladder.

'Cole Rivers Gave 20 Dedicated Years'

"It is most appropriate that this hatchery, the largest in our state, and one of



COLE M. RIVERS

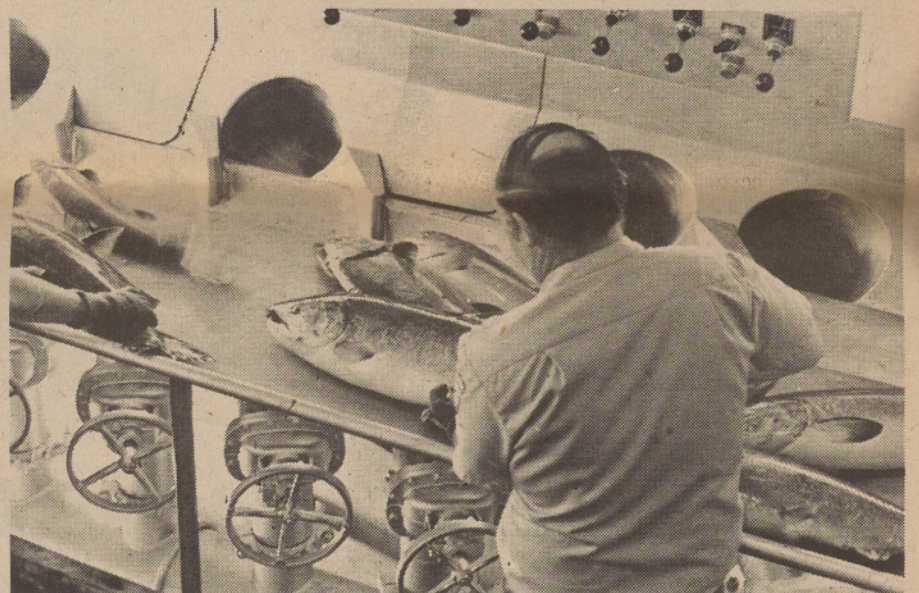
the largest in all the United States, be named for a fishery biologist of the Oregon Game Commission," Gov. Tom McCall said when he dedicated the Cole M. Rivers Fish Hatchery on the Rogue River.

"Cole Rivers gave 20 dedicated, innovative years to this very district in efforts always dedicated to improving and protecting the fishery resource of this world-famed river."

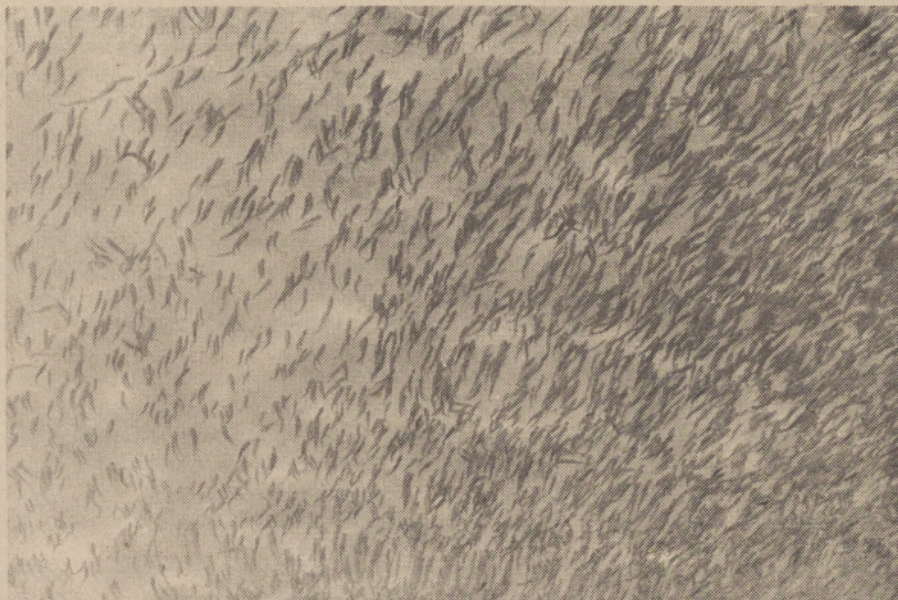
"His dream is coming to fruition, and the waters of this stream that he treasured so much, and knew so well, will be vastly improved in quality and quantity by the Lost Creek Lake Project, and his hatchery will provide new vigorous numbers of fish to populate the entire Rogue Basin streams."

Rivers began his career with the Game Commission in 1941 in Grants Pass. His initial assignment was as a cook for the 1941 Rogue River Survey Crew.

He took over responsibilities for the study in that district the following year, and then served as the district fishery biologist for more than 20 years.



Fish are raised by a hoist and spilled out onto a sorting table. From there fish are transferred through fiberglass tubes into various holding ponds in the hatchery.



These young steelhead will be kept in one of the hatchery's 26 outside starting ponds before being transferred to one of the 87 rearing ponds to complete their hatchery cycle. When sufficiently mature, they will be released via tubes into the Rogue or trucked to other release points.



Hundreds of large spring chinook salmon are kept in holding ponds until they are ready to spawn. Then they are transferred to the spawning building, killed and stripped of roe.