

The Stacks' Paradise Trout Hatchery Still Going Strong After 100 Years

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the bulk of the business at Paradise is the sale of live fish for stocking, Martin prefers to raise the fish in as close to their natural setting as possible.

For this reason, Paradise does not add oxygen to the ponds, knowing that when the fish leave their location and are released in streams or ponds, it will be easier for them to adjust. Each pond has at least one or two fountain-type aerators which, along with the strong flow of water and earthen raceways, have proven to be quite suitable for keeping the fish healthy.

The water for the operation of the hatchery at Paradise is

supplied by four or five springs and flows by gravity through the hatchery buildings, raceways, and ponds. The three types of trout raised at Paradise—Brook, Brown, and Rainbow—are kept in separate ponds and graded according to size.

While the desired size for stocking fish at one time was 8-10 inches, now it is 12 to 14 inches, taking a minimum of 18 months to raise a fish for sale at market size. Producing desirable fish is a 3- to 4-year process—therefore, producers are always looking ahead in the fish hatchery business.

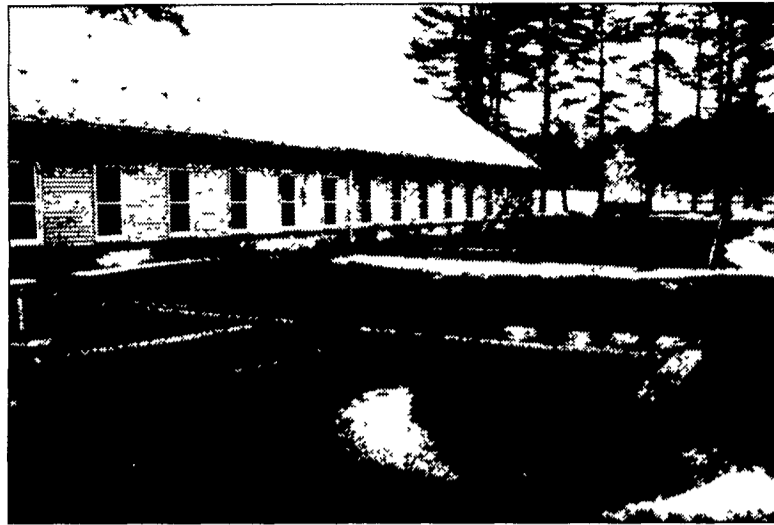
Martin knows that when selling fish for restocking, the end result is a fisherman land-

ing a large and beautiful fish. Raising them at Paradise in as close to their natural setting as possible consistently produces large, colorful, and healthy fish.

She believes raising fish in natural settings produces healthier and prettier fish, and that is what the fee fishing customers and fisherman want to see when they reel in that line with a trout on the end. Martin strives to produce quality, not quantity.

Just as any livestock farmer has to provide the best care for their animals, so is the case with aquaculture. Paradise receives a shipment of fish food every 30 days from Salt Lake City, Utah they prefer not to have more than a 30-day supply on hand to insure freshness and quality of the feed. A belt feeder is used to drop a regulated amount of feed into the water to start the fish. As they increase in size and are moved to growing ponds, a belt feeder is positioned next to a self feeder that resembles a seed or fertilizer bin on a corn planter that has a string hanging from the bottom dangling into the water. With the belt feeder dropping food next to the string, the fish soon learn that the string will cause food to drop when bumped or pulled. Eventually the belt feeder is removed.

When asked about predator problems, without hesitation



Paradise Trout Hatchery and Preserve, Cresco, in operation since 1902, was the first licensed fish hatchery in Pennsylvania. Seen is the hatchery surrounded by some of the many raceways on the property.

Martin listed birds, particularly the great blue heron, as the biggest problem. In summer, when the birds are at their worst, netting is hung across the ponds for protection. Occasionally they have muskrats visit the pond, but they generally aren't a problem.

Runoff entering their water sources or ponds has not been a real problem, although they occasionally see some cloudiness of the water during periods of heavy rain. Paradise is fortunate that they have several means of diverting the flow of water and seldom have experienced problems to the quality of water. Like other farming operations, however,

Paradise is being surrounded by residential growth, and Martin is concerned as to what future water quality problems might occur. As for government regulations of the discharge of water, Martin said, "it's coming—just like everywhere else."

Martin serves as secretary of the Pennsylvania Aquaculture Association, and is able to keep abreast of upcoming developments affecting her industry as well as being involved in promoting her product.

Generally Paradise is able to sell all the fish they raise, and what isn't sold to stocking

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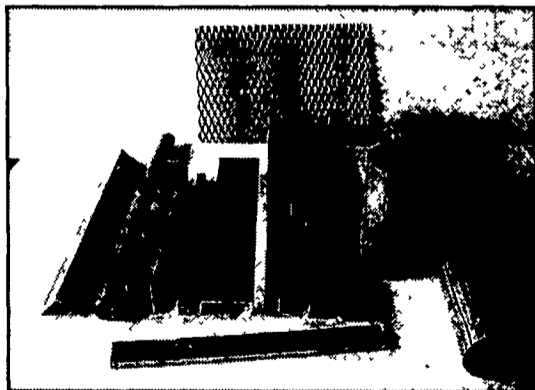
The hatchery building at Paradise Trout Hatchery is seen behind one of the earthen raceways. The white PVC pipes along the pond are used to hold netting to protect against loss by birds.

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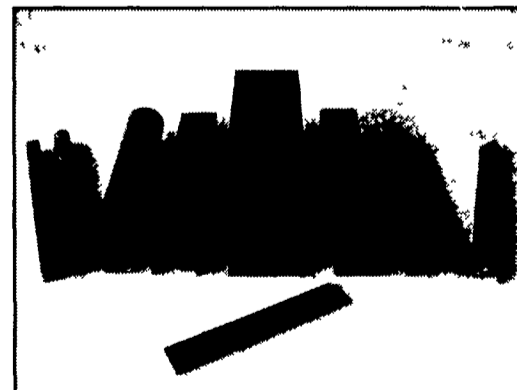
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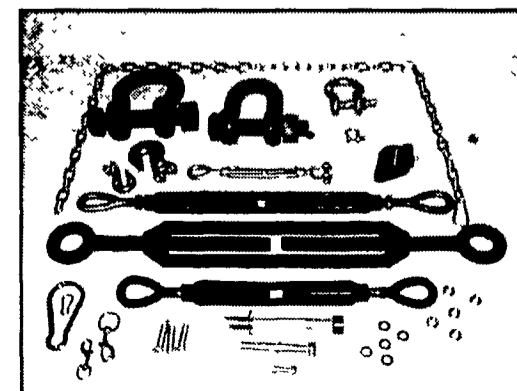
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