Bureau of Fisheries Workplan - Salmon River Fisheries Management

NEW YORK STATE | Department of Environmental Conservation

Objective	*Strategies*	*Progress*
1) Maintain and improve fish culture practices at the Salmon River Hatchery to support high quality lake-run fisheries.	***Produce a diverse array of salmonid species to support a high-quality, year-round lake-run fishery that also satisfies hatchery egg requirements.***	*September 2025 Status* - Fall 2024 egg requirements and Spring 2025 stocking targets met for Salmon River. Spring 2025 egg requirements met.
	Develop and implement Salmon River Hatchery "Infrastructure Revitalization Plan."	*September 2025 Status* - Well field rehabilitation, and new well development continues. Mold remediation, painting, and new lighting throughout the start tank room and building completed. Extensive cleanup of reaeration area completed and repowering of the area underway after winter lightning strike and subsequent fire (completed in Aug 2025) Visitor center rework, planning and development meetings currently underway.
	Continually explore opportunities to integrate science-based, state-of-the-art aquaculture technology and practices, and employ them where appropriate and feasible, to maximize the hatchery's production potential.	*September 2025 Status*- Grading of both steelhead and coho salmon ongoing to help eliminate fish size variation. Promising results from first year of coho grading. Use of a new digital scales have led to more accurate numbers of fish on hand at the facility. Second year of steelhead supplemental oxygen and density experiments underway with very promising results thus far.

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2) Improve and expand the existing network of angler access sites on the Salmon River and its tributaries to provide satisfying angling experiences to a diversity of angler interests.	***Maintain existing angler parking areas and trails to support safe use.***	*September 2025 Status* - Condition of lots assessed in April 2025 - maintenance addressed by Operations staff / snowplow contract implemented. Paved both Altmar lots along with Pineville and Trestle South.
	Formalize and improve trail access system to and along the River to minimize impacts on sensitive areas.	*September 2025* -Received written agreement from Tailwater Lodge of a trail easement to allow the connection between Altmar FAS and Ellis Cove. Funding has been secured and the plan developed.
	Add additional DEC angler parking areas on DEC properties as per the Lower Salmon River Restoration and Recreation Enhancement Plan.	*September 2025 Status* - Just completed the Wirehole parking lot. The Academy lot is planned for 2025 as well.
	Acquire additional Public Fishing Rights easements and outright ownership whenever willing sellers are identified.	*September 2025 Status- T*he PFR purchase from the Village of Pulaski has been finalized
	Explore opportunities to create universally accessible fishing sites along the River.	*September 2025 Status* - Design staff to evaluate feasibility of constructing wheelchair accessible access at Trestle South on top of the old bridge abutment
	Develop and improve outreach tools to inform anglers about fishing opportunities that exist throughout the River.	*September 2025 Status* - Distributed the Salmon River brochures. Installed new kiosk panels with a river access map, other nearby waters and fish ID guides.

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2) Improve and expand the existing network of angler access sites on the Salmon River and its tributaries to provide satisfying angling experiences to a diversity of angler interests (cont.)	***Maintain a limited number of areas that are relatively remote to provide a more solitary angling experience.***	*September 2025 Status* - Gates at museum and Trestle North lots limit winter access. Snow removal does not occur at Sportsmens North FAS.
	Explore opportunities to accommodate a diversity of additional, special angling opportunities.	*September 2025 Status* - No activity to report
3) Increase responsible stewardship of the Salmon River system's fisheries resources and promote ethical angling practices.	***Post signage to inform anglers on angling opportunities, angling regulations, and encourage ethical angling techniques and behavior.***	*September 2025 Status* - Distributed Salmon River specific brochure covering fishing regulations & trout/salmon ID to tackle shops, brochure boxes at parking areas, and the hatchery. Installed new kiosk panels depicting fish ID, river map and other local waters as alternatives.
	Develop and maintain angling regulations and outreach tools that promote ethical angling behavior and responsible stewardship of the River and its fishery resources.	*September 2025 Status* - Maintained existing regulations that are aimed at reducing intentional and unintentional snagging of fish
	Provide for high-quality angling experiences through stewardship outreach and law enforcement efforts.	*September 2025 Status* - Annual SRH Open House to occur on National Hunting and Fishing Day Sept. 27th 2025
	Strive to alleviate conflicts between anglers.	*September 2025 Status* - No activity to report

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	Work with local municipalities (Village and County Governments), user groups, conservation organizations and partners to improve overall stewardship of the Salmon River (trash collection, porta-johns, etc.).	*September 2025 Status* - Facilitated local efforts to collect trash at DEC parking areas. Partnering with Oswego County on snow removal at a reduced rate.

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4) Maintain and improve high quality habitats to support all life stages of lake run salmonids.	***Protect and enhance instream habitat to benefit water quality and all life stages of trout and salmon by completing habitat enhancement and streambank stabilization projects utilizing natural stream design techniques.***	*September 2025 Status* - The Trestle Pool project has been completed. Additional problem areas downstream of the Trestle have been addressed for bank erosion and over widened conditions.
	Protect instream habitat and water quality through ensuring compliance with NYS laws and regulations.	*September 2025 Status* - Ongoing
	Identify thermal refuge areas and explore opportunities to enhance adult salmonid holding areas which provide refuge during warm summer months.	*September 2025 Status* - USGS seeking additional grant funds to continue work. No work completed in 2025.
	Develop measures (regulatory or otherwise) to protect identified thermal refuges during periods of high water temperature.	*September 2025 Status* - No activity to report
	Assess the need for additional protection of important spawning tributaries.	*September 2025 Status* - No activity to report.
	Work with volunteer groups and conservation organizations to improve riparian and instream habitat.	*September 2025 Status* - Provided willows to volunteers for riparian plantings. Focused on the Davey Farm on Orwell Brook in 2025.
	Monitor changes in watershed land use and seek to minimize adverse impacts on water quality and quantity.	*September 2025 Status* - No activity to report

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5) Maintain a high-quality Fall sport fishery.	***Maintain current Salmon River water flow regime to support wild Chinook production.***	*September 2025 Status* - In cooperation with Brookfield Power and the USFWS, staff reviewed reservoir storage levels ahead of scheduled 2025 whitewater releases. The Labor Day release was cancelled in 2025.Reviewed prior year flows with the Flow Mmgt. Advisory Team.
	Maintain yearly assessment program for monitoring natural production of juvenile Chinook.	*September 2025 Status* - Assessment program completed by DEC according to standard protocols and finalized report for Lake Ontario Committee Report
	Maintain Chinook and coho salmon stocking numbers supporting objectives established in Fish Community Objectives for Lake Ontario.	*September 2025 Status* - Lake Ontario chinook #'s were unchanged from 2024.
	Evaluate the performance of stocked yearling versus fall fingerling coho.	*September 2025 Status* - Evaluation complete
6) Maintain a high-quality Winter/Spring sport fishery.	***Monitor wild juvenile steelhead production in Trout and Orwell brooks.***	*September 2025 Status* - No activity to report.
	Explore options to maximize the opportunity to catch wild and trophy-sized steelhead.	*September 2025 Status* -No activity to report

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Objective	*Strategies*	*Progress*
7) Improve the quality of the summer sport fishery.	***Increase returns of Atlantic salmon to the River by:***	
	Developing an Atlantic salmon management plan for Eastern Basin Lake Ontario tributaries, including the Salmon River system.	*September 2025 Status* - Lake Ontario Atlantic salmon fisheries management plan was published in 2022.
	Collaborating with the USGS and US Fish and Wildlife Service to provide supplemental stockings of juvenile fish originating from Lake Ontario stocks.	*September 2025 Status* - No activity to report.
	Imprinting federally reared fish on the Salmon River Hatchery by stocking fall fingerlings into the smolt release pond, and releasing as yearlings.	*September 2025 Status*- In 2025 15,000 Atlantic salmon smolts from USFWS Eisenhower National Fish Hatchery were transferred and held at Salmon River Hatchery for approximately 3 weeks prior to stocking in the estuary. In 2024, 10,000 smolts were transfered from Adirondack Hatchery to Salmon River Hatchery and held for approximately 3 weeks prior to stocking in the estuary.
	Monitoring the production of wild juveniles in the Salmon River system.	*September 2025 Status* - No activity to report.

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	Evaluating the potential for rearing Atlantic salmon at the Salmon River Hatchery.	*September 2025 Status* - No activity to report
	Evaluate the performance of Skamania strain steelhead in providing a viable summer/early fall fishery.	*September 2025 Status* - Skamania program has been discontinued
	Stock surplus yearling and 2-year old brown trout to provide a summer fishery until adequate summer runs of Atlantic salmon and/or Skamania steelhead are established.	*September 2025 Status* -Stocking has been discontinued

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8) Use science to evaluate the sport fishery quality and inform adaptive management strategies.	***Implement an annual fall through spring creel survey to evaluate the fisheries for Pacific salmon and steelhead.***	*September 2025 Status* - This position is now part of the Lake Ontario Angler Survey. The Tech works on the boat angler survey in the summer and the SR in fall/winter. Survey taking place in 2025/2026.
	Evaluate the progress being made toward the improvement of a summer fishery.	*September 2025 Status* - Summer angler diary program conducted. Report sent to participants. 6 additional participants joined for 2025.
	Periodically conduct a summer creel survey to evaluate fisheries for Atlantic salmon, Skamania steelhead, and brown trout.	*September 2025 Status* - Summer angler diary program conducted. Report sent to participants.
	Utilize creel survey results to monitor current fishing conditions and inform management decisions.	*September 2025 Status* - Creel survey results being used to inform ongoing discussions with lake and tributary stakeholders
Other Management Activities Related to Insuring the Quality of the Salmon River Fishery	***Collect biological data on the trout and salmon returning to the SRH in order to inform management decision for Lake Ontario that also impact the Salmon River Fishery***	*Septermber 2025 Status* - Biological data collected on steelhead in April 2025/ Data on Pacific salmon gathered in October 2024

	Support GLFC efforts to control Sea Lamprey numbers in Lake Ontario	*September 2025 Status*-DEC Fisheries staff received and unloaded a large TFM chemical shipment at the new storage facility / Plowed access road into Orwell Brook sea lamprey barrier for DFO Lamprey Control staff.