



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE HOSTS PEQUEST TROUT HATCHERY FREE OPEN HOUSE THIS WEEKEND; OPENING DAY OF TROUT SEASON IS APRIL 4

(15/P28) TRENTON –With trout season just around the corner, the Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Fish and Wildlife is hosting its annual free Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center Open House this weekend, March 28 and 29.



The Pequest Open House is one of the Division of Fish and Wildlife’s premier events, held every year the weekend prior to the opening of trout season to spotlight trout fishing and New Jersey’s natural resources. An estimated 100,000 anglers are expected to take part as trout season begins on April 4 at 8 a.m.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife is stocking some 570,000 rainbow trout across the state throughout the spring, with 200,000 in the water and ready to be hooked on opening day.

“Trout fishing in New Jersey is as strong as ever,” said Richard Boornazian, DEP Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources. “Our lakes and streams are being stocked with lots of healthy rainbows, ready to be hooked and help make fond memories.”

“Opening day of trout season is one of the most anticipated days on the calendar for outdoors lovers, connecting families and friends in the enjoyment of our state’s natural resources and splendid scenery,” added Division of Fish and Wildlife Director David Chanda.

All designated trout waters are being stocked exclusively with rainbow trout. The staff at Pequest is shifting to more intensive production of rainbow trout, which is resistant to furunculosis, a disease common in cold water fish species that impacted brown and brook trout reared at the Warren County hatchery. This issue limited stocking in some of New Jersey’s trout waters last year.

The Pequest Open House, which runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, offers a range of activities suitable for everyone from novices to experienced lovers of fishing and the outdoors.

“People of all ages from across New Jersey and neighboring states come to this event to learn about



trout and New Jersey's abundant natural resources," said Hatchery Superintendent Jeff Matthews. "This event features family friendly activities and conservation exhibits that focus on fishing, hunting and wildlife in the Garden State."

Activities include:

- The Hog Trough -- a giant mobile fishing tank holding thousands of gallons of water and loaded with monster trout and warm-water game fish. Professional fishing demonstrations in the Hog Trough are scheduled throughout the day, with tips for anglers on casting methods, lures and effective fishing techniques.
- Children ages 8 to 16 can try their hand at trout fishing before the season opens in the Fishing Education Pond, with expert instruction by staff and volunteers from the Wildlife Conservation Corps and Trout Unlimited. Children under 8 can try catching trout in the Kiddie Fishing Tank. All fishing equipment will be provided.
- Inside the Natural Resource Education Center, Division of Fish and Wildlife staff and representatives from conservation organizations will be on hand with exhibits and information on the work being done to protect our natural resources. Wildlife artists, carvers and taxidermists will exhibit their artwork and offer items for sale.
- In addition, a Sportsmen's Flea Market will offer deals on fishing and hunting equipment, outdoor gear and many other items. Food vendors will be available or you can bring your own lunch and enjoy one of three picnic areas located in the 5,000-acre Pequest Wildlife Management Area.

The Pequest Trout Hatchery utilizes state-of-the-art techniques for trout stocking throughout New Jersey. Wells in the Pequest Valley provide a constant flow of cold water necessary for the rearing of trout.

For more information on the spring trout stocking program, including the in-season stocking schedule, please visit: http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/trtinfo_spring.htm

Stocking information is also available through the **Trout Stocking Hotline at (609) 633-6765**. For more information on the Open House including a schedule of events and directions, call (908)-637-4125 ext. 100 or visit: <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/peqoh.htm>

Anyone age 16 or older must obtain a fishing license and trout stamp to fish for trout. Children under 16 and New Jersey residents 70 years and older can fish for free. Licenses and stamps may be obtained through license agents statewide, found at www.njfishandwildlife.com/agentlst.htm They can also be purchased online at www.nj.wildlifelicense.com

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