

Location

The Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center is located on Rt. 46 -- nine miles west of Hackettstown in scenic Warren County. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily (except holidays) and admission is free.

Directions

From Rt. 80: Take Exit #19 (Rt. 517). Go south toward Hackettstown approximately 5 miles. At the first traffic light you come to (downtown Hackettstown) make a right onto Rt. 46 West. Go approximately 8 miles to hatchery entrance on eastbound side.

From Rt. 78: Take Exit #17 (Rt. 31). Take Rt. 31 North approximately 17 miles to its end at Rt. 46. Make a right onto Rt. 46 East. The hatchery entrance is approximately 2.5 miles on the right.

For More Information

For more information about the Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center write or call us at:

**605 Pequest Rd.
Oxford, NJ 07863
908-637-4125**

You can also visit the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's website at:

www.njfishandwildlife.com

Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center



**State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Fish and Wildlife**



www.njfishandwildlife.com

Pequest History

The Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center is located within the 4,000+ acre state-owned Pequest Wildlife Management Area. The facility is operated by the Division of Fish and Wildlife.



The hatchery was built in this area because of the large supply of pure water available. Water is a critical resource for raising trout. The water is pumped out of the Pequest aquifer, a large body of water located underground. Wells located on the property supply the hatchery with up to 7,000 gallons of water per minute. The water temperature stays about 52 degrees Fahrenheit, even in the winter, because the heat from the earth keeps it the same temperature.

Public access to the raceways and the interior of the fish rearing buildings is restricted to prevent the introduction of parasites and diseases into our fish stock.



Each raceway holds up to 12,500 fish per pool.

Pequest Trout Hatchery raises more than 700,000 brook, brown and rainbow trout each year. The average size of the trout is 10.5 inches when they are ready to be stocked. The trout are stocked in over 200 lakes and rivers throughout New Jersey that are open to public fishing. None of the trout raised at the Pequest Trout Hatchery are sold.



Brook Trout
Salvelinus fontinalis

Brown Trout
Salmo trutta



Rainbow Trout
Oncorhynchus mykiss

There are many things to see and do at the Natural Resource Education Center. Come inside and learn about New Jersey's natural resources as you explore our displays. Enjoy a fifteen minute video, "Hooked on Nature," about how the trout are raised -- from egg collecting to stocking. Take a self-guided tour of the hatchery. Visit our butterfly garden. Learn how to create backyard wildlife habitat. Pick up free literature about New Jersey's natural resources. There are also several hiking trails and picnic areas located on the Pequest property.

Hatchery Operations

The Broodstock Building

Where do all the fish we raise at Pequest come from? Raceways house 6,000 two-and three-year old trout as broodstock. These trout are raised at the hatchery to provide the eggs and milt, the fluid containing sperm, used to hatch the fish for New Jersey's public waters.



Each fall, over two million eggs are manually collected in the broodstock building by a process known as "stripping". During stripping, manual pressure is applied to the fish. This causes the females to release eggs and the males to release milt. The eggs are then fertilized with the milt.

The Nursery Building

The fertilized eggs are taken from the broodstock building to the nursery. The eggs are placed in incubators until they hatch. Constantly running 52 degree water supplies the eggs with plenty of oxygen until they hatch. The eggs take 30-35 days to hatch. These young trout are called "sac-fry" because the egg's yolk sac remains attached to the trout's abdomen. The "sac-fry" are placed in fiberglass rearing tanks in the nursery building. The yolk sac nourishes the fish for about two weeks until the young trout are able to feed on their own. They are then fed a high-protein diet. Feeding occurs eight times per day from automatic feeders that hang over the tanks.

The Raceways

By spring, the young trout measure three to four inches in length. They are ready to go into the outdoor raceways. Once in the raceways, the trout are fed four times a day from a customized truck. The trout will stay in the raceways until the following spring when they will be ready for stocking.



Stocking

The fish are loaded into hatchery transfer trucks starting in mid-March. They are taken from the raceway area and loaded into the stocking trucks. The trucks distribute the trout to public fishing areas. Empty raceways are drained, cleaned and refilled with water. The next generation of trout can be moved from the nursery building to the raceways. Trout are also reared for stockings in the fall and winter providing New Jersey anglers with year-round trout fishing opportunities.



Programs at Pequest

Come visit our education center. You can take a self-guided tour of the hatchery by following the green fish on the sidewalk.

School and civic groups with a minimum of 15 participants in grades 2 and up may schedule a program. The program consists of a video presentation about the hatchery and a guided tour. Dress for the weather! A Natural Resource Trail hike, that focuses on wildlife habitat and natural resources, and a session on stream ecology are also offered. The stream ecology program, a hands-on activity, teaches students about the habitat requirements of trout.

Pequest also offers fishing education classes to groups of 15-20 people from April through October. These classes cover safety, ethics, technique and equipment followed by a hands-on fishing experience. Pequest provides all the equipment needed for these classes.

Pequest offers many other programs throughout the year. They are open to the public and require registration.



Additional programs at Pequest include:

- Spincasting for Beginners**
- Fly-Fishing for Beginners**
- Fly Tying for Beginners**
- Winter Fly-Fishing**
- Fly Tying Demonstrations**
- Pequest Trail Hike**
- Insect Safari**
- What Do Owls Eat?**
- Let's Feed the Birds**
- Bear Aware**
- Papermaking**
- Amphibian Amble**
- Wild Turkey Seminar/ Calling Clinic**
- Wildflower Walk**
- Bats of the World**
- Early Morning Bird Walk**
- Gyotaku**



You can find a current list of programs being offered at Pequest at www.njfishandwildlife.com