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Salmon Hatchery at Duck Hole



Connecticut State Salmon Hatchery at Duck Hole on the Hammonasset River

In the summer of 1919 the Connecticut State Fish and Game commission began construction of a salmon hatchery on the site of a grist mill on the Hammonasset River at Duck Hole just north of the railroad bridge.

The grist mill on the west bank of the river and the saw mill on the east bank were both demolished to make way for the new buildings. The grist mill had been in use until just shortly before its destruction. The original dam was also destroyed and new, higher one constructed.



Mills at Duck Hole on the Hammonasset River. The grist mill is on the left and the saw mill is on the right.

The hatchery was to consist of 4 buildings: a hatchery above the dam and three feeding houses 50 feet long below the dam. A large feed pipe running through the dam into the pond provided ample water for the hatchery and the feeding houses. The hatchery was scheduled to open in December, 1920. Work commenced about June 1, 1919 with 30 men from Madison, Guilford, Clinton and Killingworth being employed by the H. Wales Lines Company of Meriden, general contractor for the work.

The work was under the supervision of John N. Crampton of the State Fish and Game Commission who also acted as superintendent of the state game farm also in Madison on the site of the present Grove School located on Copse Road just south of the I-95 overpass.

It was reported at the time that the new dam would be 25 feet tall, 3 feet taller than the original dam. It was also speculated that it might be necessary to raise the highway to prevent flooding during the spring freshet.

A newspaper article the described the benefits of the state's fish hatchery program: "As with the present artificial propagation of trout carried on by the state, the fry of these salmon will be distributed all over the state and released in waters found suitable for their breeding and development. In this way it may be but a few years before sportsmen may find it unnecessary to go to Maine and Canada to catch salmon."

At the time no citizens complained about the destruction of historic mills nor the plans to empty the waste products from the operation into the Hammonasset River.

When the Salmon Hatchery closed, the State destroyed the dam. All that remains is the ruined dam and a few old stones. There is a trail at the Madison Town Campus that leads to the salmon hatchery.

Directions to the remains of the Salmon Hatchery: From Madison Center travel east toward Clinton on Route One. After passing the entrance to Hammonasset State Park, turn left onto Duck Mill Road Follow Mill Road to River Road and continue straight on bearing to the right under I-95. After passing under I-95 you will see the remains of the Salmon Hatchery Dam above the bridge over the river.