

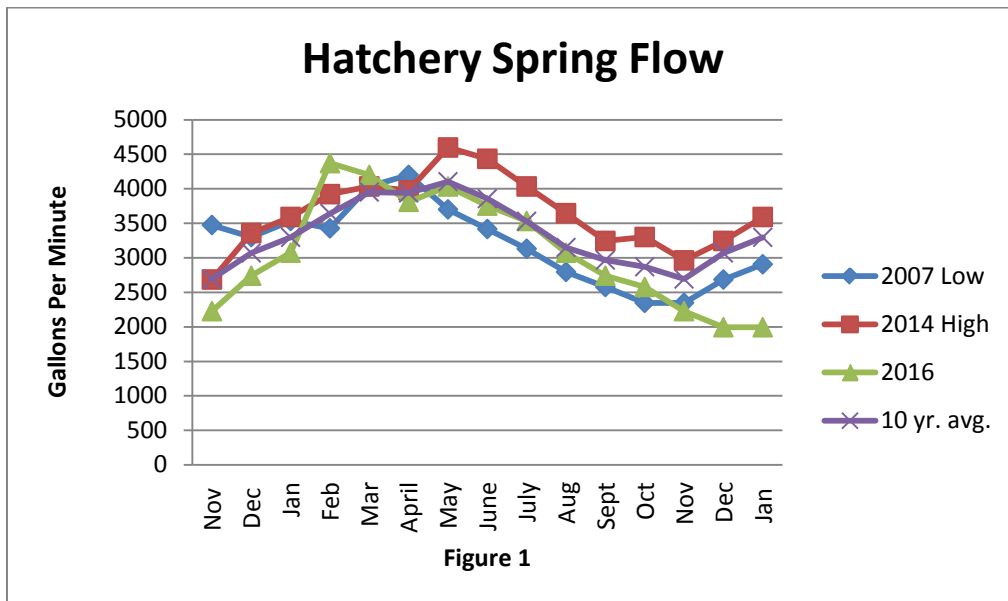
**Washington County's Albert Powell Hatchery Working on Water Quality and Quantity Issues;  
Response Included Early Stocking to Relieve Overcrowding**

Albert Powell Hatchery, the largest Department of Natural Resources trout production facility, is investigating and has taken corrective actions following a recent disruption to its water quality and quantity.

During the first three weeks of December, the hatchery water supply became cloudy with silt, which created poor water conditions for adult trout culture, and potentially fatal conditions for eggs and newly hatched trout. Hatchery staff immediately responded to protect the younger fish, transferring some trout to another culture facility, reducing feeding, and increasing raceway cleaning as needed. A second silt event occurred January 15, 2017, and lasted about 24 hours.

In addition, the lowest November-January spring flows ever recorded (Figure 1), affected growth of the hatchery rainbow trout, which required Fishing and Boating Services staff to stock multiple locations sooner than anticipated. As a result, trout scheduled for spring 2017 stocking will be slightly smaller than normal.

Also, the annual allotments for Deep Creek Lake and Savage River Reservoir were shifted to the pre-season schedule to further reduce densities within hatchery raceways. Anglers can find the list of stocked waters on the [trout stocking web site](#).





*Photos from December 2, 2016 silt event at Albert Powell Hatchery (courtesy of Marshall Brown).*

Fishing and Boating Services staff is working with Maryland Department of Environment, Maryland Geological Survey, and the Washington County Health Department to determine potential causes for the silt events and develop possible solutions. The Department of Natural Resources has temporarily deployed a seismometer to determine activity underground that may be impacting the hatchery's spring.

For 2018, Fishing and Boating Services has developed a response plan to these events. Hatchery production capacity and statewide stocking will be slightly reduced for 2018, and stocking in specific impoundments will occur early in the stocking season. This should provide sufficient hatchery culture space to grow out the remaining fish to the target size of 0.5 pound each. If flows at the hatchery spring return to normal, better growth rates should produce fish that exceed the target size.

The department is also investing in a capital improvement project to implement a state of the art water treatment system. This new system, currently at the design stage, will allow the hatchery to operate a water re-use system that will help staff deal with low spring flows. The department is hopeful that these solutions will protect the valuable hatchery water supply and continue to support trout culture well into the future.

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