

Labor of love at Warren County Fish Hatchery



Conor Whalen knew at a young age that he wanted to pursue a career working with wildlife. He still vividly recalls a school tour of **Warren County Fish Hatchery** when he was a third-grader in Queensbury, which helped formulate his love of the outdoors.

“I remember visiting the hatchery on a school trip and being amazed,” he recalled.

Nearly 17 years later, Whalen has realized his dream of a career working in the outdoors. He is overseeing the fish-rearing operation at the hatchery, newly promoted to Fish Management Specialist when his boss, **Jeff Inglee**, ascended to **Warren County Director of Parks, Recreation & Railroad**.

The irony of the situation is it was Inglee years ago who led the fish hatchery tour that, along with the Trout in the Classroom program at Queenbury Middle School, helped forge Whalen’s interest in wildlife management.

Three-and-a-half years ago, Whalen and Inglee became colleagues at the hatchery when Whalen was hired as a hatchery aide fresh out of **Paul Smith's College's** environmental science program. An avid outdoorsman, Whalen quickly excelled at a job he loved.

"Everything just fell into place," he noted.

Inglee said he was heartened to learn from Whalen that he and the hatchery helped fuel a youngster's love of the outdoors that led to a career choice.

"It's heartwarming to know I had an impact and the hatchery had such an impact on him," Inglee said.

Whalen holds a degree from Paul Smith's College, and found his replacement from the graduate pool at Paul Smith's. Gabe Freebern was hired earlier this year, and like Whalen, is a lover of the outdoors who sought out a career in fisheries.

Photo – Conor Whalen, right, and Gabe Freebern, left at Warren County Fish Hatchery in Warrensburg.