

The Dipnetter

News of the River from the
Columbia River Inter-Tribal
Fish Commission



February 2011

New Winter Gillnet Fishery Season Structure

BY STUART ELLIS

The 2011 tribal winter gillnet fishery structure was set by the tribes on January 20. This fishery primarily targets sturgeon, however other species are caught during this fishery as well. Allowable sales for the winter gillnet fishery are sturgeon (between 43 and 54 inches fork length in The Dalles and John Day pools and between 38 and 54 inches fork length in the Bonneville pool), chinook, steelhead, walleye, shad, carp, catfish, bass, and yellow perch.

One of the tools the tribes use to set the winter fishery details are stock assessments that estimate the number of legal-sized sturgeon found in each pool. The John Day pool stock assessment showed a larger population of legal-sized sturgeon than has been seen in many years. As a result, the tribes tripled the annual commercial harvest guideline from 335 fish to 1,000 fish. After a review of last year's Bonneville pool stock assessment, the tribes agreed that it was appropriate to increase the annual commercial harvest guideline in that pool as well, raising it from 1,400 fish to 2,000 fish. The harvest guideline in The Dalles pool remained unchanged at 1,000 fish.

The gillnet fishery opens in all three pools of Zone 6 on Tuesday, February 1 at 7 a.m. The fishery runs continuously in The Dalles and John Day pools until Monday, March 21 at 6 p.m. or until the harvest guideline for either pool is met, whichever is first. For the Bonneville Pool, the fishery runs three nights per week starting Tuesday, February 1 at 7 a.m. through Friday, February 4 at 6 p.m. It then runs 6 a.m. Monday through 6 p.m. Thursday each week through March 21 or until the harvest guideline is reached, whichever is first. In 2010, the Bonneville pool guideline was met after only an 11-day fishery. The three-nights-per-week structure for the Bonneville pool was necessary to avoid exceeding the harvest guideline. Please consult your own tribe for details on the fishing regulations applicable to you.

This year, CRITFC's salmon marketing efforts are moving into sturgeon for the first time. We hope to make gradual progress in helping fishers get the best price for their fish. If you need information on options for selling your sturgeon or other marketing questions, call Les Brown at (503) 238-0667.

The tribes wish all fishers a very successful winter fishery and remind everyone to wear a life jacket and fish safely in this dangerous winter weather. 🐟

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ATTENTION! WIND RIVER IN-LIEU SITE INACCESSIBLE

Recent flooding has washed out a section of the Skamania County road, preventing any access to the Wind River In-lieu Site. Skamania County determined that acting now would create the risk of losing a larger section of the hillside above the failed area. The county doesn't anticipate starting repair of the road until June or July. For more information, contact Michael Broncheau at (503) 238-0667. 🐟



Paul Lumley
YAKAMA

CRITFC Executive Director

The Power of Intertribal Cooperation

critfc executive director's message

For centuries, we have lived along the Columbia River where everything had its place. Villages along the river were occupied by those who knew how the Creator expected them to live, to fish, hunt, and gather the First Foods. *N'Chi Wana* gave us life and a way of life.

We Indians of the Columbia River have endured incredible change over the last century. Dams, highways, railroads, and cities have displaced us and our way of life. Promises made in the 1930s that the salmon would return in greater numbers and that land and housing would be provided to replace our villages inundated by the dams turned out to be empty words. The greatest blow to our spiritual connection to *N'Chi Wana* occurred when we witnessed the inundation of Celilo Falls. Some

believed that all these circumstances would destroy the salmon runs that the tribes depended upon.

The magnitude of these challenges were more than any one tribe could address alone. For this reason, the four Columbia Basin treaty-fishing tribes embraced the power of intertribal cooperation. CRITFC was the outcome of their shared goal of improving our way of life and ensuring that our treaty-reserved fishing right was recognized on our terms. Since 1977, CRITFC has fought for our fishing rights in the courts and defended

the science behind tribal salmon restoration efforts. We now have more fish returning to the Zone 6 fishing area and the tributaries because of this work. Much work remains to achieve our vision of fully rebuilding our salmon runs, but progress is being made each year. CRITFC is an Indian organization established for that purpose: to serve its member tribes and honor their tribal sovereignty.

The tribes have pressed the federal government to fulfill its promises to set aside river access locations. We have been able to secure 31 sites along the Columbia River for access to the river, called In-lieu and Treaty Fishing Access sites. These sites provide important access to the river that allows us to

exercise our treaty fishing rights. With these sites come a responsibility to maintain them and ensure the safety of those who use them. In 2003, the Bureau of Indian Affairs transferred the long-term operations and maintenance responsibility of these sites to CRITFC. We received a federal appropriation for site maintenance and operations that was expected to last 50 years. Unfortunately, the impacts of long-term residential usage at some locations and overuse in general has degraded these sites quicker than expected and the funds will be exhausted in half that time.

It is a sad truth that crime, violence, and drugs are also a problem at many of these sites. The BIA was not effective at addressing these problems and we had no authority to stop non-Indians who broke laws at these sites. The tribes sought the transfer of BIA enforcement responsibilities to the CRITFC Enforcement Program. The BIA granted CRITFC officers Special Law Enforcement Commissions in an historic agreement last November. In January, we were informed that the BIA will transfer their Columbia River enforcement program to the CRITFC Enforcement program and fund two officers to focus on these In-lieu and Treaty Fishing Access sites. These improvements will have an immediate and positive effect on our ability to exercise our treaty fishing rights.

I know that we have great challenges ahead of us. CRITFC is organizing this effort and has created an In-lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Committee to focus exclusively on these issues. Also, while not within the primary mission of CRITFC, I plan to meet with each of the tribes' housing programs to address housing issues along the Columbia River. My first meeting with the Yakama Nation Housing Authority was promising and I look forward to meeting with the other tribes' housing programs soon.

Together, we can make a difference and I look forward to continuing my focus to improve these fishing sites so that they are accessible, safe, and sanitary.

Nye.



The overburdened Underwood In-lieu Site.





by Aja DeCoteau
YAKAMA
CRITFC Watershed
Department manager

New Water Quality Rules Proposed for Oregon

BY AJA DECOTEAU

After nearly two decades of concern about pollution in Oregon's waterways, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has proposed significant changes to its water quality standards. The new rule, scheduled for approval this June, would make the state's Human Health Water Quality for Toxics and Fish Consumption Rate the highest in the country. This is particularly momentous for tribes in the region because for the first time, it takes into account the subsistence and cultural significance of fish to tribal people.



Tribal members eat an average of nine times the amount of salmon the general population does.

Why is this significant? We know that tribal people eat and will continue to eat salmon and other fish in large quantities. We also know that fish (and salmon in particular) provide us with an array of health benefits and nutrition such as Omega-3 fatty acids, high protein, and a multitude of vitamins. Water quality standards are based on the amount of fish a population eats, but tribal members' diets are not accurately reflected in these standards, and therefore do not adequately protect us from the allowable pollutants in our rivers and streams.

These factors were not acknowledged by the state until a 1996 survey conducted by CRITFC concluded that the average tribal member consumes nine times more fish than the general population. This and other Northwest fish consumption studies provided the basis for Oregon to propose increasing the current fish consumption rate from 6.5 grams per day (roughly the amount of fish that would fit on a cracker) to 175 grams per day, which is twenty-four 8-oz. servings of fish per month. The new rules reflect willingness by the state to clean up our waterways and protect the majority of people who eat fish.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Let your voices be heard and help set the bar for other Pacific Northwest states to follow Oregon's lead. In the next few weeks, the Oregon DEQ will be taking comments and holding public hearings on the new rules. Tribal members, regardless of Oregon residency, are encouraged to participate in this process by attending public hearings or submitting comments to DEQ by February 23, 2011. Suggested comments:

- **Express your support for a fish consumption rate of 175 grams/day.** *The new fish consumption rate is based on extensive research on how much fish Oregonians eat, particularly tribal members. Tell DEQ to adopt the new water quality standards based on a fish consumption rate of 175 grams per day to protect the majority of people who regularly eat fish from Oregon's waterways.*
- **Urge DEQ to adopt new standards without major loopholes.** *The new standards won't result in actual improvements in water quality if there are major loopholes for polluters.*
- **Express your support for adopting the revised water quality standards immediately.** *CRITFC has monitored and advocated for revised toxics standards and tribal fish consumption rates for the last twenty years. DEQ initiated its work to revise these standards in 2006. We have waited long enough for standards that protect people who eat fish.*
- **If you eat fish from Oregon's rivers, streams, and lakes, tell DEQ.** *The entire purpose of increasing Oregon's toxics standards is to protect people who enjoy or rely on eating fish from Oregon's great rivers, streams, and lakes. Tell DEQ why this rulemaking is important to you.*

How you can help

SUBMITTING WRITTEN COMMENTS

Mail: Andrea Matzke, Oregon DEQ, 811 SW Sixth Ave., Portland, OR 97024

Fax: Andrea Matzke, (503) 229-6037

Email: ToxicsRulemaking@deq.state.or.us

PUBLIC COMMENT HEARINGS

Bend, Tues., Feb. 1, 1 p.m., Oregon Dept. of Transportation Office, 63055 N. Highway 97, Deschutes River Room

Coos Bay, Thurs., Feb. 3, 1:30 p.m., Coos Bay City Hall, 500 Central Ave., Council Chambers

Pendleton, Tues., Feb. 8, 2 p.m., St. Anthony's Hospital, 1601 SE Court Ave., 1st floor, Cascade Room

Portland, Thurs., Feb. 10, 6 p.m., DEQ Headquarters, 811 SW Sixth Ave., 10th floor, Room EQC-A

For more information and the dates of other public hearings:

<http://www.deq.state.or.us/regulations/proposedrules.htm>



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Yakama • Warm Springs
Umatilla • Nez Perce



Salmon Marketing Classes for Spring 2011

COLD WATER SURVIVAL

February 22, 11am-4:30pm

The Dalles Fitness & Court Club, 731 Pomona Street, The Dalles

This class teaches fishers how to best respond if their boats capsize or sink. Topics include surviving in cold water, mayday procedures, operating flares, and techniques to improve the safety of operating a boat on the Columbia River. Participants will have the opportunity to learn water survival skills in the controlled (and heated!) environment of the gym's swimming pool.

HACCP FOOD SAFETY

March 4-5, 10am-5pm

CRITFC Enforcement Office, 4270 Westcliff Drive, Hood River

This day and a half class is conducted by the Warm Springs Tribe's sanitarian. Passing the food handlers test at the end of the class will give fishers Warm Springs Tribe-issued certification that is recognized by the State of Oregon for sales within the state. Oregon residency is not required to obtain this certification, but fishers who make over-the-bank sales in Oregon to non-Indian customers are encouraged to complete this class.

FIBERGLASS & ENGINE REPAIR

April 7 (tentative), 10am-5pm

Celilo In-lieu Site

This class gives an overview of basic fiberglass repair and boat engine maintenance and repair. Fishers can bring their boats to the workshop to address specific questions.

For additional information on these or other marketing topics, you can reach Les anytime at: (541) 392-1632 or (503) 799-8640.



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CRITFC Commissioners

WARM SPRINGS • (541) 553-3257

Bruce Jim (CHAIRMAN), Leslie Bill, Rafael Queahpama, Ryan Smith, Emerson Squiemphen, Donnie Winishut, Sr.

YAKAMA • (509) 865-5121

Gerald Lewis (VICE-CHAIRMAN), Richard George, Johnny Jackson, Sam Jim Sr., Virgil Lewis Sr., Wilber Slockish

UMATILLA • (541) 276-3165

N. Kathryn Brigham (SECRETARY), James Marsh, Mitch Pond, Vince Sohapp, Chris Williams

NEZ PERCE • (208) 843-2253

Joel Moffett (TREASURER), Brooklyn Baptiste, Julia Davis-Wheeler, Tonia Garcia, Larry Greene, Joanna Marek, Allen Slickpoo Jr., Roberta Bisbee, Marie Arthur, Elmer Crow, Erik Holt, Herb Jackson, Wilferd Scott

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