

The Dipnetter

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



November 2011

THREE-YEAR FISHING SITE CLEANUP PLAN

BY DIPNETTER EDITOR JEREMY FIVECROWS



Michael Broncheau,
Nez Perce,
CRITFC Fishing
Site Maintenance
Department
Manager

Visiting the 31 tribal fishing access sites along the Columbia River, it is evident that the 2011 fishing season has been busy. Clearly the sites are well used and necessary for the hundreds of Yakama, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Nez Perce fishers that rely on these locations each fishing season. Of course, all this use comes at a cost; the sites are showing both their age and the heavy use from the fishers.

“We’re pleased that the fishers use and count on these sites in the exercise of their treaty right to harvest fish in the Columbia River,” said Michael Broncheau, manager of the CRITFC Fishing Site Maintenance

Department. “We want to keep them as useful to the fishers as possible.”

Part of keeping them useful is to perform regular maintenance, which the Fishing Site Maintenance crew does throughout the year. Despite this regular maintenance, certain major renovations or extensive repairs are necessary to keep the sites useful and in good condition. This November, CRITFC is set to begin the largest and most comprehensive maintenance project on the sites to-date. This three-year project will involve in-depth cleanup, repairs, upgrades, and replacements at 17 of the most heavily used treaty fishing access sites along the Columbia River. This

extensive plan was reviewed and approved by the tribal councils of all four member tribes and was initiated by the CRITFC In-lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Site Committee. This committee was formed by CRITFC action in February 2011. One of the topics at the committee’s first meeting was to review costs and scope of work for a three-year cleanup plan. When the plan was presented to the fishers who attended the 2011 Indian Fishers Expo in July, 87% of those polled supported it. Several fishers raised concerns in this poll and the cleanup plan was modified to address them.

Six to seven sites will be refurbished each winter from November through February for the next three years. The work



The Stanley Rock Treaty Fishing Access Site, one of the six sites scheduled for a one- to three-week closure this winter for major upgrades and maintenance.

will only be conducted on one site at a time. While a site is being refurbished, it will be temporarily closed from one to three weeks to facilitate this work. While each site is closed, the Fishing Site Maintenance crews will be making substantial repairs, replacing broken or obsolete fixtures, cleaning, and painting. "Without periodic repairs and replacement or upgrades to the facilities, their expected useful life will be greatly decreased," remarked Paul Lumley, the executive director of CRITFC. "These sites were designed to last 50 years or more and this cleanup plan will help us ensure that happens."

While a site is closed for the maintenance, all other access sites, including the five in-lieu sites, will remain open for use and will be maintained on a normal weekly schedule. Since the nature of the cleanup will prevent access by fishers, the plan specifically excludes any of the in-lieu fishing access sites, as year-round residency is allowed at those locations.

Fishers using any of these access sites are encouraged to be aware of the closure schedule and remove their personal and titled property to help speed the work along and prevent any unexpected losses. Coinciding with this cleanup, CRITFC commissioners took action at the October meeting to allow the disposal of abandoned property left on any of the fishing sites more than four weeks after the close of the fall commercial gill net season. Examples of personal property include camping gear, appliances, electronics, construction materials, clothes, bedding, mattresses, food, and personal care items.

The CRITFC Fishing Site Maintenance Department looks forward to working with fishers

and the BIA in successfully completing these required maintenance periods with minimal or no interference with any tribal commercial fishing season. For more information about the cleanup or the closure schedule, contact Michael A. Broncheau at (503) 866-8375 the CRITFC Fishing Site Maintenance Shop in The Dalles, at (541) 296-6010. 🐟

FISHING SITE CLOSURE SCHEDULE

Winter 2011-2012

Preachers Eddy (Nov 1-11, 2011)*
 Pasture Point (Nov 14-23, 2011)*
 LePage (Nov 28-Dec 2, 2011)*
 Celilo (Dec 5-16, 2011)*
 Stanley Rock (Dec 19-Jan 6, 2011)*
 North Bonneville (Jan 9-30, 2012)*

Winter 2012-2013

Threemile Canyon, Rufus, Roosevelt,
 Maryhill, White Salmon, Lyle

Winter 2013-2014

Crow Butte, Alderdale, Pine Creek,
 Stanley Rock, North Bonneville, Wyeth (if
 needed), Dallesport (if needed)

*These are the currently scheduled dates for each closure, subject to change. A schedule listing specific dates of each closure will be posted at the sites and at www.critfc.org.

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BOATING SAFETY TIPS

Avoid Overloading Your Boat

BY DIPNETTER EDITOR JEREMY FIVECROWS

The Columbia is a very dangerous and unpredictable river. Each year, CRITFC Enforcement officers respond to rescue calls and many of these are due to overloaded boats. Overloading a boat is extremely dangerous, potentially causing capsizing, swamping (rear sinks and water floods in the back), drowning, or boat loss.

Sometimes an overloaded boat won't have a problem when resting mid-river on still water, but may capsize or sink when it begins moving, crosses a wake, is hit by a wave, or a passenger moves across to another seat.

Always be aware of your boat's weight capacity limit. This is the combined weight of all the passengers, gear, and fish.

You should never exceed 80% of the limit, as after that the boat performance suffers badly. The weight capacity is not the weight that the boat will carry and still float, it's the weight that can be loaded in and still maintain seaworthiness under expected conditions.



This overloaded boat is in serious risk of swamping. It's often too easy to do when pulling in a lot of fish.

Fall Fisheries Recap and Summary

BY CRITFC HARVEST BIOLOGIST STUART ELLIS

The 2011 fall season fishing season was successful both in number of fish harvested and in economic benefits to the tribal commercial fishers. The season began August 1, when platform and hook-and-line fisheries were open for subsistence and the commercial sale of salmon and steelhead. The Platform and hook-and-line fisheries remain open for subsistence use as of the printing of this newsletter, while the fall commercial season ended October 8.

Between August 22 and October 6, the tribes set seven weekly commercial salmon gillnet fishing periods. This provided 28½ days of commercial gillnet fishing and 50 days of commercial platform and hook-and-line fishing, which is similar to the average in recent years.

The tribes decided to close the fall commercial fishery as the tribes were approaching the harvest rate limit for Group B steelhead. During the fall season fisheries, tribal fishers harvested just under 130,000 adult fall chinook, over 27,000 steelhead, and over 24,000 coho.

Prices were high during the entire fall commercial fishing period, even for tules. This year has provided one of the larger economic benefits of any of the fall commercial fishing seasons in recent years.

In addition to the salmon and steelhead commercial fisheries, the tribes set a 12½-day commercial sturgeon setline fishery from August 1-13. This setline fishery was re-opened on October 10 and is expected to run through October 31. 🐟

Abandoned Property Notice

The US Army Corps of Engineers would like to remind fishers to remove all property including titled vehicles, vessels, camping equipment, and fishing gear from Corps-managed lands after the fishing season is completed. This includes Seufert Park, The Dalles Northshore Boat Ramp, and Giles French Park, and other Corps-managed lands. Property left after the fishing season may be removed as abandoned property and if not claimed will eventually be disposed of by the Corps of Engineers. For questions please contact The Dalles Lock and Dam Natural Resources Office at (541) 506-7816. 🐟

CRITFC Text Messaging Service Trial

CRITFC is testing a group text messaging service to quickly distribute important news to fishers and other interested individuals. Using this system, news such as fishery openings and closings, extreme river or weather conditions, and other timely items will be texted to subscribers to the service. The text service is free, however text messaging charges from your phone provider may be incurred if you are on a limited message plan. The typical number of text messages subscribers will receive is most likely five to ten per month. The system is completely automated. Individuals subscribe and unsubscribe themselves via text message. If you would like to begin receiving these messages, text 'CRITFC' to 55958. 🐟



The Dipnetter

Yakama • Warm Springs
Umatilla • Nez Perce



Preparing for Winter

The end of the fall 2011 tribal salmon fishery marks the end of one of the most productive and successful years for Columbia River salmon and the Indian fishers who depend on them. The high numbers of returning salmon this year is a tribute to the four tribes' hard work. Their efforts to restore salmon in the Columbia River basin and manage the fishery helped make this possible. They also never backed down in pressing the state and federal agencies to fulfill their trust responsibilities when they met to coordinate fishing seasons. A number of factors came together this year that the tribes and CRITFC have been working on for many years. That the fish run and fishing season was so successful is proof that the tribes got it right.

Now that the main fishery is over for the year, it's time to begin preparations for the winter with

repairing gear and boats, stowing your equipment for the season, and making plans for the spring. CRITFC is also busy preparing for winter, as we are set to begin a three-year major cleanup of 17 treaty fishing access sites. This winter, we will be working on Preachers Eddy, Pasture Point, LePage, Celilo, Stanley Rock, and North Bonneville. The details of this project, along with the closure schedule, are detailed in this issue of the Dipnetter. So enjoy this time as you prepare for the winter and look forward to getting back on the river in the spring. Next year, when the spring chinook are running, plan on enjoying the benefits of not only your own preparations but also our winter's work.



Paul Lumley
YAKAMA



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