

The Dipnetter

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



May 2012



One of the first CRITFC meetings. Commissioners at the table are (from left) Wilferd Yallup, Rod Cowapoo, Eugene Greene, Claude Smith.

35 YEARS OF INTERTRIBAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Last week, CRITFC celebrated its 35th anniversary. During those years, the Yakama, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Nez Perce tribes have worked together through CRITFC to achieve some very significant accomplishments and milestones that have protected tribal treaty fishing rights, salmon, and the watersheds where fish live. Here are 35 of the most noteworthy items:

The Early Years (1977-1989)

- 1977 Four Tribes Found CRITFC
- Lawsuits Cont. to Make Progress Enforcing *U.S. v. Oregon* Ruling
- 1979 CRITFC Makes "Ocean Connection"
- 1981 Freedom of Information Act Used to Obtain Federal Hatchery Records
- 1982 Tribes and CRITFC Major Contributors to First Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Plan
- Four Tribes Authorize CRITFC Fisheries Enforcement Arm
- 1983 Water Budget Center (Fish Passage Center) Created
- 1985 Four Tribes Key in Gaining Bilateral Agreement in U.S.-Canada Salmon Treaty
- Attempts to Deny Indian Tribes Their Steelhead Fishing Rights Finally Thwarted
- 1986 Successful Lawsuit Leads to No New Hydropower in Protected Areas
- 1988 *U.S. v. Oregon* Columbia River Fish Management Plan Signed
- Flow Agreements Protect Basin's Largest Wild Fall Chinook Populations
- Congress Approves In-lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Sites

The Middle Years (1990-2001)

- 1991 Salmon Marketing Program Initiated

- 1992 Endangered Species Act Listings Generate New Lawsuits
- 1994 Tribes Assert Treaty Right to Fish Willamette Falls
- 1994 Snake River Fall Chinook Supplementation Won in *U.S. v Oregon* Settlement
- Salmon Corps Is First Workforce Development Program
- Fish Consumption Survey Published
- 1995 *Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit*, the Spirit of the Salmon Restoration Plan Released
- 1997 Watershed Department Created to Coordinate Implementation of Tribal Restoration Plan
- 1999 CRITFC and University of Idaho Create Hagerman Genetics Laboratory
- 2001 Large Runs of Upriver Spring Chinook, Summer Steelhead and Coho Return

The Recent Years (2002-2012)

- 2003 Events Invite Public to Celebrate *Wy-Kan-Ush Pum* With Message "We are All Salmon People"
- 2004 Dam Spill Won to Save Juvenile Salmon
- 2007 CRITFC Observes 50th Anniversary of the Flooding of Celilo Falls
- 2008 *U.S. v Oregon* Agreement Uses New Approaches
- Tribes and BPA Sign Fish Accords

- 2010 CRITFC Holds First Indian Fishers Expo
- 2010 One of the Best Tribal Fishing Seasons Yet
- Salmon Camp Encourages Our Native Youth to Study Math and Science
- 2011 BIA Law Enforcement on Columbia River Transferred to CRITFC
- The Four Tribes Form Tribal FishCo, LLC
- CRITFC Finalizes Lamprey Restoration Plan
- Condit Dam Removed to Restore Fish Passage

Future Challenges

The work of CRITFC has only just begun. Under the guidance of the four member tribes, there are new challenges to address as we enter the next 35 years of intertribal cooperation. Among these are:

- ▲ Reduce toxic contamination in the waters of the Columbia River Basin
- ▲ Increase natural spawning of salmon, sturgeon, and lamprey throughout the region
- ▲ Find a solution to unchecked predation problems in the Columbia River
- ▲ Support changes to the US-Canada Columbia River Treaty that respect both salmon and tribal trust responsibilities
- ▲ Combat efforts to decrease federal funding levels that impact tribal efforts to rebuild salmon runs to their full productivity

Sea Lion Update

DOUG HATCH, CRITFC FISHERIES BIOLOGIST

Sea lions are again congregating at Bonneville Dam where they eat salmon, sturgeon, and lamprey. Numbers of sea lions are about the same as last year at this time and we expect them to build with the salmon run. In March, the National Marine Fisheries Service issued lethal take authority to Oregon and Washington to remove specific individual California sea lions that frequent Bonneville Dam. As of April 10, three California sea lions have been euthanized this year. The Humane Society of the United States and the Wild Fish

Conservancy are once again going to court over the lethal take authorization. The tribes are planning to intervene in the lawsuit. In the meantime, CRITFC is deploying a hazing crew that uses crackershells and seal bombs to drive predatory sea lions away from the Bonneville fish ladder entrances.

A longer-term solution to sea lion predation is in the "Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act" H.R. 3069 bill introduced by Doc Hastings. This bill was

passed out of committee and is waiting to be heard by the House of Representatives. This legislation provides an avenue for the tribes to be directly involved with sea lion removal.

Each year a few sea lions pass through the Bonneville Lock and reside in the Bonneville pool. Documenting sightings of these animals is helpful and observation forms are available at the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Enforcement office.

It is possible under certain circumstances for fishers to haze sea lions themselves, but there are specific limitations. Fishers may only haze "non-listed sea lions" which include California sea lions and harbor seals and then only to protect their property (boats and gear). They may not haze Stellar sea lions. NOAA Fisheries has set up a question and answer page online: <http://1.usa.gov/sealionhazing> and specifically allowed hazing techniques can be found at: <http://1.usa.gov/hazingtechniques>. 🐟

CRITFC staff members Jeremy FiveCrows (left) and Rishi Sharma conducting sea lion hazing below Bonneville Dam.



River Flow Update

KYLE DITTMER, CRITFC METEOROLOGIST/HYDROLOGIST

In the April 17 update from NOAA's National Weather Service, rapidly warming temperatures will cause the low-elevation snow to melt. Tributary rivers will quickly swell to near bank full or flood-stage by April 21. The first major peak flow in the lower Columbia will occur in late April. River conditions could be dangerous for fishers. The main peak flow of the lower Columbia will occur in early June. 🐟

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DALLESPORT FISHING ACCESS SITE DEDICATION

SARA THOMPSON, CRITFC PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Leadership from the Columbia River Treaty Tribes, Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Indian Affairs gathered on the banks of the Columbia River on April 25 to celebrate the completion of the Dallesport Treaty Fishing Access Site. This is the 31st fishing access site constructed by the Corps of Engineers; its completion represents the end of the construction phase of the Columbia River Treaty Fishing Access Site program. The sites constructed under the program are mitigation for usual and accustomed fishing areas lost by the tribes when the lower Columbia River Dams were constructed, beginning with Bonneville Dam in 1937.

“The conclusion of these construction projects demonstrates the power of partnership and what we can accomplish when we work together,” said Gerald Lewis, chairman of the

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. “There is still work that needs to be done to address what was lost at these sites. I believe we will accomplish what we need to by working together.” 🐟



A drum circle honors the opening of the Dallesport Fishing Access Site, the 31st fishing access site for tribal treaty fishing in Zone 6.

Spring Fisheries Update

STUART ELLIS, CRITFC HARVEST BIOLOGIST

Finally some spring chinook are showing up at Bonneville Dam. It has been another late start for the spring chinook run at Bonneville, but fish are finally starting to move. It is still too early to have a clear picture of what the total run will be. Treaty and non-treaty mainstem fisheries are both managed with harvest rates based on the actual (not forecast) river mouth run size. Until we get a clear picture of how many fish are actually going to show up, the tribes are taking a cautious approach to setting fisheries. The tribes have begun their ceremonial permit fishing. Because of the late beginning run, we aren't sure (as of press time) exactly when the ceremonial permit fishery will conclude. Platform and hook-and-line fishing is also open for subsistence use. Fisheries downstream of Bonneville are open on specific days and with specific regulations which are different for each tribe. Check with your tribe for details. As of right now, none of the tribes have passed regulations allowing the commercial sale of fish and fish caught under a ceremonial permit can never be sold. Everyone is hopeful that there will be some commercial fishing opportunity some time this spring. 🐟

Lamprey Migration

BRIAN MCLRAITH, LAMPREY BIOLOGIST

Juvenile Pacific lamprey migrate downstream within the Columbia River throughout the year. With the spring fishery ramping up, it is important to be aware of the possible presence of juvenile lamprey in fishing gear. If juveniles are observed in your gear, carefully remove them and return them to the river. Currently, there is very little information regarding juvenile lamprey and their movement patterns in the Columbia River. Fishers are encouraged to record the date, time, and location of individual juvenile lamprey observations. This information can be sent to Brian McIlraith, Pacific Lamprey Project Leader (mcib@critfc.org) for analysis. 🐟



Be sure to mark your calendar for this year's Columbia River Indian Fishers Expo. Once again it will take place at the Hood River Inn on Friday, July 27. There will be classes, presentations, and vendors providing information geared specifically to the needs of Indian fishers. More details and a schedule of events will appear in upcoming issues of the Dipnetter. 🐟



The Dipnetter

Yakama • Warm Springs
Umatilla • Nez Perce



Restoration



Paul Lumley
YAKAMA

One of my favorite parts of being the executive director of CRITFC is the opportunity to visit the reservations of our member tribes and see firsthand the incredible work they are doing to protect and restore salmon and salmon habitat. Last month during the Commission meeting hosted by the Confederated Umatilla Tribes, we toured the work CTUIR Fisheries is doing to return Meacham Creek to a natural state, not only helping salmon, but the health of the creek itself and all the plants and animals that the creek supports. Other projects that we toured included a lamprey restoration site and a CTUIR spring chinook hatchery. The tribes have come a long way since they came together back in 1977 to pool their resources and expertise to create CRITFC. I can only imagine what our children and their children's children will accomplish in the next 35 years.

CRITFC Executive Director's Message



A railroad line built in the 1860s straightened and confined Meacham Creek, a traditional use area for the Conf. Umatilla Tribes. This degraded habitat and encouraged floods. By putting curves and meanders back into the creek, CTUIR Fisheries is working to restore, enhance, and protect 60 acres of floodplain habitat.



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