

The Dipnetter

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



October 2012

COLUMBIA RIVER TRIBES OPPOSE OREGON MEASURE 81

SARA THOMPSON

The Columbia River treaty fishing tribes today announced their opposition to Oregon Ballot Measure 81, a ballot initiative that seeks to ban non-Indian commercial salmon gill netting on the Columbia River. Resolutions passed by the governing bodies of the Yakama, Umatilla, Warm Springs and Nez Perce tribes

cite the measure's lack of emphasis on rebuilding abundant, sustainable salmon populations.

"Ballot Measure 81 does not save fish or fishing communities," said N. Kathryn Brigham, chairwoman of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. "All it does is reshuffle

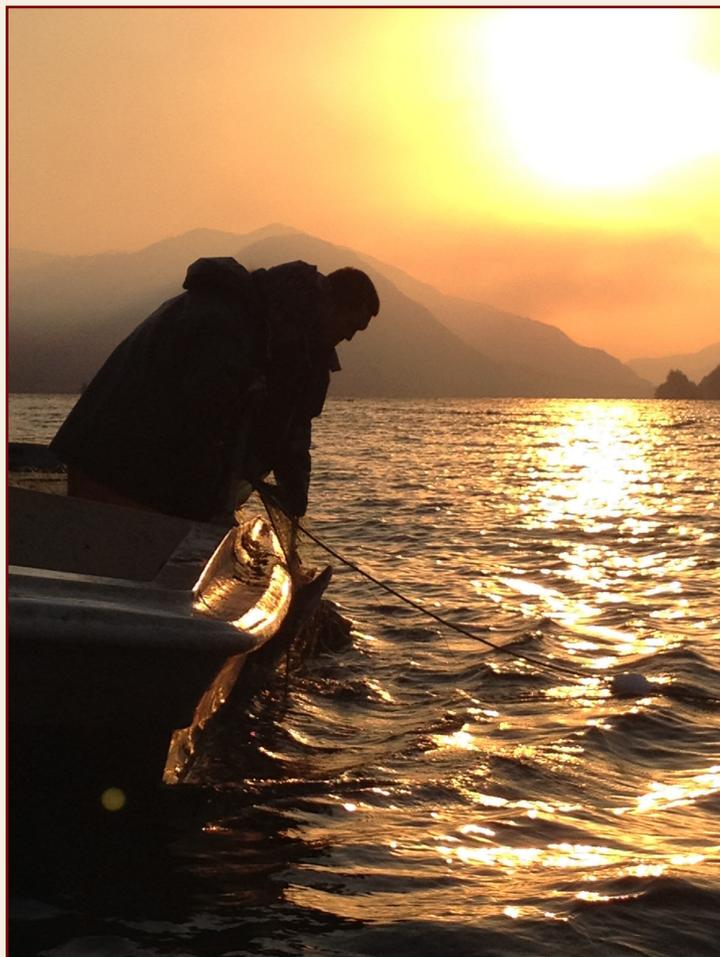
who gets to catch the fish in the Lower Columbia. It doesn't change how many fish can be caught and it doesn't help rebuild salmon runs. Tribal, state, and federal co-managers carefully balance sport, commercial, and tribal fisheries with successful restoration efforts that are rebuilding upriver salmon runs. We have fought over fisheries allocations in the past and fighting over who gets to catch the fish doesn't help build the necessary partnerships we need to restore and protect salmon. This ballot measure is just an allocation fight in the lower river, but it also distracts from the goal of developing healthy and sustainable salmon populations throughout the Columbia Basin."

For over thirty years, the tribes have been working to put fish back in the rivers and protect the watersheds where fish live. They developed management plans that have been conserving and improving tens of thousands of acres of salmon habitat and using hatcheries as wild salmon nurseries that are designed to improve juvenile survival and increase returns of naturally spawning salmon to healthy habitat over time.

These cooperative efforts are working.

- Wild spring chinook salmon are returning to restored ecosystems in the Umatilla, Walla Walla, Yakima, and Klickitat basins.

Scenes from the River



The recent fires in the Columbia Gorge made for some spectacular sunrises. CRITFC's Salmon Marketing Coordinator Les Brown caught this scene during the September 6 fishery opening.

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- Coho in the Wenatchee, Yakama, Clearwater and Umatilla rivers in Washington, Oregon and Idaho are now abundant due to the tribes' efforts.
- In the Snake River Basin, the fall run of chinook has been brought back from the brink of extinction. In 1990, only 78 wild fall chinook crossed Lower Granite Dam. Last year, more than 10,000 wild fall chinook passed that dam.

"While we still have a lot of work to do, it is clear from the data that salmon runs are rebuilding in the Columbia River Basin," said Brigham. "We all need to be working together to rebuild abundance. That is the only way we will truly be successful." ◀

Fishing Site Clean-up Closures

MICHAEL BRONCHEAU, CRITFC FISHING SITE MAINT. MANAGER

Last winter, 6 treaty fishing access sites were closed for extensive clean-up and repairs. The 2012-2013 clean-up will begin in November. During each closure, fishing site maintenance crew will remove trash, abandoned property, and temporary structures; repair facilities, plumbing, and electrical systems; maintain the landscaping; and other repairs as necessary. The closure schedule is listed below:

- **Roosevelt (Nov 5-16, 2012)**
- **White Salmon (Nov 19-30, 2012)**
- **Maryhill (Dec 3-21, 2012)**
- **Rufus (Dec 24-31, 2012)**
- **Lyle (Jan 1-18, 2013)**
- **Three-mile Canyon (Jan 21-25, 2013)**

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.

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. ◀

Fall Season Update

STUART ELLIS, CRITFC FISH MGMT. BIOLOGIST

As of September 18, the tribes are in the beginning of the fifth weekly commercial gillnet fishing period. The catch rates for bright chinook have been un-expectedly low this year even when factoring in the somewhat lower return than expected. So far this fall we have had very similar numbers of gillnet fishing days as most years and we have seen near record effort in a couple weeks, but the chinook catch has been fairly slow. We don't really know why this has occurred. Group B steelhead (measuring at least 78 cm or about 31 inches) have also been a problem this year, not so much in that we are catching more than expected, but that the Group B steelhead return is very small this year. We expect that the tribal fishery will reach the harvest rate limit for B steelhead before the chinook harvest rate limit. A few years ago the tribes negotiated a change in the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement that switched the fall management from a system based on a wild B steelhead harvest rate to a combined wild and hatchery B steelhead harvest rate. This has helped.

CRITFC Officers and Commissioners

UMATILLA



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This year's fall fishery would have been worse off under the previous system. But clearly there is more work to be done to address the real problems with the productivity and abundance of Group B fish.

A separate and important event occurred this fall. FishCo, the tribally owned fish processing plant opened this fall. Tribal fishers were able to sell fish there. Tribal members were hired to process fish in the facility as well. Even though, this fall's operations started off small, it is the beginning of what we expect will be an important asset to the economic vitality of tribal fisheries in the future. 🐟



2012 Future of Our Salmon conference: A Focus on Hatchery Policy

AJA DECOTEAU, WATERSHED DEPT MANAGER

In June 2011 the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission held its first Future of Our Salmon Conference. Over 275 participants with an investment in Columbia Basin salmon recovery attended the conference and many critical aspects related to the salmon life cycle were covered. This year's conference will build on last year's success and specifically concentrate on how hatchery policies shape salmon rebuilding and recovery efforts. In particular, we intend to focus on how hatchery policies can best serve the needs of the salmon and the region. The targeted audience is tribal, federal, state, and city representatives; public utility districts; Indian, sport, and commercial fishers; environmental organizations; and the public. The Columbia Basin tribes believe that the region needs a common vision to restore naturally spawning salmon populations based on practical management, habitat protection and restoration, and innovative recovery and rebuilding programs. Salmon are the shared bounty as well as the responsibility of all the people of the Pacific Northwest.

BPA 75th Anniversary Celebration



CRITFC Commissioner Wilbur Slockish (YAKAMA) and Executive Director Paul Lumley were part of the tribal representation at the recent BPA 75th Anniversary celebration.

For more information and to register, visit www.critfc.org/future. If you have any further questions, please email future@critfc.org. 🐟

Get fisheries announcements right on your cell phone

If you would like to get fisheries announcements via text message, send a text message to the number **55958** with "**critfc**" in the body of the text. Calling the number will not work. This must be done as a text message from your cell phone.



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Yakama • Warm Springs
Umatilla • Nez Perce



Protecting the Columbia River

CRITFC Executive Director's Message

The Columbia River treaty tribes support energy and economic development in the Columbia Basin Salmon. We do not support, however, energy and economic development in the Columbia River Basin that comes on the backs of salmon or at the expense of tribal fishers and the health of their communities.

Tribal communities have come together to stop the proposed coal terminals along the Columbia River for three primary reasons:

1) We would see increased coal in our communities. Coal dust would significantly increase in our tribal fishing communities and pose a health risk to them. The increased barge and train traffic along the river would pose another safety risk to our fishing community. In fact, I was nearly overcome by a barge at night on the Columbia River.

2) Once coal is exported, the risks to our region do not disappear. The coal burned in Asia will ultimately come back to haunt us, riding the jet stream and eventually falling back on us in the form of mercury

and acid rain falling into our sensitive watersheds.

3) One by-product of coal burning is airborne mercury, which will find its way to our fish and our bodies. Our communities would see an increase in mercury in the basin's fish populations. Tribal members eat 10 times more fish than the general public and as a result would be exposed to significantly more mercury.

Everyone wants to see more jobs in our communities but these new jobs should not come at the expense of the health of others.

Working together we have made significant progress in the State of Oregon to increase water quality standards. Oregon now has the strictest water quality standard in the nation, a decision based on tribal fish consumption rates. Let's not take a hasty step back.

I encourage you to contact your tribal and state elected officials and let your thoughts be heard on this significant issue.

Paul Lumley
YAKAMA



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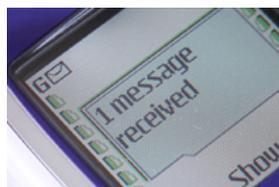
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