

The Dipnetter

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



April 2013

GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

DIANNE BARTON, CRITFC WATER QUALITY SPECIALIST



- ▲ U.S. Attorney Amanda Marshall [in red] and her office met with Oregon tribal police chiefs at the CRITFC Enforcement office in Hood River.
- ▼ During a recent CRITFC delegation to Washington DC, CRITFC chairwoman Kat Brigham (UMATILLA) met with Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Kevin Washburn.



Government-to-government relations between the tribes and federal and state governments are an important function to protect tribal sovereignty as well as to ensure that the tribes expectations of how the governments fulfill their trust responsibilities are known to a wide range of government leaders

Several government-to-government meetings took place last month. At a recent meeting at the CRITFC Enforcement office in Hood River, US Attorney Amanda Marshall and her office met with Oregon tribal police chiefs. Among the meeting topics were the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and its application in Indian County, the Oregon Tribal Law & Order Act, federal prosecutions, and BIA Special Law Enforcement Commissions (SLECs).

Tribal representatives also travelled to Washington DC to meet with federal officials and elected representatives on a variety of issues. CRITFC Chairwoman N. Kathryn Brigham met with Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Kevin Washburn, where she explained why the tribes need the BIA to help manage the in-lieu and treaty fishing access sites and assist with tribal housing along the Columbia River. 🐟

Honoring First Salmon

JEREMY FIVECROWS, CRITFC PUBLIC INFORMATION

One of the Columbia River tribes' most important ceremonies is the First Salmon Feast. This salmon ceremony occurs before open fishing takes place. It is why every fishing season begins with a ceremonial harvest for fishers to catch salmon for use in these ceremonies. The timing of these feasts matches the arrival of the salmon to each longhouse.

The feasts honor Salmon for being the first to volunteer when Creator asked all the plants and animals for a gift to help humans survive.

In accordance with this sacrifice, salmon are honored each year upon their return. The ceremony always begins with a blessing and drinking of water, followed by a prayer of thanksgiving and the serving of the salmon. This ceremony reinforces the central role that salmon and water play in



*Plates of salmon ready to be served at the Umatilla Salmon Feast. This year, the Lyle Longhouse feast will be on **April 7** and the Celilo Longhouse feast will be on **April 14**. For feasts at other longhouses, see the calendar on the CRITFC website.*

the health and culture of the tribal people in the Columbia Basin. 🐟

2013 Spring Fishery Update

NICOLE CHARLEY, CRITFC FISH MGMT. DEPT.

The winter gillnet fishery ended March 21. Its timing and catch size was similar to last year. The sturgeon guideline was reached in the Bonneville and John Day pools, but not in The Dalles pool.

The 2013 ceremonial permit fisheries are currently underway. The ceremonial permit fisheries are expected to go on for several weeks. As of March 22, only 122 spring chinook had passed Bonneville, but this is a lot more than the count of only 22 fish by that date last year.

The tribes have decided to keep the fisheries downstream of Bonneville closed until at least

April 15, when a new run size estimate will be made. This is done in part to help ensure that fish are able to pass upstream for ceremonial permit and subsistence fisheries in Zone 6. The tribes will open the fishing areas downstream of Bonneville when they believe it is the right time so that the fishery fits in with Zone 6 fishing efforts.

Commercial spring chinook sales are currently closed as tribal rules do not allow the sale of spring chinook during periods when ceremonial permit fisheries are occurring. Check your tribe's regulations for more information specific to you. 🐟

CRITFC Officers and Commissioners

UMATILLA



Kathryn Brigham, CRITFC chairwoman
James Marsh · Ken Hall
Vince Sohappy · Chris Williams
(541) 276-3165

NEZ PERCE



Joel Moffett, CRITFC vice-chairman
Brooklyn Baptiste · Roberta Bisbee
Anthony Johnson · Dan Kane
McCoy Oatman · Silas Whitman
Gary Dorr · Quintin Ellenwood
Erik Holt · Herb Jackson
Timothy Wheeler
(208) 843-2253

WARM SPRINGS



Bruce Jim, CRITFC secretary
Leslie Bill · Rafael Queahpama
Ryan Smith · Emerson Squiemphen
Donnie Winishut, Sr
(541) 553-3257

YAKAMA



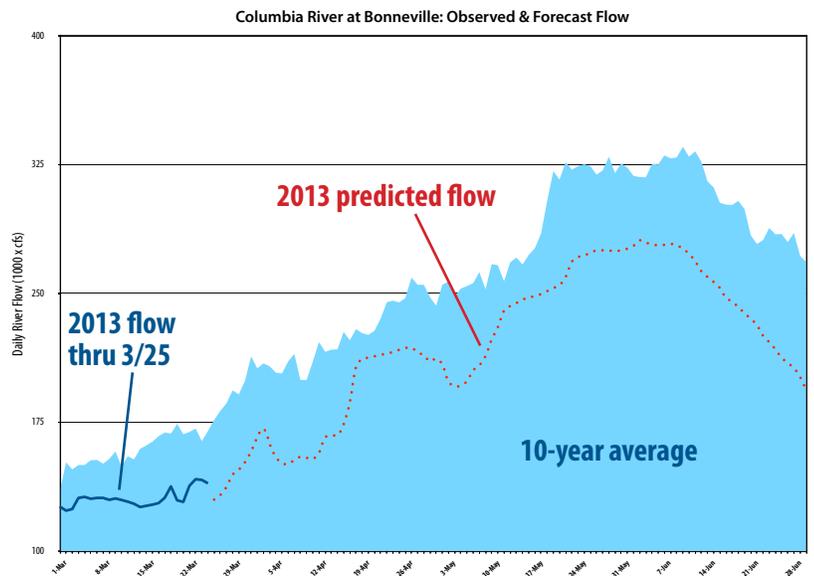
Gerald Lewis, CRITFC treasurer
Raymond Colfax · Richard George ·
Johnny Jackson · Sam Jim Sr
Virgil Lewis Sr · Wilbur Slockish Jr
(509) 865-5121

A Rising River: 2013 River Forecast

KYLE DITTMER, CRITFC HYDROLOGIST-METEOROLOGIST

The spring snowmelt (or “freshet”) causes rising high water levels in the Columbia River and its tributaries each year. This condition helps get salmon smolts downriver quickly, but also makes it dangerous for fishers. CRITFC monitors river conditions during the year and creates forecasts to inform fishers of the predicted timing and nature of the freshet. River flow will increase in late April, peak in late May (flow will be fastest during this time), then slowly recede through June.

We started the season with a brief El Niño event, which is a Pacific Ocean condition that gives the Pacific Northwest warm, dry winters and sour ocean conditions. We quickly transitioned to neutral conditions since last summer. However, this winter has been more like El Niño, with less snowpack and warmer temperatures. This means that the freshet will be slightly less than normal this spring, but still favorable for juvenile salmon migrating out to the ocean and for returning adults. Recent late winter storms have helped to restore the snowpacks. The March 19 NOAA-National Weather Service river spring-summer forecasts are at 92% of normal.



CRITFC generates its own forecast, predicting this year’s river flow will be 102% of normal. The NOAA forecast has moved toward the CRITFC forecast recently.

Snowpack accumulation is doing well in the Washington and North Oregon Cascades (110 - 175% of normal), near normal in the Canadian Rockies, but poor in Idaho and northeast Oregon (25 - 90% of normal). 🐟

Invasive Fish Collection Program

BLAINE PARKER, CRITFC AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES COORDINATOR

This fishing season, CRITFC’s Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator Blaine Parker will pay fishers for invasive/undocumented fish species caught by Indian fishers in Zone 6. Examples of such fish would be grass carp, Atlantic salmon, northern pike, tiger muskies, and other non-established fish species. Such fish are likely escapees from private ponds and lakes (grass carp or tiger muskie) or strays from commercial aquaculture (Atlantic salmon), or even aquarium releases.

In 2012, CRITFC received three credible reports (clear photographs or fish in hand) of large adult grass carp from Zone 6. This first fish caught in Bonneville Pool, Parker was able to contact the fisher directly and purchased the fish for scientific examination. The fish was found to be an adult female with fully developed eggs—a serious concern given that all grass carp imported into



Tiger muskie

Washington or Oregon are required to be sterile. The other two fish identified by photographs were caught in John Day Pool.

Given the importance of collecting physical evidence for analysis, Parker began a program that pays fishers for these invasive fish species. If at all possible it is important that they are kept fresh on ice and not frozen. This is important as freezing can damage soft tissue, particularly the gonads.

For a list of the major invasive species found in the Columbia River Basin, including photos and descriptions, visit www.critfc.org/invasive

If you catch one of the species listed above, contact Blaine at 503-731-1268 or via email at parb@critfc.org. 🐟



The Dipnetter

Yakama • Warm Springs
Umatilla • Nez Perce



Food Sovereignty

At a recent CRITFC-hosted workshop, the Food Safety Modernization Act was presented. This legislation could possibly impact tribal sales of fish sold directly to the public. Attorneys and staff are investigating whether this new federal law dictates regulations that Indian fishers would be subject to. The tribes are working to schedule consultation with the Food and Drug Administration on the implementation of this new law. They hope to get ahead of this by exploring ways to enhance their sovereignty over the processing of food products that are sold to the public. The goal is to not only support our fishers but to provide the public with safe, wholesome fish while protecting tribal sovereignty.

The tribes have been clear in their dedication to promoting food safety. They directed CRITFC to work with fishers to incorporate quality handling techniques into the processing of the treaty catch. Over 350 fishers have voluntarily taken HACCP food safety classes, representing over 5,000 hours of instruction.

Incorporating food quality handling techniques into the processing of the treaty catch is paying off:

CRITFC Executive Director's Message

- ❖ The quality of the treaty catch is recognized by wholesalers and consumers, creating greater demand.
- ❖ Despite the economic downturn of the past five years, the prices Indian fishers receive for tribal-caught salmon actually increased.
- ❖ Tribal-caught salmon can now be found in local, regional, and national markets, including top supermarkets and restaurants. Last year, Indian fishers provided over one million servings of salmon to consumers.



Paul Lumley
YAKAMA

This increased level of visibility also comes with higher expectations from the public. Food safety awareness has greatly increased over the last few years as the public wants to ensure food is processed in a safe manner and in accordance with a regulatory framework. We want to make sure that any food safety regulations tribal members are subject to come from their own tribe.



The Dipnetter

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
729 NE Oregon, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97232
www.critfc.org • (503) 238-0667

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND, OR
PERMIT #11



Text "critfc"
to the number
55958 to start
getting fishery
announcements
on your cell phone.

It's free!

