

The Dipnetter

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



May 2014

BLESSING OF THE RIVER AND MEMORIAL SITE DEDICATION

On April 4, around 250 people gathered at Columbia Hills State Park in Dallesport, Washington for a blessing of the river and dedication of the proposed Fishers Memorial that the tribes hope to have built there. The event included drummers singing three sets of seven songs each, an opportunity for those gathered to talk about the memorial and remember their lost loved ones, and concluded with a salmon dinner. The CRITFC Enforcement team was given with a beaded staff to honor their dedication and support in search, rescue, and recovery efforts. The final blessing on the food was sung by a group of children. In his remarks, the event organizer River Chief Wilbur Slockish, Jr, spoke of honoring the river that gives us life and respecting that same river, because it can take life, too.

For more information about the proposed Fishers Memorial, visit www.critfc.org/fishersmemorial. 🐟



↑ The final prayer song before the meal was sung by children.

← The proposed site for the Columbia River Fishers Memorial is on this bluff overlooking the river.

→ The memorial will be not far from Tsagagl'alal, the sacred She Who Watches petroglyph.

↘ Traditional stick-roasted salmon cooking for the dinner.

↓ An artists rendering of the Fishers Memorial at its proposed site. The memorial would be visible from the highways on both sides of the river as well as boaters on the river.



NEW RESEARCH BOAT

DOUG HATCH, CRITFC SENIOR BIOLOGIST

The CRITFC Fish Science team recently received delivery on a new research boat. It is 26 feet long and 8½ feet wide. It has two 150 horsepower motors. The boat was purchased with Bonneville Power Administration funding made available through the Columbia Basin Fish Accords.

The vessel will be used primarily on sea lion-related projects for the next few years. These projects include abundance surveys to estimate how many sea lions are in the river, sea lion observations, and sea lion hazing.

In the future, the boat will be used on other research projects stretching from the Columbia River estuary at Astoria all the way up to the end of Zone 6 at McNary Dam. Future projects that the new boat will be used on are acoustic fish tracking in the Zone 6 pools and juvenile salmon surveys in the lower river and estuary. 🐟



CRITFC Fish Biologist John Whiteaker next to CRITFC's new research vessel. To give an idea of the size of the boat, Whiteaker is 6' 5".

SPRING CHINOOK FISHERY

STUART ELLIS, CRITFC HARVEST BIOLOGIST

The spring chinook run is starting to arrive. At press time, with close to 2,500 spring chinook over Bonneville, the cumulative count is the third highest to date in the last 10 years. This doesn't say anything about how big the total run will be, but it is nice to have a few fish in Zone 6 this early. The tribes have been issuing ceremonial permits and several crews have been fishing and some fish are being caught. A few fish are being picked up in the Zone 6 platform fishery as well.

The tribes have not yet made any decisions to open a tribal bank hook-and-line fishery downstream of Bonneville. Last year the short opening downstream of Bonneville caught over 47% of the total tribal spring chinook harvest. The potential of high catches downstream of Bonneville are a concern to tribal leaders who want to balance fishing in Zone 6 with any fishing that occurs downstream. If the tribes do decide to open fisheries downstream of Bonneville, there could be some restrictions to try to limit the catch. At this time, the tribes are not allowing spring chinook to be sold. Under tribal regulations, sales cannot occur when ceremonial permit fishing is occurring. Ceremonial and subsistence use of spring chinook is the priority established by the tribes. If at some point this spring, the tribes make a decision to allow spring chinook to be sold commercially, announcements will go out through the usual channels

Fisher announcements are sent out via mail, email, text message (instructions on how to subscribe to this service are on the back of this newsletter), and Facebook. 'Like' CRITFC on www.facebook.com/critfc to follow fishery announcements and other river news. 🐟

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THE FOUR GOALS OF CRITFC

One of the most common questions we receive is what exactly CRITFC does for the tribes and tribal members. CRITFC coordinates management policy and provides fisheries technical services for its four member tribes: the Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla, and Nez Perce.

Its mission is “to ensure a unified voice in the overall management of the fishery resources, and as managers, to protect reserved treaty rights through the exercise of the inherent sovereign powers of the tribes.”

This mission is accomplished with the following four primary organizational goals:

PUT FISH BACK IN THE RIVERS AND PROTECT WATERSHEDS

CRITFC provides the tribes and the region with invaluable biological research, fisheries management, hydrology, and other science to support the protection and restoration of Columbia River Basin salmon, lamprey, and sturgeon. The vision of this goal is to reverse the decline of salmon, lamprey, and sturgeon and rebuild their numbers to full productivity. This work is guided by the holistic principles outlined in Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit (Spirit of the Salmon), the tribal salmon plan that addresses recommended restoration actions in every phase of the salmon’s lifecycle from stream to ocean and back.



Cutting-edge fish science is conducted at CRITFC’s Hangerman Genetics Lab, operated in cooperation with the University of Idaho.

PROTECT TRIBAL TREATY FISHING RIGHTS

CRITFC employs lawyers, policy analysts, and fisheries enforcement officers who work to ensure that tribal treaty rights are protected. All of these activities are done in careful coordination with and under the direction of our member tribes. The commission works closely with state and federal agencies to ensure fair harvest sharing between the tribal and non-tribal fisheries.



CRITFC Enforcement reflects a fundamental right of tribal sovereignty by allowing the four tribes to enforce tribal laws rather than be subject to state enforcement. Without tribal fisheries enforcement, state enforcement would take over, resulting in state laws being enforced, not tribal laws.

SHARE SALMON CULTURE

CRITFC actively shares news, information, and the tribal perspective on a variety of issues. Common topics include salmon and lamprey restoration, the nature of treaty fishing rights, and tribal culture. The targets of this effort are tribal members, policy makers, media outlets, and the general public.

Through these outreach efforts, the member tribes hope to build support for salmon restoration in the region and promote an understanding of tribal treaty fishing rights and sovereignty among the general public.



CRITFC outreach efforts focus on the importance of salmon, of caring for the environment in which salmon live, and inspiring people to create ways that they can honor salmon themselves.

PROVIDE FISHER SERVICES

CRITFC provides a variety of services directly to fishers from its member tribes. The Salmon Marketing program provides fishers from the four member tribes with resources to help them carry on the tradition of making a living from fishing, whether that be from commercial, over-the-bank, or value-added fish sales. The organization also operates and maintains 31 fishing access sites along the Columbia River for the exclusive or near-exclusive use of the fishers from all the member tribes. 🐟



CRITFC’s Salmon Marketing program provides over-the-bank customers with sales dates, locations, fish preparation techniques, and other information to increase the demand for Columbia River Indian-caught Salmon

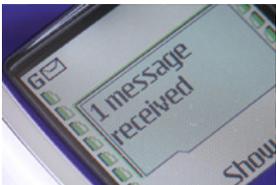




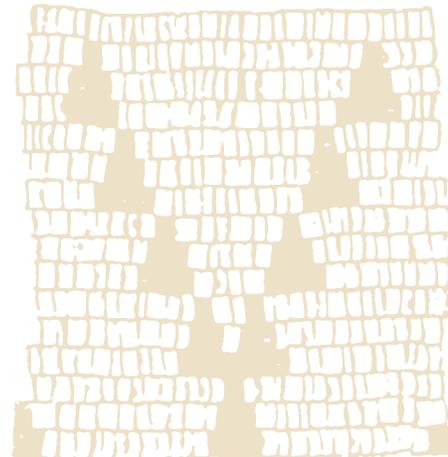
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Yakama • Warm Springs
Umatilla • Nez Perce 

CRITFC Executive Director's Message

A Memorial to Those Lost; A Reminder to Those Who Remain

On April 4, I joined around 250 others who had come to Columbia Hills State Park outside Dallesport. We gathered there to bless the river and fishers, asking the Creator for a safe fishing season. We also gathered to remember those who have lost their lives while fishing in the Columbia. During the ceremony, we heard many words. We heard memories of the lost fishers' dedication and traditions. We heard words of gratitude for those who assisted the families in their time of need. We heard words of comfort for those who still grieve at their loss.

The location for the ceremony was picked because it is the proposed location for the Columbia River Fishers Memorial. For over 30 years, the four Columbia River treaty tribes have spoken of building a memorial to honor lost fishers. Under tribal leadership, a group of Warm Springs, Yakama, Umatilla, and Nez Perce artists designed a culturally significant monument to memorialize lost fishers, provide a place for families to express their grief,

and to encourage safety for all who use the river.

Over the millennia, untold numbers of fishers have lost their lives to N'Chi Wana. The loved ones who they left behind look to with renewed respect, for while the river offers many gifts, its awesome power makes it dangerous as well. By remembering those lost, the tribes hope the memorial also serves as a reminder for fishers to always be safe and take the proper precautions when they are out on the river.

The site for the memorial is a short walk from Tsagaglalal, the sacred "She Who Watches" petroglyph. Together, these two stone creations will overlook the Columbia. One reminds us that the river is the source of our identity and strength. The other will remind us of those who returned to the Creator in the river's watery depths. 🐟



Paul Lumley
YAKAMA

Bobby P. 4-4