

# The Dipnetter

February 2015

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

## PACIFIC SALMON TREATY CHINOOK CHAPTER

MIKE MATYLEWICH, CRITFC FISH MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT MANAGER

One of the main reasons the tribes created CRITFC in 1977 was to provide its member tribes with technical assistance on harvest, hatchery, water management, and fish passage issues. The CRITFC Fish Management Department does this in several ways. It tracks the Columbia River salmon catch from southeast Alaska all the way to the Columbia River tributaries. It reviews hatchery management plans with an eye toward working to rebuild naturally spawning salmon runs. CRITFC staff also write plans that help increase the survival of juvenile and adult salmon as they migrate through the hydropower system. Tribal leaders and decision-makers use CRITFC's technical information and expertise to guide their decisions when making management positions. The goal of CRITFC and its member tribes is to return naturally spawning fish to all their usual and accustomed fishing places.

CRITFC's Fish Management team also assists the CRITFC commissioners in their participation on intergovernmental bodies overseeing salmon fisheries in the Columbia River Basin, including the Pacific Salmon Commission, which oversees the Pacific Salmon Treaty between the United States and Canada.

The PST was ratified in 1985. It established international harvest management arrangements to prevent overfishing, provide for optimum production, and ensure that each country receives equitable benefits from the production of salmon originating in its waters. The PST recognizes the desire to reduce interceptions, to avoid disrupting existing fisheries, and to take into account annual variations in stock abundance.

The specific harvest arrangements are contained in chapters of an annex to the main treaty. Of particular interest to the Columbia River Tribes is the Chinook Chapter (Chapter 3) because fall chinook from Hanford Reach and summer chinook from the Upper Columbia migrate as far north as Southeast Alaska and are caught in fisheries



*The western coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia, one of the ocean fishing areas that is regulated by the Pacific Salmon Treaty.*

coast wide. Most of the current harvest arrangements, including the Chinook Chapter, expire at the end of 2018. The Pacific Salmon Commission will start renegotiating the annex this year.

The current Chinook Chapter, adopted in 2008, recognized the need to reduce ocean fishing in response to concerns for weak stocks. Southeast Alaska fisheries were reduced by 15% from the previous agreement and West Coast Vancouver Island fisheries were reduced by 30% from the previous agreement. Fall chinook in Hanford Reach and summer chinook in the Upper Columbia responded positively to the change, leading to increased returns and increased fisheries in the Columbia River.

Tribal negotiators will be working to protect and enhance those gains in the development of a revised Chinook Chapter. 🐟



# The Changing Climate

For thousands of years, tribal cultures have been based on the First Foods that each came at their appointed time. Our calendars and travels were based on when these sacred foods—the salmon, the game, the roots, and the berries—were ready for harvest.

Now, tragically, changes to the environment due to climate change are already having an impact on the plants



*Snow at Deadman's Pass in the Blue Mountains on the Umatilla reservation. Future models show less and less snowpack as winter snows that provide cold water to the rivers in the summer are replaced with winter rain that runs off as soon as it falls, leaving the rivers lower and warmer in the summer during the salmon runs.*

## CRITFC Executive Director's Message

and animals of the Columbia River basin. In fact, the tribes are some of the first to have noticed the slight changes that began happening years ago when huckleberries were ripening earlier than anyone could remember or when roots weren't growing as large as they once had. These changes haven't stopped there, and are getting more noticeable. We no longer see the deep mountain snowpacks and as a result, the warmer rivers no longer cooled by the cold water melting from them are altering the timing of the salmon return.



**Paul Lumley**  
YAKAMA

All of these changes are adding up to a very real threat and danger not only to the balanced ecosystem of the region and the planet, but to the cultures that depend on them, too. Knowing what is happening makes watching these slow changes seem like watching a train wreck in slow motion.

CRITFC has been studying climate change and working to predict the effects it will have on the Columbia River basin. By anticipating how salmon and rivers will be impacted, we are providing the tribes with information they can use to prepare for the expected changes.

Ultimately, the governments of the world must come together to address this issue, as only by a united, global effort do we have any hope to solve this threat to us all. I am confident, however that the tribes and CRITFC will be strong voices calling for action to protect and restore sacred Mother Earth. Our elders would expect no less from us. Generations yet to come are counting on it. 🐟

## CRITFC Officers and Commissioners

### Warm Springs



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**Brooklyn Baptiste, Treasurer**  
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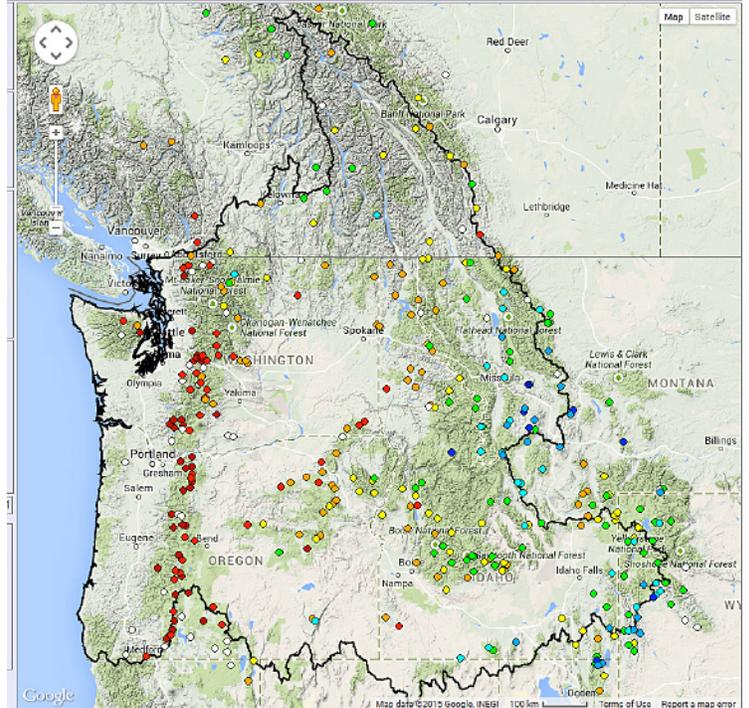
# WATER SUPPLY FORECAST HAS GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

KYLE DITTMER, CRITFC HYDROLOGIST-METEOROLOGIST

Despite off-and-on rain and snow since October, Columbia River basin weather patterns are coming back to normal, although it is still a little on the warm, dry side. In general, mountain snow stations show the water contained in Oregon and Washington snowpacks is 2" to 5" below normal while Idaho's snowpack is 2" to 5" above normal. When the snow melts in spring, this runoff feeds the river flow, which helps the fish migrate down the river and out to the ocean.

The figure to the right shows the current state of the region's snowpack. The situation is similar to last winter where the region started off dry then quickly made up the lack of moisture during the late winter and spring months.

Snowpack, along with monthly and seasonal precipitation and current river flow, are the key components that are used to calculate the year's Water Supply Forecast (WSF). This forecast is used by water management agencies, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and determines how much water is released for power, irrigation, and fish. The latest CRITFC water forecast is that the Columbia River at The Dalles will be 96% of normal for the April-July runoff period. (NOAA estimates 94%.) Current ocean and atmospheric indicators suggest that we are in a weak El Niño pattern, which means the region will see a tendency for warm, dry winter conditions. 🐟



*Snow status for the Pacific Northwest as of 15 Jan 2015. Red, orange, and yellow dots indicate snowpacks below normal. (The darkest red, representing a snowpack less than 25% of normal is seen all along the Cascade Range.) Green indicates normal snowpack, and turquoise through dark blue indicate above average snowpack. (The darkest blue, representing snowpack greater than 175% of normal, is seen in several areas of the Rocky and Bitterroot mountains in the upper basin.)*

# FARMERS MARKETS: DIRECT-TO-THE-PUBLIC OPPORTUNITY

LES BROWN, CRITFC SALMON MARKETING SPECIALIST

Farmers markets in the Northwest are popular and located in a growing number of communities. Many of today's consumers appreciate local and seasonal products and will pay premium prices for premium products. Over 30 farmers markets operate within a 100-mile radius of Columbia River Indian fishing sites. Currently the closest large markets are in Portland, Gresham, Beaverton, Lake Oswego, and Hillsboro. Other cities in Oregon, including Hood River, The Dalles, Troutdale, have smaller markets. In Washington, Goldendale, Prosser, the Tri-Cities, Camas, Vancouver and others have small markets within reach of tribal fishers.

While you can sell directly to consumers at farmers markets and avoid intermediaries, you must compare the cost of transportation, the selling station and vendor application fees (usually small) with potentially higher prices. There may also be requirements for having potable

water on-site, keeping totes covered during non-sale periods, and using state-certified scales for sales. Page 29 offers information on how much to increase price per pound for your fish to recover mileage costs.

Now is a good time to contact farmers markets in your area to reserve booth space or find out the market's requirements before they open in the spring. For help with this, or to find out what farmers markets operate in your area, contact Les Brown at (503) 799-8640. 🐟



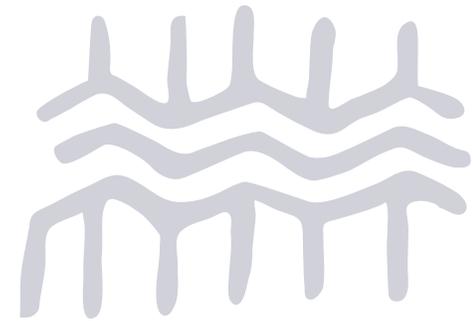


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Text "critfc" to the number 555-888 to start getting fishery announcements on your cell phone. It's free!



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Yakama • Warm Springs  
Umatilla • Nez Perce 



## BEAUTIFYING THE FISHING ACCESS SITES

Under a grant CRITFC received from the Potlatch Fund, Yakama artist Toma Villa has been working on painting murals and creating artwork to beautify the fishing access sites. Toma's graffiti-style murals brightly depict tribal, natural, and historical themes. This mural of Indians riding on a woolly mammoth is on the wall of a building at the Wind River Fishing Access Site. (Photo courtesy of the artist.) 

