

# The Dipnetter

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



September 2013

## WALKING ON

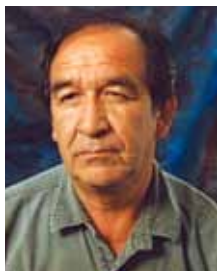
SARA THOMPSON, CRITFC PUBLIC INFORMATION

The CRITFC family lost two loved ones on July 26, 2013: Debbie Hansen and Elmer Crow.



Debbie Hansen passed away at the age of 50 after a brief battle with cancer. An administrative assistant for CRITFC's Policy Development and Legal Support Department, Debbie had been a vital part of the CRITFC family for 11 years. In her work, she provided essential administrative support and was a valuable aid

to tribal attorneys in their efforts. Debbie took joy in volunteering for various office functions and delighted in playing "Santa's elf" for the kids at CRITFC's annual holiday party. Debbie was an avid sports fan who loved the Portland Trailblazers, Dallas Cowboys, and many other teams. She loved the Oregon Zoo, the Columbia River Gorge, and the Oregon Coast. Her final weeks were spent with her CRITFC family and friends, including visits to the coast and the Oregon Zoo. A day before her passing, Debbie spent time with her CRITFC family at a picnic held in her honor. Debbie wanted to see the restoration of the Columbia Basin's June Hogs (aka summer chinook). A salmon habitat restoration project is currently under development in her name.



Elmer Crow was a respected Nez Perce tribal elder and former CRITFC commissioner. A wealth of Nez Perce teachings and cultural knowledge, Elmer was dedicated to the natural world and to protecting tribal treaty rights. A staunch advocate for Pacific lamprey, or

"eels," the fight to save this species from extinction was something he poured his heart and soul into. He worked tirelessly with tribal, state, and federal agencies to save a fish that others ignored.

Elmer's passion for lamprey was often contagious. He could often be found giving cultural presentations and talking with anyone willing to listen about lamprey and the Nez Perce Tribe. Over the years, he gave presentations to tens of thousands of people. He particularly enjoyed giving presentations to children, hoping to instill in them a connection to the natural world and an appreciation of Indians and Indian culture. Elmer died while rescuing two of his grandsons from the Snake River at Buffalo Eddy. He died saving those he loved, at a place that he loved, and in a river he loved.

Both Debbie and Elmer have left a mark on the CRITFC family. They were loved and they will be missed. Their legacy, however, will live in the work that we do. 🐟



*Nez Perce elder Elmer Crow particularly enjoyed teaching children about tribal people and culture. He gave presentations on traditional tribal fishing and hunting gear for all five years that CRITFC hosted the Wy-Kan-Ush-Pum Village at the Oxbow Park Salmon Festival. Presenting with him in this photo are two other former CRITFC commissioners who recently passed away: [left] Jay Mint-horn (UMATILLA), and [center] Terry Courtney, Jr (WARM SPRINGS).*

## Protecting Fisheries by Protecting the Ecosystem

In July, CRITFC passed a resolution opposing the development of coal transport facilities along the Columbia River. Last month, CRITFC passed a resolution opposing the development of Canadian tar sands oil development and the “megaloads” of equipment they require. These megaloads are transported up the Columbia River on barges and then on roads running through the Nez Perce reservation and ceded territory.

People have asked why tribal representatives charged with protecting treaty fishing rights are weighing in on energy policy. The answer is simple: protecting fisheries requires holistic management of both the fish and the ecosystems upon which those fish depend. For 75 years, energy demand has been built on the backs of salmon and the environment that supports them, and the steep decline of salmon, steelhead, and lamprey show the effects of it.

The last thing these fish need are more obstacles, this time in the form of coal dust and debris, threats from spillage or accidents, or the environmental effects of burning of tar sand oil—a particularly dirty form of petroleum. In addition to the threats to the ecosystem,

both of these proposals would negatively impact tribal fishers’ access to treaty-reserved fishing locations with mile-long trains or increase barge traffic on an already congested Columbia River.

The Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee felt so strongly about the issue of transporting megaloads through their reservation that they protested the most recent shipment and eight of the nine council members were arrested.

These are only two of the many threats to the health of the river, the fish, and the fishery upon which the tribes depend. It is a sad fact that many people don’t understand the scope of these threats. Tribal wisdom teaches us that what harms one part of the web of life harms the whole, including ourselves. Only by remaining diligent in protecting the fish and the waters in which they live do we have hope of ensuring that the seventh generation from now will enjoy the bounty that we do. 🐟



**Paul Lumley**  
YAKAMA

## FALL FISHERIES UPDATE

The fall commercial fisheries are underway. As of press time, we are in our fourth week of commercial gillnet fishing. We don’t have complete catch data yet, but as of Sept. 8, over 72,000 chinook, over 8,000 steelhead, a few coho, and even a couple sockeye have been harvested in the tribal fishery with over 700 tribal nets out last week and almost 700 this week.

The fall chinook run has been very good so far. Both the bright and tule stocks are tracking ahead of what we expected. The total adult fall chinook count of 531,061

through Sept. 10 is a record cumulative count. On Sept. 9, Bonneville also saw the highest single day chinook count in its history with 63,870 fish passing the dam. The previous record was set just two days earlier when 48,710 passed.

Steelhead counts are tracking below what was expected. The A-run steelhead (<78 cm), appear to be coming in at about 205,000 at Bonneville compared to a forecast of 291,000. It is too early to update the B-run steelhead (78 cm+) run size, but they appear to be tracking less than expected so far as well. 🐟

## CRITFC Officers and Commissioners

### NEZ PERCE



**Joel Moffett**, CRITFC chairman  
Brooklyn Baptiste · Albert Barros  
Anthony Johnson · Dan Kane  
Leotis McCormack · McCoy Oatman  
Samuel Penney · Gary Dorr  
Quintin Ellenwood · Erik Holt  
Herb Jackson · Timothy Wheeler  
(208) 843-2253

### WARM SPRINGS



**Bruce Jim**, CRITFC vice-chairman  
Anthony Holliday · Jonathan Smith  
Ryan Smith · Emerson Squiemphen  
Donnie Winishut, Sr  
(541) 553-3257

### YAKAMA



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

### UMATILLA



**Kathryn Brigham**, CRITFC treasurer  
James Marsh · Ken Hall  
Vince Sohapp · Chris Williams  
(541) 276-3165

## RUSSELL SPINO PROMOTED TO SERGEANT

MITCH HICKS, CRITFC ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT CHIEF



*Sergeant Russell Spino*

The CRITFC Enforcement has promoted Russell Spino to the rank of sergeant. Spino is a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. He was first hired as a patrol officer in 2001 and served as a fisheries officer

until 2004. He was then assigned, in addition to duties as a fisheries officer, to be the cultural resource protection patrol officer and investigator. In 2011, Spino was moved from the cultural resource protection

assignment to the BIA Columbia River In-lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Site Law Enforcement Program. In 2005, he completed the BIA Criminal Investigator training at the federal law enforcement training center in Georgia and has been the lead defensive tactics instructor for the department since 2010. Spino was named the 2013 Conservation Officer of the Year by the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society and was voted by his peers as the 2012 Columbia River Inter-Tribal Enforcement Officer of the Year.

Sergeant Spino said, "I became an enforcement officer because as a tribal citizen it is important to me to protect and conserve our First Foods. I am really honored to take on a leadership role to help carry on CRITFC's mission. I see that I can do more to help influence the future of CRITFC."

Department Chief Mitch Hicks commented, "I have observed over the years as Officer Spino has prepared himself for this position. I have no doubt that he will continue to work hard and achieve many more of his career goals." 🐟

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## MITCH HICKS CHOSEN AS NEW CRITFC CHIEF OF ENFORCEMENT

SARA THOMPSON, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

CRITFC promoted 20-year CRITFC Enforcement veteran Sergeant Mitch Hicks to Chief of Enforcement effective August 1. Hicks is a member of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes from the Fort Hall Reservation.

"I am honored to lead one of the best enforcement entities in the region. I personally know how this work benefits Indian fishers along the Columbia River," said Hicks. "My family, friends, and I were subjected harassment while exercising our tribal hunting and fishing rights. I remember having our salmon fishing camp shot at and being held at gunpoint while hunting in Idaho. My experiences have driven me to do what I can to prevent the harassment that I experienced as a boy from happening to anyone else."

As the chief of law enforcement, Hicks is responsible for the management of CRITFC's Enforcement Department. Based in Hood River, CRITFC Enforcement employs 17 patrol officers, dispatchers, and administrative staff and is responsible for patrolling the 147 miles of Zone 6 of the Columbia River and 31 fishing access sites that are found there.

"Mitch has a dedication to the tribal members who fish the Columbia and the protection of their

treaty fishing right," said CRITFC Executive Director Paul Lumley. "Enforcement of tribal treaty fishing rights is the backbone of tribal sovereignty and Mitch's dedication will serve the tribes well."

Hicks graduated from Idaho State University and has spent his entire enforcement career with CRITFC Enforcement. He was hired in April 1993 as a patrol officer and was promoted to sergeant in August 2000.

Hicks takes over for Davis Washines who retired from the position after three years of service. Washines remains with CRITFC as the Law Enforcement Liaison. 🐟



*New CRITFC Enforcement Chief Mitch Hicks*





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# The Dipnetter

Yakama • Warm Springs  
Umatilla • Nez Perce



## Tour of the Nez Perce Tribe's Northeast Oregon Projects

Twice a year, the CRITFC commission meeting is held on one of the member tribes' reservations. The August meeting was hosted by the Nez Perce Tribe. Part of this on-site meeting was a tour for CRITFC and the visiting Columbia Gorge Commission to see some of the Nez Perce Fisheries' projects in northeastern Oregon. Below is the group at the Joseph Creek overlook.

