

The Dipnetter

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



December 2013

CRITFC CLIMATE RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTED IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL

KYLE DITTMER, CRITFC HYDROLOGIST/METEOROLOGIST

Some of the climate research CRITFC scientists have been conducting was selected for a special issue of *Climatic Change Journal*. The October 2013 issue of this peer-reviewed scientific journal was devoted exclusively to climate change impacts on indigenous communities across the United States. Over 50 authors contributed to this issue, representing tribal communities, academia, government agencies, and environmental organizations.

One of the CRITFC research projects featured in the issue is CRITFC hydrologist/meteorologist Kyle Dittmer's study analyzing the last 100 years of Columbia River Basin river flow data. He focused on how much the rivers and streams on tribal lands have changed, primarily the amount of water flow and when the spring runoff begins. This research confirmed that the spring runoff has gotten earlier and earlier over the years. Warmer temperatures melt the snowpack earlier in the spring, impacting the temperature and amount of water that flows during the summer and fall when those salmon runs are migrating.

CRITFC Climate Change Efforts

Part of understanding what will happen in the future is to have a good idea of what how much the climate in the Columbia River Basin has already been altered. CRITFC has been studying the impacts of climate change on tribal lands for over a decade. An altered climate will affect all the tribes' First Foods, however CRITFC's primary concern has been to understand how salmon and the rivers on which they depend will be affected.

The tribes are among the voices calling for governments around the world to address climate change and try to if not reverse it, at least halt it. Until that happens, though, they are committed to researching the impacts to be able to provide tribal leaders with



<http://bit.ly/indigenousclimatechange>

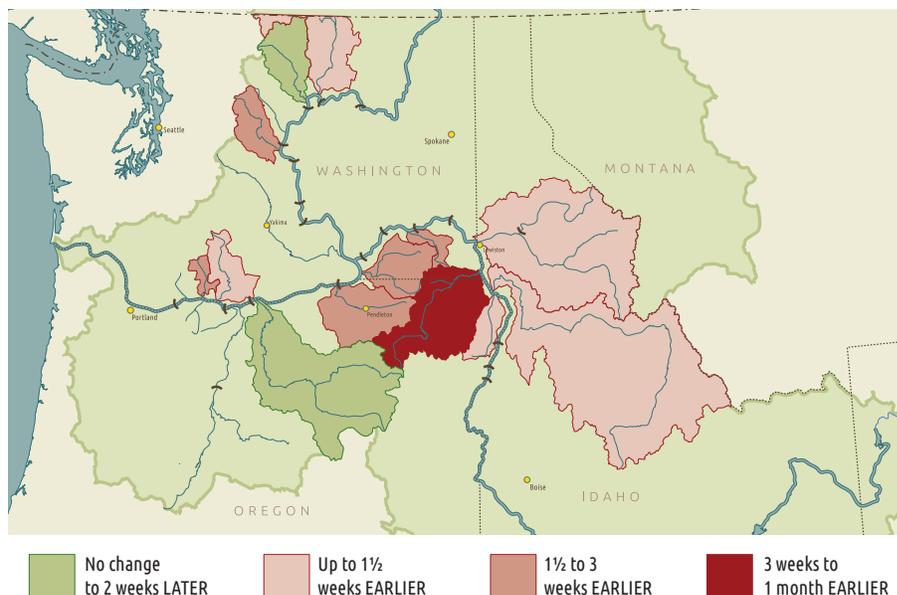
Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples in the United States:
Impacts, Experiences and Actions

Available in hardback and eBook from Springer Publishing



the best possible information as they decide how to best manage salmon recovery in a changing climate. 🐟

A sampling of the 32 basins that were studied to determine how much the start date of the spring runoff has shifted over the past century. The spring runoff of some mid-Columbia basins now comes more than an entire month earlier than it did 100 years ago.



PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

MIKE MATYLEWICH, CRITFC FISHERY MANAGEMENT MANAGER

The Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) meeting cycle is coming up. The post-season meeting will be January 13-16 in Portland and the annual meeting will be February 10-13 in Vancouver, BC. The PSC process covers a wide range of fisheries from the Fraser River sockeye and pinks fishery to the ocean chinook fisheries in Canada and Southeast Alaska. The PSC will be reviewing last year's fisheries performance and will plan for this year's fisheries by reviewing abundance forecasts.



Chinook issues are of primary interest of the Columbia River tribes in the PSC process. Ocean fisheries in Canada and Alaska harvest significant numbers of Hanford Reach bright fall chinook and Upper Columbia River summer chinook. The Chinook Technical Committee calculates an abundance index based on the forecasted returns of more than 30 chinook stocks in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, British Columbia, and Southeast Alaska. The harvest levels for ocean fisheries in Canada and Southeast Alaska are determined by the abundance index.

The PSC was established as part of the Pacific Salmon Treaty between the United States and Canada. The treaty was ratified in 1985. The tribes' threat to sue over allocation issues was a major factor in bringing the parties to the negotiating table. The control of harvest impacts in ocean fisheries contributed to increased returns to the Columbia River, providing greater harvest opportunities for tribal fisheries and increased conservation benefits for Columbia River chinook stocks. 🐟

CORPS WINTER CLEANUP

KELLY THOMAS, NAT RES MANAGER, THE DALLES LOCK AND DAM

The US Army Corps of Engineers will begin its annual clean up on Dec. 1, 2013. This year's focus will be Avery Park, Seufert Park, The Dalles Dam Peninsula, Giles French Park, and Lepage Park. All personal property, temporary structures, and building materials need to be removed prior to Dec 1. If these items are not removed, they will be removed from the site, impounded, and eventually disposed of as abandoned property. The Corps of Engineers has identified and tagged the titled property below for removal:

Description	Location	License/vessel#
Blue/White Shasta Camper	Avery Park	(WA) V54193
Viking Alpenlite Camper	Avery Park	(WA) 4482-PG
Blue Mirrocraft Boat	Avery Park	WN 3748 NY
Tan Glastron Boat	Avery Park	CF 5016 EG
Yellow WellCraft Sunhatch boat	Lepage Park Boat Ramp	(OR) 72 YN

If you are the owner of the tagged property, know who is, or have any questions, please call The Dalles Lock and Dam Natural Resource Office at (541) 506-7857. 🐟

RIVER SAFETY TIPS

JERROD DANIEL, CRITFC ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Remember to make sure you store life jackets in a dry location over the winter. When left in boats for a few months, they can mold or mildew. No one is going to wear a smelly, rotted life jacket at the first launch in the spring. By making sure you're ready for anything, you can increase your safety and the safety of your boat crew. 🐟

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STRIPED BASS IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER?!

BLAINE PARKER, CRITFC INVASIVE SPECIES SPECIALIST

This summer, striped bass—also known as “striper”—were recorded several times this summer in the Columbia River. Striped bass are native to the East Coast, but have been non-native residents of the West Coast since the 1880s. Though they are primarily a marine species, striped bass can move freely between fresh and salt water and can live permanently in fresh water; similar to the white sturgeon.

At least three striped bass were reported this summer, a 15 lb. fish found dead on a lower river beach, a 52 lb. fish caught in June by a lower river commercial fisher, and 12-14 lb. fish caught by an Indian fisher in The Dalles pool in August. The last fish was similar in size to a striped bass that was observed passing the Bonneville Dam counting window a couple of weeks prior. Commission fisheries staff conducted biological sampling on The Dalles pool striped bass and determined it was a 6-year-old female fish with immature eggs, with an empty stomach. It is not unusual to hear of striped bass in the Columbia River downstream of Bonneville Dam, although it has been several years since any were reported and this is thought to be the first year that one has made it upstream of Bonneville Dam. 🐟



This striped bass weighing 52 lbs. was caught by a lower river commercial fisher in June.

FISHING SITE CLEAN-UP CLOSURES

MICHAEL BRONCHEAU, CRITFC FISHING SITE MAINT. MANAGER

Over the past two winters, twelve treaty fishing access sites were closed for extensive clean-up and repairs. The 2013-2014 clean-up will begin in November and will run through March.

During each closure, the maintenance crew will remove trash, abandoned property, and temporary structures; repair facilities, plumbing, and electrical systems; maintain the landscaping; and other repairs as necessary. **Any personal and titled property left on a site during its designated clean-up period will be disposed of.**

The closure schedule:

Crow Butte (Nov 1-15, 2013)

Alderdale (Nov 18-Dec 6, 2013)

Pine Creek (Dec 9-27, 2013)

Stanley Rock (Jan 6-17, 2014)

North Bonneville (Jan 20-Feb 7, 2014)

Wyeth (if needed) (Feb 10-21, 2014)

Dallesport (if needed) (Feb 24-Mar 14, 2014)

If you use any of these sites, please remove your personal and titled property to help speed the work and prevent any unexpected losses.

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. 🐟

Dallesport is the final site in this three-year clean-up effort. The Dallesport Treaty Fishing Access Site is the newest site; its dedication took place in April of 2012.

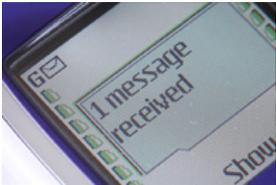




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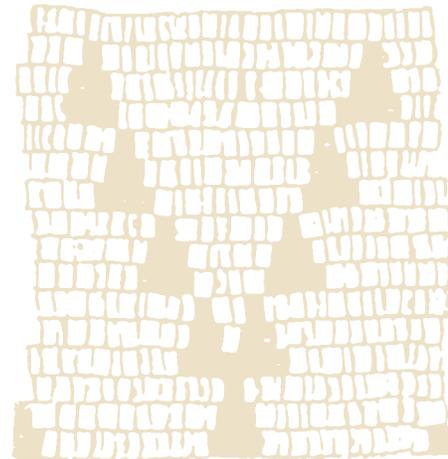
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CRITFC Executive Director's Message

Speaking for the Ecosystem

Our upcoming annual report includes a section looking back over CRITFC's three and a half decades. While going through the list of accomplishments, I couldn't help but look forward to some new challenges that await us.

The **toxic contamination** in the waters of the Columbia River Basin must be addressed, particularly since poor water quality has a greater impact on tribal members given our high reliance on fish.

The salmon aren't at risk of extinction like in the 1970s and 80s, however not all runs are out of danger and lamprey are barely hanging on in many upriver locations. We must increase **natural spawning** of salmon, sturgeon, and lamprey throughout the region if these sacred fish are to have any hope of long-term sustainability.

The unnatural river system that the Columbia and Snake river dams created made perfect conditions for some **invasive predators** like Caspian terns, northern pikeminnows, and sea lions thrive to thrive, taking a significant toll on the salmon, lamprey, and sturgeon.

We are only beginning to learn how **climate change** will affect the Columbia Basin and the tribes' First Foods.

Tribal fishers, hunters, and gatherers have been some of the first to notice the subtle and not so subtle changes that have already begun.

We have the opportunity to alter the very flow of the Columbia River with the upcoming renegotiation of the **Columbia River Treaty** between the US and Canada. A coalition of basin tribes and intertribal organizations have united to advocate for changes to this treaty that respect the ecosystem, salmon, and tribal trust responsibilities.

For some, it could be easy to become overwhelmed or discouraged over the fate of the salmon and other Columbia Basin fish, but we are spared this by the dedication, conviction, and resourcefulness of the people who make up the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, its tribal leaders, and the fisheries staffs from its four member tribes. With a solid foundation of cultural wisdom, a desire to honor the sacred fish, and the highest quality people working toward this goal, the tribes—and the salmon—will succeed. 🍣



Paul Lumley
YAKAMA