

The Dipnetter

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



February 2014

CRITFC Executive Director's Message

A SAFER RIVER FOR ALL

The 1970s was a time of great increases in Indian self-determination and rights advancement. In 1977, the four Columbia River treaty tribes formed CRITFC to exert their sovereignty in terms of fishery management and to ensure that they would not have to rely on state or federal agencies for technical information they required to make sound decisions. Soon after, the tribes determined that they themselves should be responsible for enforcing tribal rules and regulations, not wanting the BIA to shoulder this responsibility and certainly not the state enforcement agencies. In 1980, CRITFC Enforcement was formed, receiving tribal instructions to enforce the four member tribes' fishing regulations in Zone 6.

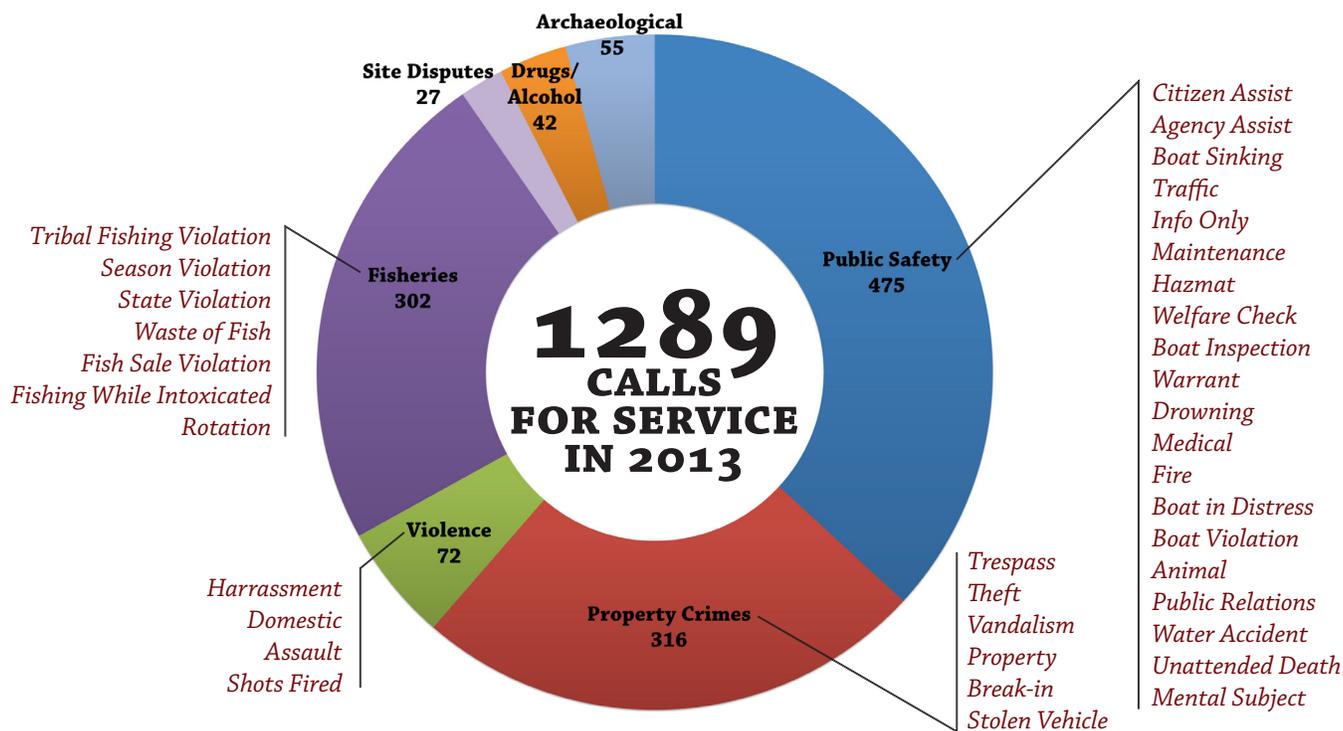
As the years went by, new duties were added to the CRITFC Enforcement team, including full police duties and cultural resource protection. By the 1990s, CRITFC Enforcement was the dominant law enforcement presence in Zone 6 of the Columbia River. One of the biggest recent changes was receiving Special Law Enforcement

Commissions from the BIA, giving them police enforcement jurisdiction on the In-lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Sites. Prior to receiving this, problems at the sites required BIA police intervention dispatched from their Seattle office. In police work, timing is critical and any delay could be life-threatening. Now law enforcement on access sites is provided by an enforcement department stationed within Zone 6, greatly decreasing response time and increasing safety.



Paul Lumley
YAKAMA

I thought of this as I reviewed CRITFC Enforcement's 2013 calls for service report (*see below*). The largest category of service last year was Public Safety. The CRITFC Enforcement team remains at its core a resource protection division that enforces tribal regulations. Thanks to the public safety work they do, Zone 6 and the communities and sites along it are a much safer place than they were 20 years ago. 🐟



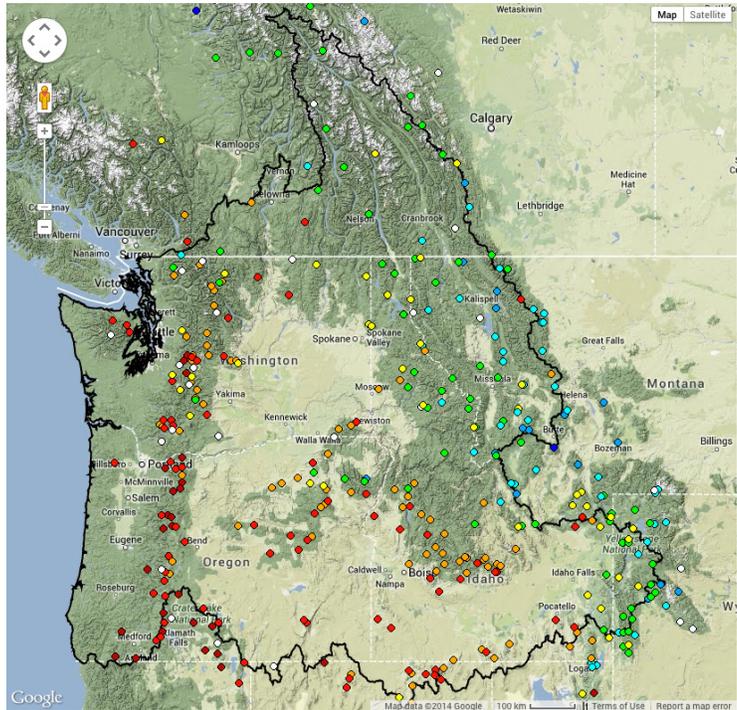
2014 WATER SUPPLY FORECAST

KYLE DITTMER, CRITFC HYDROLOGIST/METEOROLOGIST

Normally the Pacific Northwest receives large volumes of snow and rain from October through March. The mountain snowpack is the source for spring-summer runoff that feeds the rivers.

What happens if that moisture does not come? Less snowfall means less river water for fish during spring and summer. The figure to the right shows the current state of the region's snowpack. The situation is poor, similar to the winter of 2000-2001.

Current climate and weather models are giving conflicting information. We are not in an El Niño pattern, which would deliver a very dry and warm winter to the Pacific Northwest, however the weather patterns are acting as though we are in an El Niño pattern. The very dry winter of 2000-2001 may have been partially caused by the peak of the 11-12 year sunspot cycle that year. We are now in a similar peak of the current sunspot cycle. The latest long-range NOAA climate forecast is calling for near-normal precipitation for the rest of winter and spring. ➡



Current snow conditions throughout the Columbia River Basin. Red, orange, and yellow indicate BELOW AVERAGE snowpack. Green indicates AVERAGE snowpack. Turquoise, blue, and purple indicate ABOVE AVERAGE snowpack. Image courtesy NOAA.

WINTER GILLNET FISHERY

STUART ELLIS, CRITFC HARVEST BIOLOGIST

The winter gillnet fishery begins on February 1. This fishery generally targets sturgeon although some steelhead are usually caught as well. The closure date is set when any of the harvest guidelines are reached, which usually happens by March 21. Sturgeon harvest guidelines are set partly from information gathered by

stock assessments. Only one pool is assessed each year and last year's was done in the John Day Pool. The tribes and states will meet on Feb. 12 and could decide to modify the harvest guideline for the John Day Pool based on the new stock assessment. If any changes are made, information will be distributed to fishers. ➡

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Crow Butte Treaty Fishing Access site after the clean-up in November.

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 began 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) COMPLETED

Alderdale (Nov 18-Dec 6, 2013) COMPLETED

Pine Creek (Dec 9-27, 2013) COMPLETED

Stanley Rock (Jan 6-17, 2014) COMPLETED

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. 🐟

SAFE BOATING TIPS

More than 90 percent of boat drowning victims weren't wearing a life jacket. On the road, you wear your seat belt because you know you won't have time to pit it on in an accident. On the water, think about your life jacket the same way. It won't work if you don't wear it.

Top tips for safe boating:

1. Cold water is deadlier than you think. Prepare for the shock of cold water—always wear a life jacket.
2. Alcohol and boating do not mix.
3. Check the forecast. Return to shore immediately if bad weather approaches.
4. Obey all warning signs and buoys around dams. Waters can change in a matter of seconds from a scenic calm to a deadly torrent. "Stay Clear, Stay Safe."
5. Drive powerboats responsibly. Use appropriate speed, especially when the water is choppy.
6. Be extra careful when you have to stand up in your boat. It is easy to fall out of a small boat.
7. Be prepared. Ensure your vessel has the required safety gear on board and sufficient fuel.
8. Carry a CB radio or cell phone with you when on the water.
9. Always tell someone where you are going and when you will return.
10. Get trained. Learn how to survive an unexpected fall into the water.

Taken from the Lifesaving Society. For more safe boating and water tips, visit www.lifesavingsociety.com. 🐟





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IMPORTANT DIPNETTER SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE

Thank you for being a reader of The Dipnetter. When CRITFC first started producing this monthly newsletter seven years ago, it was our primary means of communicating river news directly to the Indian fishers. Today, there are many more ways that you get this news. Because of this, we've decided to clean up our mailing list as many of our subscribers now read this information in the email newsletter version of the Dipnetter, view the information on the CRITFC blog, or see the articles on Facebook.

Inside this issue is a pre-stamped postcard asking if you would like to continue receiving The Dipnetter and how you would

like to receive it. If you prefer to receive The Dipnetter via email, check the appropriate box and include your email address. **If you would like to continue receiving it in the mail, be sure to check the appropriate box. If you don't return this postcard, you will no longer receive a copy of The Dipnetter in the mail.**

Finally, take advantage of the comment lines on the postcard. We are always looking for story ideas and suggestions for information you would like to see in upcoming issues. 🐟