



The Dipnetter

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CRITFC 2014 Year in Review



2014 Salmon Run

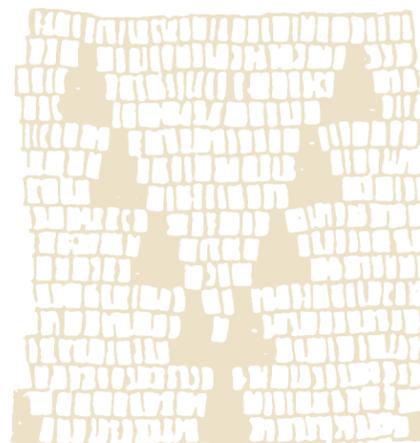
Thanks partly to intense tribal restoration efforts, the 2014 salmon run passed 2½ million fish (this number includes chinook, sockeye, coho, and steelhead adults and jacks). On September 7, the record for number of fish passing Bonneville Dam was broken when 67,024 fall chinook passed. On the very next day, the record was broken again when 67,521 passed. The total chinook run for the year was 1,152,603 adults and 187,009 jacks. The sockeye run was the largest since fish counting began at Bonneville Dam in 1938. A total of 614,179 fish passed the dam on their way to spawn in British Columbia, north-central Washington, and Idaho.

Future of Our Salmon Conference

CRITFC coordinated the third Future of Our Salmon Conference, this one focusing on restoring fish to all their historical locations, including past dams that currently offer no fish passage. A preliminary three-day technical workshop in Spokane for scientists, biologists, and other technical specialists concluded that reintroduction to blocked areas was possible given current technology and engineering capacity. At the main conference in Portland, attended by over 300 people, the findings from the technical workshop were presented, along with cultural and tribal leader presentations and panels of tribal, federal, and state officials.

Zone 6 Tribal Commercial Fishery

This value of this year's tribal commercial fishery value was estimated to exceed \$7 million. The strong fish run played a role, but the fishers were able to command premium prices due to the quality of the fish they are delivering, which is due to quality handling techniques that have become standard practice for the majority of tribal fishers. This year marked the tenth year of quality food handling training that CRITFC has provided to the tribal fishers. Due to these efforts and the fishers' dedication to improving the quality of their harvest, the CRITFC member tribes have more HACCP-trained fishers than all the other Pacific Northwest tribes combined.



Yakama • Warm Springs
Umatilla • Nez Perce 

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE: MILESTONES & PROGRESS

This year has been very busy for CRITFC and the tribes in regards to salmon, lamprey, river health, and treaty fishing. The record numbers of salmon returned to the Columbia River system was another indicator that the efforts to reverse the salmon decline are paying off, benefitting the species, the ecosystem, and the Indian fishers and families that depend on this First Food.

Cooperation was a common theme throughout the year as the tribes continued to strengthen partnerships with federal and state agencies and other organizations. The task of restoring and protecting salmon is too big to tackle alone. Many of the actions the tribes have advocated decades for can only be accomplished by combining resources with other partners. Just like in ages past, the salmon are bringing people together.

Despite the year's successes, everything isn't rosy. The effects of unusual and shifting weather caused from climate change are beginning to be seen throughout the Columbia River Basin and all signs point to these effects

only increasing. We aren't sure how great an impact this will have on the region and on salmon, but it is cause for concern for the tribes and something that CRITFC will continue to dedicate time and attention to in the coming year.

Lamprey continue to struggle in a hydrosystem that was not designed for their needs and their dwindling numbers are evidence of this. In the past year, they have received more attention, and we hope that this translates into more action to protect this ancient fish that is important to the tribes and the ecosystem.

The challenges that face us are not small, but looking back, I am proud of what the tribes have been able to accomplish and hold out hope that the same resilience, strength, traditional knowledge, and determination that brought us—and the salmon—back from the brink of extinction will carry us into the future, too. 🐟

Robert P. H. L.



Lamprey: The Lost Fish

The CRITFC-produced film "The Lost Fish," which highlighted the importance of lamprey to the tribes and the tribal efforts to save them, was selected for inclusion in the EcoFilm Festival in July. The screening concluded with Nez Perce elder Elmer Crow being posthumously awarded the Eco Hero award for his work on lamprey advocacy and restoration. The film was screened at a variety of other locations throughout the region and has been very well received.

Fishing Access Site Improvements

A major 3-year cleanup of the fishing access sites was completed in March. This cleanup involved extensive garbage, debris, and abandoned property removal, infrastructure repairs, and basic maintenance work that could only be done while a site was closed. The water systems on eleven of the sites were upgraded to put them in compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act standards. A grant was received to fund a tribal artist to paint murals at select access sites in an ongoing effort to improve and beautify the areas.

Columbia River Fishers Memorial

Work on the Columbia River Fishers Memorial continued throughout the year, with the task force finalizing a design of the memorial and determining a site at Columbia Hills State Park just outside Dallesport, Washington. In April, a blessing of the river and site dedication was held at the park, which was attended by over 100 guests, including tribal leaders, representatives, and families of those who had lost loved ones to the river. In October, a fundraiser in Portland was held that raised over \$7,000 to go toward the creation of this memorial.



Habitat and Water Protection and Restoration

CRITFC received \$2 million from the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, of which \$1.9 will pass directly to the four member tribes. This was the largest grant since 2002. The PCSRF provides funding to do habitat improvements that benefit Columbia River Basin salmon. Since the PCSRF was created, CRITFC and its member tribes have received \$26.7 million, which funded over 300 tribal projects (54 of which are on-going). CRITFC and the member tribes were also involved in addressing protecting water quality in the Columbia River Basin. Among the results of this work was the inclusion of specific tribal concerns and priorities in the Columbia River Restoration Act, which was introduced in Congress in July but did not pass.



Coal and Oil Transport

In the last few years, several projects to build terminals along the Columbia River to load coal onto barges for international shipping were proposed. One of the proposals was for a facility at Boardman, Oregon, which required approval from the State of Oregon. In August, the Oregon Department of State Lands used tribal interests and treaty rights as part of its denial of a permit to build the facility, citing tribal documentation and testimony that the area was the site of current treaty fishing activity. In October, CRITFC passed a resolution opposing the use of the Columbia River and Columbia Gorge as a transport corridor for oil and coal.



Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit 2014 Update

The tribes' 1995 salmon restoration plan Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit was written at a time when salmon numbers had dwindled to all-time lows and extinction was a very real possibility. In the years since then, some factors have changed, the working environment with federal and state agencies has improved, and new science has been added to our understanding. The goal of this 2014 update of the plan, which was two years in the making, was to incorporate the new information as well as address topics that hadn't been included in the original plan, like climate change. The update was released to the public with an unveiling of a new website (plan.critfc.org) and a print version to ensure the widest possible exposure of this important plan.



Tribal River Housing

The US Army Corps of Engineers published the results of a fact-finding study that concluded there remains a federal obligation to replace tribal homes that were destroyed as a result of the dams and reservoirs. Later in the year, CRITFC lead a tribal housing tour along Zone 6 for several Congressional offices, resulting in increased interest to address the tribal housing crisis. Tribal housing needs along the Columbia River received considerable national exposure with a significant Columbia River tribal housing story by the Associated Press, which appeared in over 100 news outlets worldwide in November.



River Safety

A concerted effort by the CRITFC Enforcement team to promote river and boating safety continues to pay off. Officers rarely spot tribal fishing boats that don't have floatation devices and this year marks the third consecutive year without a single boating-related fatality in Zone 6. To help prevent future accidents or to assist when tragedies occur, CRITFC Enforcement acquired a new Mobile Command Center this year. The trailer can be set up anywhere along the river to provide a centralized location for communications and services for search and rescue efforts or other law enforcement activities.



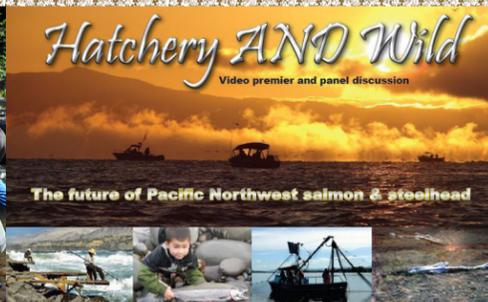
Promoting Tribal Values and Priorities in Regional Decisions

Significantly influenced a much better outcome for an updated Northwest Power and Conservation Council 2014 Fish & Wildlife Program for the use of hatchery fish for supplementation, water quality and restoring fish passage to historical locations into Canada. Also contributed to significant press in the NW regarding proposed NPCC's language on hatchery fish, which raised the awareness of the tribal philosophy for supplementation programs that result in abundance.



Salmon Camp

The fourth CRITFC Salmon Camp was held in July. This year, the Yakama Nation hosted the camp at Camp Chaparral. Twenty campers (five from each member tribe) took part in culturally relevant, hands-on salmon- and natural resources-related activities that combined Western science with traditional ecological knowledge.



Fishing Community Outreach

CRITFC co-produced the film "Hatchery AND Wild" with Northwest Steelheaders and a host of other sports fishing groups. The film featured how hatcheries have helped rebuild naturally-reproducing salmon populations throughout the Columbia River Basin. It resulted in wide support for the tribal hatchery philosophy among the non-Indian sport and commercial fishing constituency, something we have not seen before.



Improving and Expanding Our Understanding of Salmon and Ecosystems

CRITFC's largest department is the Fishery Science Department. The staff of fish biologists, hydrologists, meteorologists, biometricians, statisticians, and other technical workers are constantly building on science's understanding of salmon and ecosystems. This year, CRITFC scientists published 9 articles in scientific journals and gave 37 scientific presentations of their research.



Avian Predation on Salmon

CRITFC conducted a tour of the Columbia River estuary for tribal leaders, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to see the Caspian tern and cormorant colonies that are preying on millions of salmon smolts annually. The tour gave tribal leaders the opportunity to share their concerns and goals regarding this issue with the agencies. Later in the year, the Corps issued an Environmental Impact Statement on avian predation that supported the tribal preferred option.



Climate Change

A major concern to the CRITFC member tribes is the effects of climate change on the region's water and fish. The BIA provided funds this year through the Rights Protection Implementation Account to specifically study this issue to help the tribes anticipate how this threat will impact traditional, treaty-protected foods and resources.



Tribal Workforce Development

CRITFC is committed to utilizing and developing tribal technical expertise. One-third of CRITFC's 102 full-time employees are members of the four member tribes and overall forty percent of the CRITFC workforce is American Indian. To help develop future tribal expertise and experience, CRITFC raised funding for a tribal workforce development project that works with tribal education and employment programs and higher education institutions throughout the Pacific Northwest.