

The Dipnetter

August 2016

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

Yakama Commissioner Patrick Luke New CRITFC Chair

by Sara Thompson, CRITFC Public Information Officer

Yakama leader Patrick Luke was selected by leaders from the Warm Springs, Yakama, Nez Perce, and Umatilla tribes to lead CRITFC as its 2016-2017 Chair. Patrick is a member of the Yakama Nation Tribal Council. He is the secretary of the Fish and Wildlife Committee, chairman of Veterans Committee, and member of the Timber/Grazing Overall Economic Development Committee and the Radioactive/Hazardous Committee.

Mr. Luke is a strong advocate for treaty fishing rights, salmon, and lamprey. He brings with him a rich combination of real-life experience and knowledge of tribal treaty rights, fishery and biological understanding, and traditional wisdom. He grew up around the natural resources the tribes work tirelessly to protect, restore, and enhance. He has fished, hunted, and gathered traditional foods throughout the Columbia River basin his whole life. During his childhood, his family fished for salmon and steelhead from scaffolds and boat set nets on the Columbia River. They also gaffed for salmon and harvested lamprey in many Columbia River tributaries.

Much of Patrick's life has revolved around treaty-reserved fishing, hunting, and gathering throughout the Yakama Nation's usual and accustomed areas. He and his family would travel throughout the Columbia and Willamette river basins to gather their subsistence foods. They would travel to Gresham to collect berries during the early summers, go swimming at Dodge Park after harvesting lamprey at the Sandy River and Willamette Falls. During the winter, they would gaff suckers and white fish or net smelt in the Sandy and Cowlitz rivers. From spring through fall, they spent much of their time on the Columbia River fishing for chinook salmon. Mr. Luke is the great-grandson of Henry Charlie, one of the initial Celilo Fish Committee members. Patrick grew up attending formal and informal fishery meetings at the Celilo Longhouse, at boat launches, and at in-lieu sites where tribal leaders such as Wilfred Yallup, Victor George, Levi George, Mary Settler, Louie Cloud, Andrew Jackson, and Lawrence Goudy would meet to discuss tribal fisheries



issues along the Columbia River prior to the creation of CRITFC.

Mr. Luke's experience and education has taken him around the world. After high school, Luke enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Upon completion of his service, he moved to Alaska, living his dream of commercial fishing in Alaska, crabbing and fishing for salmon for over a decade. In 2000, Mr. Luke took advantage of the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation Chapter 31 Disabled Veterans Program. Through the program, he enrolled at Blue Mountain Community College and graduated with an Associates of Science Degree and then transferred to Oregon State University Fisheries and Wildlife Program. After graduating from OSU in 2007, Mr. Luke returned to the Yakama Reservation and began working at the Klickitat Salmon Hatchery. He helped develop the first ever Pacific Lamprey Restoration Project Manager position for the Yakama Nation Fisheries Program. He was



elected to the Yakama Nation Tribal Council in 2014.

“My vision for the future of Columbia River fisheries is to work towards the restoration of salmon, steelhead, lamprey, suckers, and sturgeon using a well-rounded approach,” said Luke. “If the region is going to return these populations to their historical numbers, we need to diversify our restoration efforts and ask ourselves questions like ‘What does a complete lamprey restoration program look like in the Columbia River Basin?’ or ‘How can we work with the region to modernize the Columbia River Treaty, improve water quality and flow in our rivers and streams and restore habitat?’ These questions must be higher on the region’s priority list because ignoring them only hurts our overall fisheries populations, especially survivorship.”

Luke assumes the position from Jeremy Red Star Wolf (Umatilla) who took over from Kat Brigham in January. The leadership of the Umatilla Tribe over the past year has guided the CRITFC through a number of changes. The tribes have waded into key battles against reckless coal and oil transportation projects, secured important advancements of housing for tribal members living along the Columbia River, and saw a record number of fall chinook return to the Columbia River.

“I would like to thank the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission membership and staff for their vast support in my short term as Commission Chair. Reigniting old friendships and gaining new ones has been a pleasure. Watching and hearing old and new knowledge being shared between our four tribes and CRITFC staff and then with local people and agencies all the way to Washington D.C. has been inspirational. The importance

of our treaty-reserved rights and our resources that cannot speak for themselves is clearly evident in the passionate deliberations and contributions I have witnessed during my tenure. From the CRITFC staff to the Commissioners to individual fishermen, they all made my role much easier than I expected,” said Jeremy Red Star Wolf “Xitsew-Ilp-Ilp,” retiring chair.

“Still, there are great duties and challenges ahead: the Columbia River Treaty, *U.S. v Oregon*, Pacific Salmon Treaty, the Accords, seasonal harvest goals, big oil, railroad safety, and climate change to highlight a few. All serve as affronts to that which we protect and enhance. I am confident in the abilities of our leadership to further our common goals and to see that the next seven generations has a chance—a chance to provide their own leadership to retaining tribal treaty rights and further protecting and enhancing the First Foods. The CRITFC leadership baton continues its circle through the four treaty tribes to the Yakama Nation. I have full confidence in our next chairman, Patrick Luke, to guide us in retaining and enhancing all that we hold dear. I have known Patrick since I was a young boy and have looked up to him as a participant and protector of that which we fight to retain. I look forward to our future, confident in the power of our passion and capabilities,” he added.

The other CRITFC officers elected were Dan Kane (Nez Perce), vice-chair; Ryan Smith (Warm Springs), secretary; and Jeremy Red Star Wolf (Umatilla), treasurer. The election of CRITFC officers takes place every June with the seats rotated among the four member tribes. 🏹

Spring Fishery Review and Summer Fishery Update

by Stuart Ellis, CRITFC Harvest Specialist

The upper Columbia summer chinook run came in very near forecast with about 91,000 summer chinook entering the Columbia River, making it the second largest run since Bonneville Dam was built. Nearly 342,000 sockeye returned to the Columbia—three times the pre-season forecast. The Snake River sockeye run continues to struggle though, with fewer than 800 sockeye passing Lower Granite Dam. Tribal fisheries had good fishing opportunity, with seven weekly commercial gillnet fishing periods totalling 25½ days of fishing time. The subsistence and commercial platform and hook and line fishery was open for the entire season. Gillnet fishing effort was lower than in 2015, which along with somewhat lower than average catches per net, resulted

in the total catch being less than expected. Despite this, prices were good. The total catch was around 20,000 chinook and 17,000 sockeye. This is a marked improvement from 1996 when the tribal summer season fishery harvested only 374 chinook and 1,414 sockeye.

Fall season fisheries began August 1. The platform and hook and line subsistence and commercial fishery continues from the summer season. The tribes have not finalized fall season commercial gillnet fisheries plans, but the forecasts are for strong returns of fall chinook. Even with a modest forecast of B steelhead, we should be able to structure fall fisheries similar to how they have been in the past few years. Expect an announcement about fall gillnet fisheries to be distributed on August 9. 🏹



Willamette Falls Lamprey Research

by Laurie Porter, CRITFC Lamprey Biologist

Pacific lamprey are superheroes in the fish world. They are ancient survivors, existing for over 450 million years and through several mass extinctions. Once highly abundant in the Columbia and Snake river basins, they have experienced threats to their survival throughout their historical range. Pacific lamprey are culturally significant and hold a place of high value to the tribes in the region. In an effort to reestablish lamprey in the upper reaches of their ceded areas, several tribes began translocation programs where adults are collected at the lower mainstem dams (Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day), overwintered in a hatchery, and then released upstream the following spring prior to projected spawning periods. Understanding migration timing and sex ratio is important in determining the best time to collect fish and further understand what is the optimal sex ratio of fish used in translocation efforts.

In order to get a better understanding of sex ratio and maturation status of adult, migrating phase Pacific lamprey, CRITFC conducted a preliminary study in July involving fish harvested at Willamette Falls. Previous studies there found that sex ratio and maturation status varies with migration timing; with mature spawning phase fish migrating early in the season (after having already overwintered elsewhere), followed by immature fish that consist of recent migrants from

the ocean who will overwinter in freshwater prior to spawning the following spring. Our sampling will add to the existing body of knowledge and address uncertainties. External characteristics used to identify the sex of the fish visually only appear as they prepare to spawn. Therefore, the only way to definitively identify sex during a portion of the run is to view the internal anatomy. To do this, the fish has to be opened, which kills it. Rather than kill them solely for study, CRITFC instead sampled and collected biological data on fish that were being harvested for ceremonial and subsistence purposes already. Tissue samples from every fish were also taken for future genetic analysis. Upon completion of the sampling and data collection, the fish were dressed and distributed among the CRITFC member tribes.

Collecting lamprey requires a skill for scrambling over slick rocks and wading in or swimming through cool, fast moving water. Lamprey attach themselves firmly to the rocks, hiding in crevasses between rocks and pools under waterfalls. They can be difficult to see underwater, and are wily, wiggly, and slick. If they catch a scent of humans they will detach from the rocks and quickly swim away. Once alerted, the chance of capturing them is slim, and generally requires moving to a new location. These fish are gentle, intelligent, and still retain many secrets about their evolution and survival. 🦉



CRITFC biologist Ryan Branstetter (UMATILLA) and Tyler Beals (Yakama Nation Pacific Lamprey Program fish biologist) at the lamprey collection site just below Willamette Falls.

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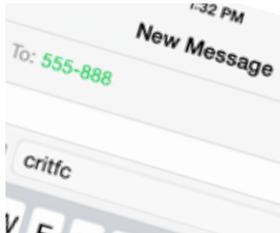
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Walking On

by Paul Lumley, CRITFC Executive Director

I, along with the entire Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission staff, was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Herbert Jackson on June 19. Jackson was a sitting commissioner who had represented the Nez Perce Tribe at the CRITFC table since 2000.

Herb, normally a very compassionate and gentle man, would become impassioned when speaking on behalf of salmon and especially lamprey. He was a strong advocate for improving the river system to help fish survive both downstream and upstream migration through the Columbia and Snake river dams.

Mr. Jackson was a very well respected and beloved part of CRITFC and will be greatly missed. His work and dedication was recognized in 2013 when he was named the CRITFC Commissioner of the Year.

On behalf of all the CRITFC family, I offer our deepest condolences to the family and friends of this outstanding elder. We join the Nez Perce people in mourning the passing of this great man. ✚

