

The Dipnetter

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



January 2012

2011 YEAR IN REVIEW

BY CRITFC CHAIRMAN GERALD LEWIS



Gerald Lewis
Yakama

This last year has been filled with a number of accomplishments. Some of them are the fulfillment of work started by tribal leaders 10, 20, 30 or more years ago. I've made a short list of some of these major accomplishments that will be benefitting tribes, fishers, and the fish as we move into the future.

In-lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Sites

The fishing access sites had a big year in 2011. A new CRITFC committee was formed to focus on the sites and site issues. A CRITFC department was created to provide the ongoing maintenance of the sites. The Fishing Site Maintenance Department is being managed by Micheal Broncheau. This year, the Wyeth site was opened and construction for the Dallesport site was finished. When the Dallesport site reopens in 2012, all 31 of the planned sites will be completed.

Enforcement

CRITFC Enforcement had an eventful year. It received commissions from all four member tribes, which allows them to enforce tribal laws and regulations. They also received BIA law enforcement commissions, allowing them to enforce federal laws on the in-lieu and treaty fishing access sites. Additionally, a new BIA 638 contract provided funding for two new officers to handle the increased demands necessary for this work. Finally, a court ruling that challenged tribal enforcement authority was fixed with the passage of Oregon Senate Bill 412.

Oregon Water Quality Standards

This year, after intense education and pressure from the tribes, the State of Oregon increased its water quality standards to reflect the prominent role fish plays in the tribal diet. The study used as a basis for this change was conducted by CRITFC almost 15 years ago. Prior to this change, Oregon based its water quality standard on people eating only an ounce or two of fish a day. People eating more than this, a large number being tribal members, were potentially exposed to higher amounts of contaminants. The increase standard is now the strictest in the nation and protects all Oregonians, even those who eat salmon every day.



The new Wyeth Treaty Fishing Access Site.

2011 Year in Review (cont.)

Tribal FishCo

After a slow start, Tribal FishCo was formally created by the four member tribes to operate the White Salmon Fish Processing Plant. This marks the first time the four tribes have gone into business together and it offers great potential for the future. The processing plant was formally transferred to the tribes this summer and it conducted a test run during the fall fishing season, producing flake ice in the facility's high-capacity ice machine. CRITFC also provided grant



Through a special grant, Tribal FishCo provided free ice to fishers.

funds to Tribal FishCo for the production and delivery of ice to tribal fishers.

Second Annual Fishers Expo

The 2011 Fishers Expo was a huge success and we'll be hard pressed to top it. In light of the 2010 losses of tribal fishers, we made safety the focus this year. We distributed almost 40 self-inflating personal flotation devices, held several classes on water safety and cold-water survival, and had the US Coast Guard conduct a helicopter water rescue demonstration. This year there were several boating mishaps, but thankfully no deaths on the river. Hopefully the information made available at the Expo, the Dipnetter, and fishers meetings has played some role, however the credit for lives saved goes to the fishers who have made safety a part of their fishing routine. In addition to this, mayors from Hood River, The Dalles, Mosier, and White Salmon all attended the event, reflecting the new relationships and friendships the tribes and tribal fishing community has made with the Gorge communities. The 2012 Fishers Expo is currently being planned; watch for details in upcoming issues of the Dipnetter.

At the Expo, the U.S. Coast Guard demonstrated an in-river helicopter rescue in the Columbia River. This proved quite popular and attracted quite a bit of attention from the surrounding community.



Condit Dam Breaching

After blocking fish for nearly 100 years, Condit Dam on the White Salmon River was breached on October 26. This came after years of effort by the tribes and CRITFC, particularly the Yakama Nation. With the dam removed, salmon, steelhead, and lamprey will once more have access to over 30 miles of upstream spawning habitat. Now in the upcoming years, we will all be able to witness the healing of the river and the fish that return there.



The freed White Salmon River rushes out of the breached Condit Dam after seven hundred pounds of dynamite opened a hole near the dam's base. The reservoir drained in less than two hours.

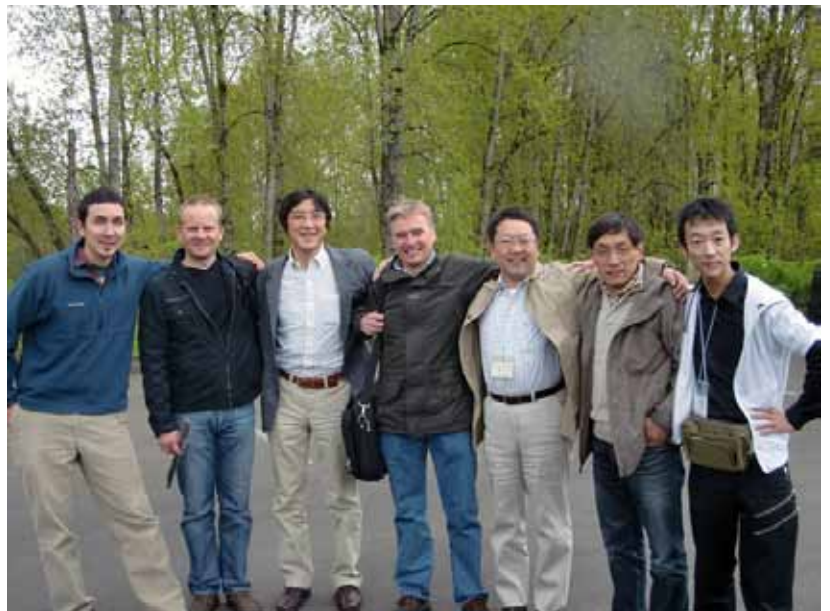
Lamprey

Lamprey are cause for the greatest concern right now. Their steep decline in recent years raises the unimaginable possibility of seeing them disappear in some river systems in our lifetime. To help prevent this, CRITFC held an international conference on lamprey propagation this year. Attendees from Finland and Japan presented information on how fisheries agencies in those countries are having success with creating lamprey hatcheries. Everyday, CRITFC works to improve lamprey passage conditions at the dams and address other passage barriers and habitat needs. Looking forward, CRITFC is finalizing the Tribal Lamprey Restoration Plan and will be hosting the third Lamprey Summit early next year.

Fish Runs

This year's fish runs are probably the best news of 2011. Both the mainstem and tributary fisheries were impressive; everyone shares in the benefits of having more fish in the rivers as a result. The tribes have made new friends where enemies once thrived. We've also increased salmon survival by getting improvements made at the dams and implementing restoration projects throughout the Columbia Basin through the Fish Accords and other sources. We worked within the *US v. Oregon* Management Agreement to maximize the tribal harvest, and thanks to market conditions and CRITFC's Salmon Marketing program, we saw good prices for all these fish. We still have a long way to go to reach the 5 million salmon goal set in *Wy-kan-ush-mi Wa-kish-wit*, the tribes' restoration plan, but we're on our way.

Here's to a new year filled with even more successes for the tribes, the river, and the salmon and other fish that live in them. 🐟



The Finnish and Japanese lamprey specialists who attended CRITFC's lamprey conference.



FISHING SITE CLOSURES

The in-depth cleaning and maintenance plan is currently underway. The upcoming site closures are listed below. Note: dates are approximate. For the latest information, check the site postings or sign up for the CRITFC text messaging service to be alerted one week in advance of each closure.

Stanley Rock (Dec 19-Jan 6, 2011)*

North Bonneville (Jan 9-30, 2012)*

CRITFC Text Messaging Service

CRITFC is testing a group text messaging service to quickly distribute important news to fishers and other interested individuals. Using this system, news such as fishery openings and closings, extreme river or weather conditions, and other timely items will be texted to subscribers to the service. The text service is free, however text messaging charges from your phone provider may be incurred if you are on a limited message plan. The typical number of text messages subscribers will receive is most likely five to ten per month. The system is completely automated. Individuals subscribe and unsubscribe themselves via text message. If you would like to begin receiving these messages, text **'CRITFC'** to **55958**. 📱

Tribal Fishers & Oregon State Food Safety Regulations

BY IAN STROMQUIST, REHS HOOD RIVER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Hood River County Health Department works hard to ensure that food sold in our County is safe. We enforce several State regulations that deal with the commercial sale of food such as fish. Many tribal fishers supply fish to restaurants and individuals in our community via temporary booths commonly found in both Hood River and Cascade Locks.

Mishandled and processed fish may pose a serious health threat to the public. Incorrectly canned salmon and poorly handled vacuum sealed smoked salmon may harbor botulism listeria bacteria leading to serious illness, paralysis, and even death to those that consume them. In addition, incidents of food-poisoning illness may lead to extensive litigation and financial liability for the fish vendor.

By ensuring that your operation is in full compliance with applicable local or tribal regulations, you help shield yourselves from liability in the unfortunate event that you become the target of a lawsuit. It is risky to operate outside the boundaries of compliance because it invites both financial liability and punitive damages as well as risks the health of your customers and community.

Article by: Ian Stromquist, REHS, 541-387-7130, Hood River County Health Department website: <http://www.co.hood-river.or.us/> 📱

Abandoned Property

The US Army Corps of Engineers has identified and tagged the property below for potential disposal. If these items are not removed, they will eventually be disposed of by the Corps of Engineers as abandoned property. If you are the owner of any of the properties or know who is, please call The Dalles Lock and Dam Natural Resource Office at (541) 506.7816

Location: The Dalles North Shore Ramp

Yellow Bayliner boat
Vessel ID: 423 MM (Oregon)

Brown and white boat with a blue trailer
Vessel ID: none

Tan and white boat with galvanized trailer
Vessel ID: none

BOATING SAFETY TIPS

A Quality Fishery: Where personal safety actions are making a difference

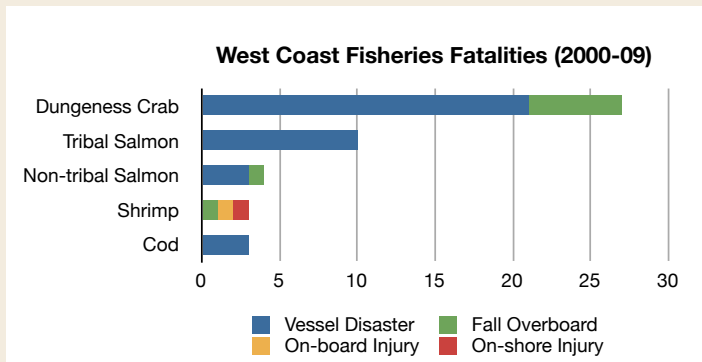
BY SALMON MARKETING COORDINATOR LES BROWN

Our thanks go out to all the fishers for making this year a safe one. From the cold stormy weather in the spring making the river exceptionally high, to the many east winds that created potential danger every time you went out to set or check your nets, good decisions were made that made a difference and saved lives. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety, fishing was the most dangerous occupation in the US. Eighty-four people lost their lives fishing on the West Coast during 2000-2009. The Columbia River tribal fishery, which lost 10 fishers during that period was the second highest only behind crab fishers, which lost 27. The tribal fishery also had the highest fatalities among all West Coast salmon fisheries.

To help reduce these numbers, many of you have responded by attending CRITFC-sponsored cold water survival and boat safety workshops and are wearing life vests while in the boat. CRITFE reported more life vests being worn overall. A number of boats went down this year and fishers wearing life vests was an important factor in



Coast Guard safety trainer demonstrating several life jacket options. Pictured left to right: Mike Broncheau, CRITFC Fishing Site Maintenance manager wearing a life preserver jacket; Mike Rudolph, Coast Guard; Davis Washines, CRITFE Enforcement manager; Ron Suppah, Warm Springs Tribal Council.



saving lives in these events. Another important factor is the decision-making process fishers employ when deciding whether or not to check nets during bad weather and being careful not to overload boats. All these add up to reduce the risk of death or injury and adding a higher margin of safety to everyone involved.

There will always be hazards associated with fishing; what you are doing is reducing those hazards. For more information please call Les Brown at 503-799-8640.

CRITFC Officers and Commissioners

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Larry Greene Jr · Dan Kane
Joanna Marek · McCoy Oatman
Allen Slickpoo Jr · Marie Arthur
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James Holt · Herb Jackson
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WARM SPRINGS



Bruce Jim, CRITFC treasurer
Leslie Bill · Rafael Queahpama
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Donnie Winishut, Sr
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Yakama • Warm Springs
Umatilla • Nez Perce



Food Safety

Over the last several years, the word has spread through out seafood markets that Columbia River tribal fishers are taking good care of their fish. The investment in training and time to practice good sanitation standards and carefully ice and handle fish is being noticed and valued. In addition, Over 300 fishers have taken HACCP training classes, further improving the quality and food safety of the tribal harvest. More of you are practicing good sanitation practices and icing your catch to preserve quality. Icing your fish is paying off in a good way by encouraging more customers to buy tribal-caught fish at higher prices.

We are all interested in promoting food safety because consumers need to be assured that tribal-caught salmon are a safe and trusted food source. Educating each other on the importance of food safety, taking and following HACCP training processes, and obtaining food handler cards are good ways of improving the food safety and

CRITFC Executive Director's Message

maintaining good reputation of our fish.

Of course, the classes aren't useful if what is taught isn't put into action. Recently, there was an incident where a fisher was found selling smoked and canned salmon that had not gone through a HACCP-approved facility or handled using HACCP procedures. Selling these products creates risks not only to both the health of customers, but also the reputation of the entire tribal fishery. A Hood River County Health Department specialist observed the sales and purchase of salmon products not meeting HACCP requirements. He then provided an article for this month's Dipnetter to provide information to fishers selling directly to the public at roadside stands.

As we move into a new year we commend you for all the wonderful progress that have has been made in providing a safe, iced, wholesome resource to customers throughout the country.



Paul Lumley
YAKAMA



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2011 Year in
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