

COLVILLE TRIBES FISH & WILDLIFE NEWS



CJH staff collecting male and female salmon

CHIEF JOSEPH HATCHERY UPDATE

Chief Joseph Hatchery (CJH) staff completed all spawning activities for 2013, and they are currently working on winterization projects. The fish ladder is currently shut down. This ladder is used to attract adult Chinook salmon that have returned after several years in the ocean. The hatchery had a total of 730 natural-origin summer Chinook enter the trap, all of which were returned to the river, and a total of 1,472 adult hatchery summer Chinook, and 526 jack summer Chinook entered the ladder - all were retained for tribal distribution. "We met all of our production goals for the year," said Pat Phillips, CJH manager. The fisheries technicians carefully went through each individual tray and picked out mortality (eggs that didn't successfully spawn) and counted all fish-eyed eggs. The first spring Chinook eggs are in the process of hatching! There are approximately 566,000 spring Chinook eggs and 1.4 million summer Chinook eggs in incubation. The hatchery staff will see

fingerlings (a young fish that has developed to about the size of a finger) by mid-February. The goals of the hatchery are to increase the abundance and diversity of natural spawning Chinook salmon in the Okanogan and Columbia Rivers, provide hatchery fish for tribal ceremonies and subsistence needs, and increase recreational fishing opportunities. The hatchery employs up to 11 people and will be fully ramped up by 2015.



Fisheries staff separate male and female salmon prior to spawning activities

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE PROJECT PARTNERS



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Resident Fishery staff (left to right Mike Fall, Brian Keleher, Bernie Fall, Montana Pakootas, Joe Carden and Jill Phillips) sorting lahontan cutthroat trout adults, Omak Lake

TRIBAL HATCHERY STOCKS LAKES, GREAT WINTER FISHING SEASON AHEAD

Fisheries staff from the Colville Tribal Resident Fish Hatchery did a great job this year stocking over 380,000 trout into our local reservation lakes and streams. The hatchery is located on the northern bank of the Columbia River just downstream from Bridgeport, Wash., and raises lahontan cutthroat, eastern brook and triploid rainbow trout.

This year, staff released approximately 146,800 trout in North and South Twin Lakes and just over 70,000 rainbow trout (triploids averaging one to two plus pounds) were released into Rufus Woods. Buffalo Lake was planted with almost 23,000 triploid rainbow trout and Omak Lake was planted with over 108,000 lahontan cutthroat trout. The Resident Fish Program purchases approximately 2,000 to 3,000 triploid rainbow trout from the local aquaculture facility with an average weight of two pounds or more for release into Rufus Woods. This supplementation effort augments the smaller sizes of trout released by the Tribes Net

Pen Program with larger trout raised by the aquaculture facility.

"There will be some phenomenal ice fishing opportunities this season at Owhi, Buffalo, Summit and Twin Lakes," said Jill Phillips, hatchery manager. "The hatchery out-planted some large three-pound triploid rainbow trout recently in Buffalo Lake, so anglers should use their augers to cut a larger hole in the ice this year." She said, "Fishing for naturally reproducing kokanee in Buffalo could also be good, and don't forget about North and South Twin, this is the time of year to target the brook trout."

Colville tribal members fishing on the reservation must possess a Colville tribal identification card which is a legal permit to fish. All non-members who are fishing on select Interior Waters of the reservation must have a valid Colville Indian Reservation fishing permit in their possession. Non-members who will be fishing on Buffalo, Summit and Twin Lakes during the Winter Fishing Season

(from January 1 to March 15) must also have a winter fishing permit in addition to a valid 1-day, 3-day, 7-day or seasonal Colville Indian fishing permit. For a listing of applicable fees and senior discounted rates, anglers can go on-line to www.colvilletribes.com and scroll from Services and Departments to Fish and Wildlife.



Brian Keleher, Colville Fisheries Biologist releases 2+lb triploid rainbow trout from the Tribes Net Pen into Lake Rufus Woods

COLVILLE TRIBES' TALLY THIS YEAR'S OKANOGAN RIVER SUMMER/FALL CHINOOK



The Colville Tribes' Fish & Wildlife (CTFW) staff completed this year's count of Okanogan River Chinook salmon that have spawned. Biologists and fish technicians spend six to eight weeks each year conducting aerial and on-the-water surveys to document where, and how many fish are spawning in the Okanogan River.

"This year's run appears to be a strong return, at or slightly above recent averages," said Keith Wolf, project leader for the Chief Joseph Hatchery Science Program. "It will take our staff several months to compile and analyze all the data we collected before we draw final conclusions." Each spring, the Science Program hosts an annual three-day workshop to review all Anadromous Fish Division activities with a large group of scientists, and the public. Spawning is one topic covered at the workshop.

The monitoring of adult fish returns provides managers with key data on fish population status and trends. This information is broadly used for planning artificial production, habitat restoration and

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NEW FISH AND WILDLIFE STAFF



Venus St. Martin

VENUS ST. MARTIN Let's welcome Venus St. Martin to the Fish and Wildlife team. She is the new Office Assistant to the Program Director stationed in Nespelem. She will serve as the main receptionist for the department. Venus will handle routine information requests, route calls and greet a wide variety of visitors. She will provide backup as needed to support other administrative needs. Venus came to us from Lapwai, Idaho, where she worked for the Nez Perce Tribe as an Administrative Specialist for the Tribal Executive Committee and as an Office Assistant for the Wildlife Program. She is a mother of four and has two children attending Boise State University, one attending Lewis-Clark State College and one in high school. She enjoys golfing, karaoke, and hanging out with her dad.

BRIDGET BOYD was recently hired as the Chief Joseph Hatchery Staff Assistant. In her new position, she will be working on subcontracts, accounting and finance. She will serve as the hatchery's primary point of contact with the public and

distribute information and materials. Her job also involves scheduling hatchery tours and outreach activities. Bridget works with the public and provides information such as brochures, newsletters, hunting and fishing regulations, and issues tags and permits to members and non-tribal members. She serves as principal administrative assistant to the hatchery manager and performs a wide-range of administrative activities for meeting the goals and objectives of the hatchery.



Bridget Boyd, Staff Assistant CJH

other projects. "These data are shared with state and federal Fish and Wildlife Programs and with Douglas, Chelan, and Grant County Public Utility Districts and their Natural Resource Programs. We communicate with partners throughout the region as part of multiple agreements, mitigation, recovery and conservation programs," said Randy Friedlander, CTFW interim director. "We work with our management partners and area stakeholders to provide information on how fish are doing and work cooperatively with them to manage fishing seasons for tribal members and the public," he continued.

Kirk Truscott, CTFW Anadromous Program manager explained, "Our pro-

fessional staff conducts redd and carcass surveys in the Okanogan each year. They count redds (a spawning nest made by a fish) and examine carcasses (the expired parents of the next-generation) for a number of biological indicators such as pre-spawning mortality, spatial distribution, abundance, age-at-return and many other key data points." Truscott said, "These are intensive efforts aimed at assessing the effectiveness of our hatchery, harvest, hydro and habitat programs. The combined results from these efforts safeguard the health of fish runs by facilitating good management decisions based on strong science."

Carcasses represent the end of life for adult male and female salmon. This is the natural life

cycle for Pacific Salmon. The decomposition of these fish provides essential nutrients that support the health and vitality of near-shore vegetation, balance in water quality, food resources for all kinds of Okanogan basin wildlife, including juvenile offspring from these parents as they emerge from the gravel in early winter and spring each year. CTFW staff takes fish measurements and biological samples from fish that have died. Fisheries staff removes fish heads to retrieve coded wire tags and they remove their tails so they are not resampled. The carcasses are returned to the river as part of the natural cycle and in keeping with tribal cultural values and traditions.

COLVILLE TRIBAL FISHERIES RESEARCH WHITE STURGEON IN THE COLUMBIA

Long before the construction of the hydro-electric system, white sturgeon was an important fish species to Native American Tribes of the Columbia River Basin. White sturgeon are the largest and longest living freshwater fish in North America. They can weigh over 1,500 pounds, reach 20 feet in length, and live for more than 100 years. Populations of white sturgeon still exist throughout the Columbia River system; however, their numbers are low as a result of limited juvenile recruitment (few younger fish to replace the old fish). According to the uppercolumbiasturgeon.org website, there is an estimated 3,000 white sturgeon that exist today from the Hugh Keenleyside Dam, BC to Grand Coulee Dam, Wash.

The Accords agreement signed in 2008 between the Colville Confederated Tribe (CCT) and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) designated a specific project to help monitor and evaluate white sturgeon in Lake Roosevelt. The project was designed to complement the White Sturgeon Program managed by the Spokane Tribe. The CCT's project will increase funding levels towards sturgeon recovery. Colville Tribal Fisheries biologists will do more research on factors affecting recruitment in the Upper Columbia River from Grand Coulee Dam to Keenleyside Dam. The \$3.26 million project, funded by BPA, began in late 2011.

"We are focusing our investigations on hydro system operations that have reduced

the ability for these fish to survive past early life stages and reach suitable rearing habitat," said Jason McLellan, Resident Fisheries biologist for the Colville Tribe. "We will also look at the effects of contaminant exposure. The Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Group, which is a consortium of over 25 partners, has looked at multiple causes suspected for sturgeon decline such as water quality, habitat degradation, predation, over-fishing and changes in water flow."

In addition to the Lake Roosevelt Sturgeon Project, the Colville Tribes' Resident Fisheries (CTRF) staff participate in the Douglas Public Utility District (PUD) -Wells Pool, Chelan PUD (Rocky Reach) and Grant PUD (Wanapum/Priest Rapids) Settlement, and Fish Forums. These forums help to implement various white sturgeon management plans required under the PUD's respective Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licenses.

CTRF staff has just completed the second year of a three-year contract with Grant County PUD to conduct monitoring and evaluation components of their White Sturgeon Management Plan. "Additionally, we have completed the first year of a four year contract with Douglas County PUD to capture white sturgeon larvae produced in the wild for stocking into Wells Reservoir as required under their FERC license," said McLellan.

