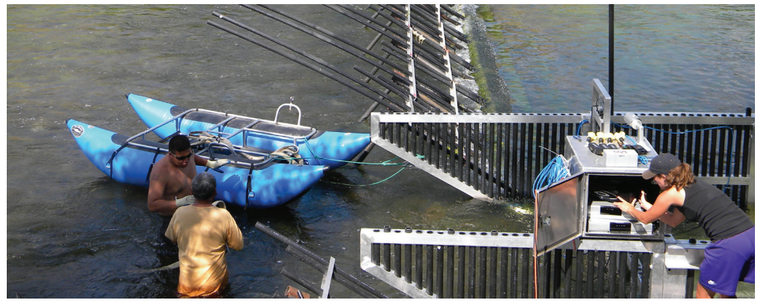
COLVILLE TRIBES FISH & WILDLIFE NEWS



Abe Best, Fisheries Technician & Andrea Pearl, Fish Biologist

EMPLOYEES ON THE WEIR PROJECT

Andrea Pearl started her position last October as a fish biologist for the Colville Tribes' Fish and Wildlife (CTFW) Dept. Andrea was previously employed at the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife as a fish hatchery specialist. She graduated from Western Washington University with a Bachelor of Science degree. In her new position with the tribe, she will be collecting field data on anadromous fish and habitat attributes in the upper Columbia, including the Okanogan and Similkameen Rivers. She will also assist the CJH program and selective harvest crew on certain projects. "Currently I'm working on-site at the fish weir that we've installed in the Okanogan River and we are trying to collect as much data as we can at this point. I've assisted staff with panel installation, assembly, and deployment as well as water quality monitoring. It's been more maintenance then we expected but we will see how sockeye and steelhead behaviors are affected."

Abe Best began his position last January as a fisheries technician for the CTFW Dept. In his position he collects data and assists with harvest, selective and live capture staff as an alternate on the purse seine boat. He also works with hatchery staff on the weir project and will be collecting broodstock in the near future. As a fisheries technician, Abe works with many types of gears including beach seines, tangle nets and on the temporary weir. "I've worked on the panels and the heads assisting with the installation of the weir," said Abe. "This project has given me an opportunity to learn more about another way to fish and it will make collecting broodstock much easier. I'm lucky to do a job like this and help bring something traditional back."

"I've been an employee at the CTFW Dept. since October 2009 and I enjoy the work," said Teddy Cohen, fisheries technician. "I'm working on our weir project and I helped assembled the pickets, tripods, and trap and assisted with deployment. There was some difficulty when placing the tripod stands in the river because of the currents, the legs are heavy and it wasn't easy at times with the river so high. It's been a great project to work on so far and I like working for Fish and Wildlife as I get to be outside a lot and work on all types of projects," he said. Teddy's work also involves juvenile trapping, tagging, biological measurements and operating and maintaining field equipment.

Teddy Cohen, Fisheries Technician, & Keith

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE PROJECT PARTNERS

The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation 1872

Bonneville Power Administration

Northwest Power and Conservation Council

US Army Corps of Engineers

Chelan County P.U.D. Power

Grant County Public Utility District

Douglas County P.U.D.

For Additional Information Contact:

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
Joe Peone, Director of Fish and Wildlife
1 Colville Street PO Box 150
Nespelem, WA 99155
joe.peone@colvilletribes.com

Bonneville Power Administration
Linda Hermeston, Project Manager
905 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232
llhermeston@bpa.gov

Tetra Tech
John McGlenn, PE
1420 Fifth Avenue, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98101
john.mcglenn@tetratech.com

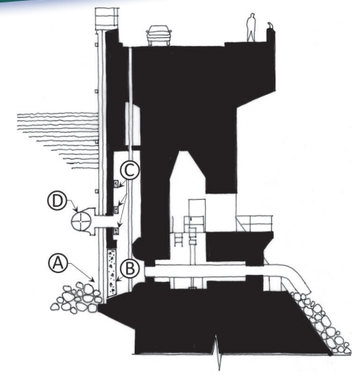
HATCHERY CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Construction at the hatchery has been focused on finishing the hatchery, office and storage buildings and completing the rearing ponds and site work. The reservoir water system preparation includes the submerged intake screen and the pipeline through the dam which will connect to the pipeline on the downstream face of the dam. Most of the site will be paved to meet operational needs. The hatchery facilities will be fenced but the office building will be accessible to visitors and will have a display that will be assembled after construction is completed.

On the east side of the office building, a rain garden, bioswales (landscape elements designed to remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water) with native and drought tolerant trees, shrubs, groundcover, perennials, herbs, and bulbs will provide water quality and aesthetic enhancements. A paved plaza and covered walking area on the west and south sides complete the office building.

At the west end of the site, three rearing ponds are under construction. These ponds are about 200 feet long and will rear and acclimate a portion of the fish for release at the hatchery site.

The reservoir, one of the last major components of the project, began in late September. Divers started working at the irrigation inlet in the upstream face of the dam at location A. They cleaned surfaces of the dam structure for planned modifications and cleared rubble from the 11' x 12' opening through an "outer wall" to the irrigation port. This port was designed to pass water through the dam for crop irrigation, but has never been used, so it is now available for fish culture at the hatchery.



SECTION THROUGH DAM

A two-foot thick concrete wall will be placed under water to block the 11'x12' opening noted above, location B. Then strengthening beams will be constructed on the "outer wall" noted above so a 34" hole can be drilled through the wall, location C. A self-cleaning, cylinder drum screen will be mounted at the 34" hole, location D, to supply up to 60 cubic feet per second of river water by gravity to the hatchery. This specialized construction work is scheduled to take approximately four months. River water will be piped through the dam to a pipeline that has been placed down the face of the dam as described in the last issues of this newsletter. At the base of the dam, this pipeline joins a buried pipeline which runs to the west, past the fish ladder and up the slope to the headbox next to the hatchery building. River water will be the primary water supply for the hatchery in the winter. When river water temperatures are cold, disease does not become an issue. However, when temperatures are above 50 degrees, hatchery operators will switch over to ground water. Project completion is planned for spring 2013.

Main office building

Spokane Tribe

Kalispel Tribe

A TRADITION OF SHARING

The Colville Confederated Tribes' (CCT) selective harvest crew has seen a much stronger fishing season than the previous year, harvesting approximately 20,000 salmon. Due to the success these fishermen have had, much of this salmon has been distributed to Colville tribal members and stored in the tribes' freezer for ceremonial and subsistence needs.

The CCT fishermen usually start harvesting salmon around 4:30 a.m. in the morning and fish from their purse seine (fishing boat) named Dream Catcher till late morning. This eight man crew uses a large seine net to catch the salmon live. The net has sinkers on one edge and floats on the other that hang vertically in the water, the ends are pulled together by two boats. Once the net is gathered, they have been able to capture up to 1,600 sockeye in a 15 to 20 minute set. The tribes' fishermen usually do four to six sets a day.

"Once we come in for the day, we load the fish in large totes with ice," said Mike Rayton, CCT selective harvest biologist. "Some of the salmon are taken to our fish processing building to be cleaned and packaged but most are distributed fresh. Salmon has been distributed several times in Nespelem, Omak, Keller and Inchelium districts. We have been busy this season and it's been a pretty good season so far."

Fishermen from the Coeur d'Alene, Kalispel, Kootenai, Wanapum, Shoshone-Bannock and Spokane Tribes were also eager to harvest salmon with the CCT fishermen.

Nate Eldred, a Spokane tribal member and local fishing guide came down to Mosquito Park, (which is a few miles outside of Brewster, Wash.) with a group of Spokane tribal youth. "I was asked to come down and teach the kids about salmon, such as the history and migration patterns and the importance of salmon as it relates to our native culture," he said. "We brought a group of youth workers from our Native Youth Center and we teach them new skills. They see what it's like to hold a steady job and they learn something while they are out of school."

"We try and get the youth involved in everything we do. Each time we come down, we bring a new group of kids with us and they learn how important this work is. We really appreciate the Colville's for doing this; our people love it when we bring salmon home."

– Del Brown, Fish Culturist
Spokane Tribe Fish Hatchery

A group from the Kalispel Tribe brought back approximately 1,100 sockeye to their reservation. Some of the catch was distributed to the members and the remaining fish were cleaned, vacuumed sealed and stored in the tribe's freezer. This salmon will be distributed to tribal elders and used for ceremonies throughout the year.

"This salmon harvest is very important to the Kalispel Tribe," said Joseph Maroney, director of the Kalispel Tribe's Fishery and Water Resource Department. "I would like to thank the Colville Tribes' and the fishing crew for this opportunity. It was a great experience for me, my staff and tribal members. He said, "We are trying to get salmon back into the diet of tribal members. This year, we had tribal members from our Culture Department involved in fishing as well as distribution. This was the second year we fished with the CCT fishermen. We are excited about this opportunity and being able to eat fish that are healthy and not full of mercury or dioxins."

"I have never fished like that before," said Zachery Wadsworth, fisheries tech for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe. "It was a good experience and I had a great time. We brought back about 3,000 pounds of salmon and as soon as we got home we distributed it. This was the first time we came down and fished with the Colville's and I sure enjoyed it. I believe folks from the Colville Tribe will come to our reservation this fall to pick up some buffalo meat," he said.

"We do our annual roundup in the middle of October," said Lance Tissidimit, buffalo chaser for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe. "We expect our buffalo herd to be about 300 or so this year. Once we get them all together, we will do our headcounts and vaccinate the young ones. We have been raising buffalo since the 60's and currently we have about 4,300 acres of pasture for them."

"The CCT is inspired to bring forward those ancient trading relationships with our brother and sister tribal nations," said John Sirois, chairman of the Colville Business Council. "We honor those gifts of salmon, bison, roots and berries by sharing and trading what we were given by the creator. We raise the health of all of our people through sharing these medicine gifts."

FISH WEIR WILL PROVIDE VALUABLE INSIGHT FOR FUTURE PROJECT

A temporary picket-style salmon weir has recently been constructed in the Okanogan River by Chief Joseph Hatchery (CJH) staff. The weir is located about one mile below Malott Bridge (approximately 15 miles upstream from the Okanogan River/Wells Reservoir confluence) near Brewster, Wash. The temporary weir took three weeks to construct and install in the river. Now that installation is complete, CJH staff will be able to evaluate how summer/fall Chinook salmon, sockeye salmon and steelhead will re-act to it. Results from the testing site will be used to design a more permanent weir in the near future.

The temporary picket-style weir, made of steel frames and PVC pipe, was installed across the channel of the Okanogan River. It allows water to flow through it but has narrow enough slots to form a swimming barrier to adult salmon, allowing them to meander down to the trap. The structure does not connect to the west bank of the river which allows small watercraft to get around the weir.

"This summer we will watch for any negative effects the structure may cause," said Keith Wolf, lead scientist/biologist for CJH. "We will be able to count fish, and get good estimates on the salmon returning to the Okanogan River. After closely monitoring the site for the next several weeks, we will see how salmon react to the weir and we'll make any necessary modifications we need to for the permanent structure."

The weir project ties directly to the CJH program and allows for adult management of annual Okanogan River summer/fall Chinook spawning escapement. A major activity of adult management requires the control and removal of hatchery-origin salmon using selective fish capture methods to achieve the goal of more natural-origin salmon spawning in the Okanogan River. "In order to address fitness risks posed to the natural population by hatchery fish, the tribe will use the weir to reduce the hatchery-origin proportion of the overall spawner population while still meeting the spawning escapement objectives when possible," said Jerry Marco, CCT Anadromous Division program manager. "We believe that increase fitness in the natural population will lead to an increase in productivity over time."

"This project plays an important role in adult management of summer Chinook that are destined for the spawning grounds in the Similkameen River and the U.S. portion of the Okanogan River," said Joe Peone, Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) Fish and Wildlife director. "It allows managers to manage natural-origin (NOR) summer Chinook to be the primary spawners (70%) and allows us to control the number of hatchery-origin spawners (HOR) about (30%) on the breading grounds. In return, the CCT will be able to harvest the HOR summer Chinook and distribute to the CCT members," he said. "At the same time, we want to make sure our Okanogan weir does not hinder any salmon stocks from migrating up the river. This is why we are doing a two-year feasibility study to monitor adult behavior as they approach the weir."

The Okanogan River temporary testing structure is being funded by Grant County Public Utility District and will be operating until the end of September. The CJH staff will operate the weir and communicate with resource agencies regarding the project findings.