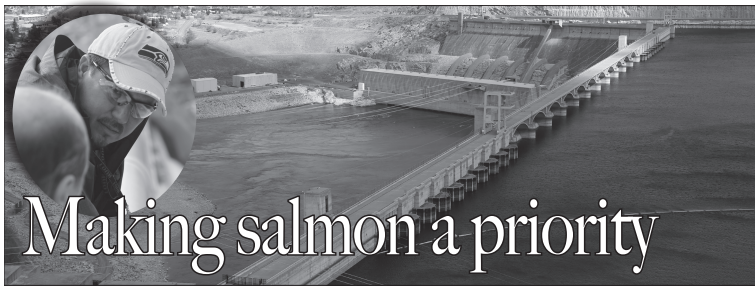


NATURAL RESOURCE NEWS

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JUSTUS CAUDELL PHOTOS/Tribune

Above: Colville Tribal Fish and Wildlife Director Randall Friedlander listens intently during a tour of the Grand Coulee Dam on March 17. **Below:** Columbia River Intertribal Fish Council Executive Director Paul Lumley, center, was a part of the tour and expressed the possibility and opportunity to pass salmon over Grand Coulee Dam and right the wrongs that happened to tribes up and down the river.

- Tribes continue efforts to change Columbia River Treaty

BY JUSTUS CAUDELL
The Tribune

GRAND COULEE – There are several challenges to salmon passing over Grand Coulee Dam. There is the engineering difficulties that spread rumors of passage being simply impossible to passage being possible but only via a seven mile fish ladder, which would extend from the dam downstream to a hypothetical point near Bellevue. The Spirit Ridge boat launch is six miles downstream from the face of the dam, said Lynn Brougher, USBR Public Affairs Officer.

There is the first physical hurdle of Chief Joseph Dam at Bridgeport, WA before fish even reach Grand Coulee.

There are questions of money; who would pay for the millions in infrastructure?

There are the challenges hypothetical fish will face in the nearly stagnant water of Lake Roosevelt, above the dam—if ever fish were to pass, could the salmon, that use flow to guide their annual migrations, even survive?

“All previous work Colville Tribal Fish and Wildlife had done [above the dam] has been with the idea of anadromous fish would be back,” Tribal Policy Analyst Sheri Sears told the Tribal Tribune in November.

Then there are legal challenges. In a Feb. 14 publication by U.S. Columbia Basin Tribes and Canadian First Nations, the tribes note, “. . . in the U.S., the federal government requires fish passage facilities for non-federal hydroelectric projects in the Pacific Northwest in most instances.”

Much of the current salmon restoration exists in litigation between Pacific Northwest Tribes and other special interest groups and the federal government or other dam-owning entities such as—locally—the PUDs of Grant and Chelan counties.

Though passage over Grand Coulee Dam or Chief Joseph Dam



does not currently exist, CTFW Director Randy Friedlander acknowledges the success of that current litigation.

That being said, the Colville Tribes, led much by CTFW, and over 15 other tribes from both sides of the Canadian-U.S. border are pushing for fish passage over Chief Joseph Dam and Grand Coulee Dam in the US and the Hugh Keenleyside, Brilliant and Waneta dams in Canada to be made into treaty law.

The opportunity has been made available with the upcoming debate on the 50 year old Columbia River Treaty.

“We have the two largest dams on the river in our land,” CBC John Sirois said in a November, Grand Coulee Dam and Chief Joseph Dam produce 40 percent of the electricity on the West Coast.

The Colville Reservation is in the middle of the fight. In March, tribes from all around the Pacific Northwest met at Northern Quest Casino in Airway Heights to prepare for upcoming negotiations.

“If you build a dam, you can build a way for fish to get around it. It’s not impossible,” Okanogan Nation’s Alliance member Michael Zimmer told a group on a tour of the Grand Coulee Dam before technical meetings at Northern Quest began.

Upper Columbia United Tribes Director D.R. Michel and Columbia River Intertribal Fish Council Executive Director Paul Lumley both expressed the possibility and opportunity to not

only pass fish over Grand Coulee Dam but to right the wrongs done to tribes up and down the river.

In an email shared with the Tribal Tribune, Friedlander noted “gulpers” have been used to pass fish over high head dams; “There are examples from old technologies that could be implemented; there are also new technologies that may be more cost effective, such as a whoosh system.”

On the Baker River near Bellevue Puget Sound Energy installed a “gulper,” which a 2008 press release describes as “a 1000-ton apparatus floating above Baker Lake’s 280-foot-deep bottom. . . designed to attract and safely capture young salmon for transport. . .”

“There are two methods of fish passage; volitional—on their own—and trap and haul,” continued Friedlander.

In 1960, with the formation of the Columbia River Treaty, tribes were not allowed to participate in treaty negotiations, and the treaty was formed with two priorities, flood control and hydroelectric production.

The official publication on fish passage presented by the Columbia Basin Tribes Coalition, a coalition of fifteen tribes and several tribal organizations, notes, “The loss of salmon into the upper Columbia Basin was a monumental, inadequately mitigated and bilateral infringement on the cultures of native salmon peoples and a loss of economic opportunity for all residents of the Pacific

Northwest.”

Howie Wright, Okanogan Nations Alliance Fisheries Manager, noted the three Canadian Dams in question have already agreed to fish passage if the fish reach their locations, but Wright was only half-joking about BC Hydro looking downriver at the immense size of Grand Coulee Dam with such promises.

The government of British Columbia declared it does not believe the Columbia River Treaty negotiations are the appropriate forum for discussions on fish passage.

“British Columbia’s perspective is that the management of . . . salmon populations is the responsibility of the Government of Canada and that restoration of fish passage and habitat, if feasible, should be the responsibility of each country regarding their infrastructure.” There is the challenge of the Canadian government.

So why is treaty law important? Salmon passage falls under the larger proposed desire for tribes to have ecological function established as a third consideration in management of the Columbia River. Within ecological function, comes “increased spring and summer flows resulting in a more natural hydrograph, higher and more stable headwater reservoir levels . . . higher river flows during dry years,” etc.

With the current treaty’s concern with only hydropower production and flood control, river management that nearly always begins at the gargantuan Grand Coulee Dam is based solely on those two functions.

The current litigation on salmon and the bigger concern of ecological function falls to the wayside to the treaty’s concerns, Sears told the Tribune. Essentially, treaty law trumps federal law.

The priorities are not right, say the Tribes. Not only are they not right, they will not be right until they are changed.

Spring brings noxious weed concerns

PRESS RELEASE

It’s finally here! Spring has sprung in our corner of the world. Beautiful blooms are beginning to emerge on the fruit trees, the rewards of spring bulbs planted last fall are beginning to show and gardeners fatigued from the long winter are tending to their weary garden beds. As the sun warms the soil, seeds are germinating, seeds from weeds that got away from us last year. Which means the task of weeding is around the corner. But with the right knowledge and correct timing, controlling weeds can be made much easier.

One noxious weed of concern to the Colville Reservation is Dalmatian toadflax. Dalmatian toadflax is a member of the Scrophulariaceae family or more commonly known as the figwort family. This aggressive noxious weed is of particular concern to rangeland, where it can quickly out-compete desirable forage. It thrives in areas with full sun and well drained soils.

The showy yellow flowers, which look similar to a snap dragon, have made this plant attractive to cultivators since the 16th century. It was most likely introduced into North America as an ornamental. Dalmatian toadflax was first observed in Washington State, in the 1920’s in Spokane County.

Dalmatian toadflax is an upright perennial, with heart shaped waxy leaves that clasp the stem. Shoots begin to emerge in March and April with flowers starting to show in late May and can extend into fall. Dalmatian toadflax has a taproot that can reach depths of 10 to 12 feet.

This plant reproduces by both seeds and roots. A single plant can produce 500,000 seeds and if that’s not bad enough, seeds remain viable for up to 10 years. Dead stalks can hold seeds for up to 2 years. Most seeds are dropped near the parent plant, with wind dispersal being minimal, however when stalks become dry they can snap off in the wind, spreading seeds like a tumbleweed.

So how do I control this aggressive weed? There are several ways that can be effective, especially if more than one control method is used in conjunction. The use of biological controls has been proven to be very effective on this noxious weed. *Mecinus janthinus* is a stem boring weevil and is the most commonly used biological control agent for Dalmatian toadflax in Washington State. Adult weevils drill a hole in the side of the stem to lay their eggs. Larvae emerge inside the stem where they feed while they develop into adults. A large infestation of Dalmatian toadflax is needed for this weevil to be effective.

Pulling isolated patches can be effective, but must be repeated for 5-6 years to deplete the root system. Herbicides can be very effective but a good surfactant must be used to get the herbicide to stick to the waxy leaf structure. Mowing and tillage are not effective methods of control and can lead to an increase in plants.

If you need any help identifying noxious weeds or recommendations on how to control them please call CCT Land Operations at 509-634-2340, or you can reach Danielle Blevins directly at 509-634-2340 or 509-634-1557.



Chief Joseph Hatchery update

PRESS RELEASE

Chief Joseph Hatchery (CJH) fish culturists have been raising young Chinook salmon fry since January of this year. The small alevin are moved from the trays (each tray can hold about 5,800 eggs) in the incubation room to blue starter tanks once they utilize the remainder of their egg sacs and become a fry. Once the fry are in the blue start tanks, they remain there for about two weeks. Each tank can hold approximately 40,000 young Chinook fry. The staff feed the fry one time each hour for eight hours per day. “After two weeks, we move them to the outdoor raceways,” said Amber Cate, fish culturist at CJH. “We do a weight sample every Monday, monitoring their length and weight which determines how much we feed them. The outdoor raceways where they grow to finger length in size can hold up to 50,000 fish.”

By mid-April fish culturists will begin marking and tagging each salmon by removing their adipose fin when they are about four inches in length. This is accomplished by using a brand new trailer that has an automated system that sorts, clips and tags juvenile salmon. This system is so fast and accurate that it can process over 60,000 fish in an eight hour period. Once these fish are processed, they are reared at the hatchery until they are ready to be released or they will be taken to the Omak and Riverside ponds for rearing and release into the Okanogan River.

The hatchery will produce approximately 620,000 spring Chinook and 1.2 million summer Chinook this year.

Chief Joseph Hatchery is a state-of-the-art facility that was built to increase spring, summer, and fall Chinook salmon in the Okanogan and Columbia Rivers. The hatchery will produce up to 2.9 million Chinook salmon annually by 2015, and will provide salmon for ceremonies, subsistence needs for members, and increase recreational fishing opportunities for all. The \$50 million hatchery was completed in May of 2013 and is located in Bridgeport, Wash., next to Chief Joseph Dam.

What is a watershed?

PRESS RELEASE

Nearly 3,000 miles of streams, 420 lakes and over 22,000 acres of wetlands ripple through the Colville Indian Reservation, located within the greater Columbia River Watershed. The waters of the Columbia River Watershed flow from Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, Oregon, Idaho, Washington and British Columbia.

A watershed is the land area from which all the waters gather to contribute to a river, lake or ocean. Close to home, water that flows into the San Poil River and the Nespelem River each has its own watershed. But the water resources throughout each watershed on the reservation, so vital to aquatic life, native plant communities, agriculture and forestry, have been compromised by the deterioration of thousands of miles of roads.

Water connects all aspects of the landscape. High levels of disturbance to one area of a watershed affects other areas of the watershed and the natural resources needed for fishing, hunting, food gathering, agriculture, grazing cattle and timber production.

There are currently about 7,000 miles of roads and more than 3,300 stream crossings on the reservation.

Unfortunately, the historical placement and maintenance of many of the forest roads have severely altered water resources and in effect other natural resources the community relies on.

Roads located on stream beds,

or that drain into stream beds, release dirt and fine sediment into stream water, as do culverts that are washing out. As these fine sediments increase beyond natural levels, fish populations, such as trout and salmon, suffer dramatically.

Fine sediments travel long distances downstream before they settle which impacts the much larger watershed and all the fish that live in the waters of that watershed.

Another consequence of roads is rapid drainage. The landscape naturally stores water for the year from rain or runoff by absorbing it into the soil, plants, wetlands, etc.

Roads that don’t adequately drain runoff into the landscape often collect and funnel water directly into streams instead. This creates higher runoff events. Also loss of this water storage worsens drought conditions leading to increased stress on timber production, grazing lands and irrigation for agriculture as well as increased risk of wildfires.

Improving runoff conditions to store water also protects against climate changes. As part of a ten-year plan, ETD and the Colville Department of Transportation are working with other departments to improve the forest roads system and restore watershed conditions.

The primary goals are to reduce sediment, reduce impacts to the natural water flows, and to reduce impacts to stream fish and wildlife habitat. Protecting our waters positively affects all natural resources and, ultimately, protects our way-of-life.