YAKAMA NATION FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Sin-Wit-Ki

(All life on earth)

March/April 2001
Volume 6, Issue 3

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Abundant fish numbers create salmon market

With drought conditions and no spill assisting migrating fish the fate of the great numbers of salmon looks dismal

It has been over two decades since a tribal spring chinook commercial fishery was allowed on the Columbia River.

This year with skyrocketing fish numbers the first spring chinook commercial season is taking place. Back in 1977 tribal fishers harvested a mere 9,300 spring chinook. Three years earlier in 1974 tribal fishers caught only 8,400 spring chinook.

This year with over 350,000 spring chinook returning the four Columbia River treaty tribes, Yakama, Nez Perce, Umatilla and Warm Springs approved a commercial gillnet fishery after ensuring that ceremonial gillnet permits provide 6,800 or 1,700 spring chinook per tribe.

> *"That's part of fish restoration and being successful in rebuilding the runs that are now faced with returning to trickles of water."*

Tribal biologists say the great run was a result of favorable flows in the river when the fish migrated to the ocean in 1998 and 1999 along with good ocean conditions.

The ceremonial fishing concluded April 15 with the platform fishery remaining open for subsistence use.

During the subsistence fishery it is estimated that between two and four percent of the spring chinook will be harvested. "That would be around 7,000 to 14,500 spring chinook," said Steve Parker, harvest manager for the Yakama Nation Fisheries Program.

"Because of the low pool elevations, many platforms may not be usable, which will result in less fish being caught," he said. The platform fishery was monitored to estimate the total catch.

Spring chinook not utilized in the ceremonial and subsistence fishery went towards a commercial gillnet fishery after the Washington and Oregon Compact met to discuss fishery options during the week of Apr. 9-13. "This would match the peak of the run under average conditions," Parker said. Commercial catch projections range from 25,700 to 33,200. The first three-day commercial fishery was April 17-19.

Spring chinook will also be made available from lower Columbia River hatcheries for tribal ceremonial or subsistence use as needed.

As of April 15 there were 169,700 fish over Bonneville Dam and on April 18 some 27,000 were counted over the dam. "It looks like we'll exceed 400,000 up from the pre-season forecast," Parker said.

The downside of this year's abundant numbers of fish is that with so many returning, Parker says it is ironic that the good conditions that got them to the ocean by spilling water two and three years ago are now replaced by the worst water conditions in three decades, hampering their ability to get back to the spawning grounds with much less water in the river. "That's part of fish restoration and being successful in rebuilding the runs that are now faced with returning to trickles of water."

CRITFC commissioners met April 19 to discuss more fishing dates. The next commercial gillnet fishing period for spring chinook was set for 6 a.m. April 26 to 6 p.m. April 28.

Prosser crew PIT tags fish

Several crew members at the Chandler Facility near Prosser, Wash. stood side-by-side to insert Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tags in juvenile spring chinook. PIT tags help in the identification of fish returning to a given location.

The fish being worked up earlier this month seemed much larger than usual according to the fishery technicians.

"These fish look a lot bigger," said Seymore Billy as he continued poking each fish to insert the tag. The tags are about a half-inch long and implanted with a needle at the end of the pectoral fin near the stomach into the body cavity. Each tag is unique and identifies an individual fish.

The tiny PIT tag at Billy's fingertip is only about a half-an-inch long.

"The juvenile fish are usually about 90 to 120 millimeters but these fish were 140 to 150 millimeters long," said Tammy Swan, fisheries technician.

The six person crew had already completed work on about 500 spring chinook in one week and will continue.

"We usually do this work until about July but with the low water this year they may do trap and haul a lot earlier," said

(Tags--Continued on page 10)

Sin-Wit-Ki translated from the Yakama tribal language means "All life on earth." It is a monthly publication written, edited and photographed by Carol Craig, public information manager for the Fish and Wildlife Program.

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Richard LaCourse--Dean of tribal journalism gone

One of the most respected and renowned tribal journalist in the nation died from a massive stroke after surgery March 9 at the Swedish Memorial Hospital Providence Campus in Seattle, Wash.

Richard LaCourse was an enrolled member of the Yakama Nation and Associate Editor of the Yakama Nation Review.

His journalism career spanned more than three decades which began with the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* in 1969 where he worked as copy and photograph editor and writer. In 1971 he became news director of the American Indian Press Association (AIPA), in Washington, D.C. From 1971 to 1974 he served as Regional Bureau Chief of the Albuquerque AIPA Bureau from 1974 to 1975. Throughout 1977 and 1978 he edited the *Yakama Nation Review*. He covered a majority of the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee on the Oglala Sioux Reservation in South Dakota and Nebraska. He founded the Northwest Indian Association and started the *Confederated Umatilla Journal* and the *Manataba Messenger* for the Colorado River Reservation in Arizona and California. From the summer of 1981 to August of 1983 he edited the biweekly CERT Report for the Council of Energy Resource Tribes. In October of 1983 he began the writing and design of Indian Finance Digest after forming LaCourse Communications Corporation and entered into a contract with the American Indian National Bank.

His superb writing skills had him author *Native Hemisphere: The Emerging Social Continent, Red Christmas: The Nicaraguan Indian Resistance; Native North America Media, Red Pages: Businesses Across Indian America; Northwest Tribal Profiles; Editor of "1855 Yakima Treaty Chronicles: May 28, 1955-June 11, 1855"* for the *Yakama Nation Review* and the American Indian Media Directory. He video scripted the Northwest Indian economic development and tribal jurisdictional issues for the National Congress of American Indians, Washington, D.C. He co-founded the Native American Press Association where he was author of the news network charter, code of ethics and the business plan of operation. He 1984 he received the National Recognition Award for Accomplishment from the

(LaCourse--Continued on page 16)

STEP kids tackle huge sturgeon

Above--Kelley Cootes and Amando Ramos burst into laughter while trying to get the hang of dipnetting their first sturgeon to get it out of the holding pond next to the Marion Drain.

Below left--Squirming sturgeon out of water gets pulled by D.J. Spencer as other STEP participants wait to hoist the fish up to be weighed. The six are part of the STEP program. Photos by Carol Craig.

Twenty tribal high school students are taking advantage of the field program that has taken them to the Wanapum village at Priest Rapids Dam and various locations to assist the fish, wildlife and forestry staff while learning about the sciences. "We want to encourage them to take more science classes," said Leon Strom STEP (Sciences and Tribal Educational Partnerships) coordinator.

Six tribal high school students enjoyed a new experience last month when they took to the ponds where sturgeon are being housed near the Marion Drain at Toppenish, Wash.

When they arrived at the site Chuck Carl, tribal technician asked who wanted to get in the pond to retrieve the huge fish. At first none of the six were eager to volunteer. Finally Kelly Cootes and Amando Ramos stepped forward to take the challenge. They donned waders and boots and carefully slid into the pond. "It's really slick in here, said Ramos, as he stared down at the sturgeon. Cootes questioned how the fish would react to their presence. "They can't hurt you. They'll just bump into you once in awhile," said Carl.

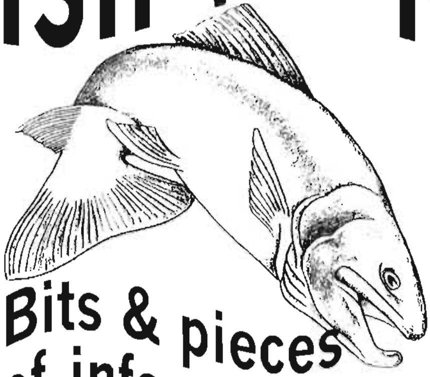
Carefully they waded in the pond and grabbed the huge dipnets to haul them out one by one.

The yearly process of weighing, measuring and scanning tags to keep track of growth and health of the 180 sturgeon was completed with the assistance from the STEP students. The fish are evenly divided into two ponds so they can be fed with no competition to stay healthy according to Carl.

Cootes uses muscle power to net one of the sturgeon from the pond.

The STEP program is a coordinated effort between the tribe and the University of Washington to encourage tribal high school students to enter the science field.

Fish wrap



Bits & pieces of information

Farmers to hear on drought

Farmers in the Yakima Valley are invited to a meeting designed to inform them on key issues that will affect everyone in this drought year and in the future.

"This meeting is to be informational only and not a debate on the merits of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Clean Water Act (CWA) or the Yakama Nation Water Code," said Karen Lucei, from the tribe's Environmental Program. The Apr. 25 meeting begins at 8 a.m. in the Eagle Seelatsee Auditorium. The tentative schedule includes information about lease and compliance, drain cleaning procedures, drought conservation techniques and, water quality and farming.

There will be an update of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Plan, Wapato Irrigation Project along with fish biology and habitat. There may be panel discussions with a possible presentation on ESA according to Lucei.

Many hands make light work as Ida Ike, left and Charlotte Bennett bag smelt that was distributed to tribal members. Photo by Carol Craig.

For the first time in awhile fisheries staff volunteers assisted tribal technicians in bagging smelt.

Tribal technicians during the first weekend in March traveled to the Cowlitz River near Kelso in southwest Washington to check on the run. "It was much better for the first time in a long time, said Joe Hoptowit, tribal technician.

Two years ago tribal technicians got less than half a tote of smelt. This year the abundant tiny fish filled three-400 gallon totes. "We got over a thousand pounds," said Hoptowit. The fish was bagged averaging 10 pounds per bag. Tribal biologists say the smelt are an unpredictable run. "We don't see them every year," said Mark Johnston, fisheries biologist. This year thousands of smelt entered the Columbia River as far as Bonneville Dam. While tribal people know how to prepare the fish some non-tribal people said they were hard to clean. "You don't have to clean them before frying," said Joanne Mendoza from Yakama Nation Credit. "I shared them with my neighbors who asked how to prepare them. I told them all you have to do is fry them up then just wiggle the head until loose and tug on it. All the necessary parts come out really easy."

Sturgeon fishery closed on river

On Mar. 14 the Compact states of Washington and Oregon agreed with the Columbia River treaty tribes to close the Zone 6 commercial gillnet fishery on sturgeon harvest.

All three pools at John Day, The Dalles and Bonneville were closed while the scaffold fishery remains open for subsistence use.

The sturgeon catch guideline for the year in Zone 6 pools were: 1,300 at Bonneville; 1,100 for The Dalles and 1,160 in the John Day pool.

The sturgeon setline fishery may be re-opened at a later date in pools with fish remaining in the harvest guideline for that pool.

Announcement

The Native American Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS) has a one-time scholarship for $1,000 to be awarded to a tribal student pursuing a degree in the field of natural resources. It is in memory of David Lee, a well-respected and long time staff member of the NAFWS. Selection will be decided by the NAFWS Education and Training Commmittee and announced at the national conference May 23, 2001 in Lincoln City, Ore. Applications may be obtained at the fisheries office. Deadline is Apr. 27.

***Walk this way! Right--Coleman Ezekiel gleefully leads Salmon Corps crew members in an exercise that had them blindfolded and depending on someone to assist them in a stroll around the parking lot.. Photo by** Carol Craig.*

'Lean on me' training

Follow the leader was the Salmon Corps members instructions as they were blindfolded for a team exercise conducted by Chuck Sams, Northwest Salmon Corps Director in early March.

The team building exercise entitled "Survivor-Lost in the Andes" put Salmon Corps members trust in one person to take them from one point to another. Coleman Ezekiel led the group and would tell them when to step down, turn or step up as they were led around the fisheries building.

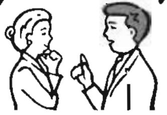
This was a portion of Salmon Corps exercises that teaches members to work together to accomplish a goal. The day long session included mental exercises that had Corps members unraveling concentric rings learning how the circular ties were connected to one another and recognizing and counting all the F's in a paragraph plus numerous other numb minding problems they solved.

In related news, the entire Salmon Corps from the Pacific Northwest convened at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Ore. Mar. 26-31 for their fourth annual education and career conference.

This year's conference was entitled "Fish, forest and fire," and had 30 invited speakers, instructors and visitors. The conference allowed Corps members to take in university life as well as allowing them to meet and develop relationships with professors, lawyers, tribal politicians, scientists and other professionals.

Lillian Pitt, well-known artist for her many ceramic tribal mask designs was the dinner guest speaker Mar. 27.

In the corner with CC



Many words of adoration filled the Umatilla Longhouse at Mission, Ore. March 13-14 where Richard LaCourse's body was taken before he was laid to rest at Athena, Ore.

He was a tribal man that was instrumental in encouraging tribal people all over the nation to get into the journalism world both tribal and non-tribal.

I first met him when he came to the Yakama Nation to be the editor of the tribal newspaper in the mid-70s. I had joined on a year earlier as a trainee writer/photographer.

"Write at the eighth-grade level so people can understand it." "I need dates, times and places." He always insisted on accurate information. I listened to him all the time and each time I learned something new. He was a wealth of knowledge. This was repeated from others who also met and formed a friendship with him. I believe to this day that he inspired many, was mentor to many and was very well respected.

When he came on board I told him I wanted to learn more and he said, "Then you will have to go back to school." So at age 31 I packed up my two children and headed to college. He talked about his days at Portland State University (PSU). After looking into different institutions I decided PSU was where I wanted to continue my education. Although it took much longer than four years to obtain my degree I feel very fortunate to have been influenced by him and I know I would not be the person I am today had it not been for him.

He had the greatest sense of humor and we always traded jokes and shared stories about our families. He was immensely proud of his nieces and nephews as well as brothers and sisters. And he knew my children as he did with the current staff, Ron Washines' and Donna Wilson's children.

When I returned home in 1995 to work for the fish and wildlife program he wrote a story about that. He'd call me at the office and say "Need your ear for a minute," or "Need your help." That's all he'd have to say and I'd be over to his office.

Today I share what he taught me--encouraging young tribal people interested in journalism. A year and a half ago he called me and said there was a young tribal lady that was going to college in Yakima, Wash. and she was interested in photography but didn't have a camera. He sent her to my office where I immediately loaned her my two old Canon cameras, one with a telephoto lens and the other a wide-angle.

She attended the UNITY Journalists of Color conference in 1999 when the presidential campaigns were in full swing. With camera in hand she captured a photo of George Bush when he came to address conference members. Her photo ran nationwide as an Associated Press photo. I am very proud of Darla Leslie as she pursues a photojournalist career and I know Richard was equally proud.

There are not many people like Richard in today's world and I will miss him. It was an honor and a privilege to know him.

Views expressed in this column are solely of the editor of Sin-Wit-Ki and not the Yakama Nation or the Fish and Wildlife Program.

Special section:

Within the forest

In the Cascade Mountain range, at elevations from 2,500 to 7,000 feet, the Yakama Nation forest occupies over one-half million acres

Sin-Wit-Ki will be featuring a series of articles about the Yakama Nation Forestry Products. The series begins with a short history on the tribal significance of the forest and the budworm infestation. Next issue will be forestry practices today

During the annual November General Council last year a multitude of questions about the tribe's forest practices abounded.

"People are concerned about the spruce budworm epidemic we're experiencing," said Cecil Sanchey, Yakama Forest Products business and public relations manager. Tribal members questioned whether stands of trees were being cut to bring the problem under control or for profit and how much money is being spent on spraying the infested areas.

Other inquiries from tribal members include logging practices, the tribe's Forest Management Plan, how much revenue is being generated from timber sales and whether cultural and religious practice areas within the primitive area are considered for harvest.

"Not all of the facts about what we are doing for the forest and wildlife are out there and we need to get that cleared for everyone," said Sanchey.

For the last two summers the forestry program has kept busy spraying portions of the closed area of the reservation for the Western spruce budworm infestation. The 1999 Spruce Budworm project covered 37,745 acres at a cost of $891,936. The 2000 Spruce Budworm spray project covered 4,915 acres at a cost of $116,006.

Quick facts...

- Western spruce budworms are the most important tree defoliators in the west.
- Budworm larvae eat the new growth of host trees.
- True firs are the preferred hosts and Douglas-fir is often the favored host.
- Budworm has a one-year life cycle.
- Budworm control measures usually are conducted in June.

According Edwin Lewis, Bureau of Indian Affairs forestry manager. "Outbreaks occur in forests that have a large percentage of host species, are densely stocked and have two-story or multi-storied vertical structures."

Managing a healthy and productive forest in reducing and controlling the spruce budworm epidemic will take time.

Today the forest is growing at three percent while the tribe is harvesting about 1.2 percent. "Most of the growth is occurring in Douglas-fir and white fir trees. Grand fir is the main species" said Lewis.

The different forest types are declining health wise and stands of infected trees are elevating mortality from insects and pathogens along with increased wildfire hazard.

Dense stands have trees experiencing stress which predisposes them to attacks from bark beetles. Root rots are appearing with great frequency as well.

With the increased canopy of Douglas and white fir trees helps rise the hazard of the budworm.

The budworm has always been in the closed area region of the forest but at epidemic levels it can defoliate huge patches of mixed conifer and pine-fir timber types.

Back in 1985 the western spruce budworm was noticed in the closed area forest. The infestation spread across 60,000 acres. Then in 1990 a biological control agent called Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki (Btk) was applied to the impacted areas reducing the budworm population. That project covered 3,850 acres at a cost of $1,087,544. The costs covered salaries, travel, fuel, vehicles, application contract, and miscellaneous supplies.

High shade-tolerant species composition, high

(Forest--Continued on page 8)

Tribal significance of the forest

From tribal generation to tribal generation the Yakama people found in the forest both material and spiritual values. Food was the major concern; wood products were secondary.

The Yakama people's seasonal round of harvesting foods begins in the early spring at lower elevations. The melting snow and maturing of plants at higher places had the women gather more than 20 varieties.

Edible roots like bitterroot and camas provided a source of food for the digging. As soon as the green shoots sprouted it signaled the end of winter and the beginning of a new life cycle.

Tribal people traveled when and where the food was available eventually taking them to higher elevations as the season continued. The men were kept busy hunting for elk and deer. Then they completed their round at the timber line in the autumn with harvest of the huckleberries.

Elders back in the 1950s remember the clouds of the tiny white butterflies hovering over the forest during the epidemic.

The annual food journey was a cyclic way of life in tune with nature that held deep significance because of the interweaving of spiritual and material values.

Harvesting of the different food in the forest were preceded by significant religious ceremonies known as the 'first foods ceremony.'

A group of people were selected for the first gathering with their special skills and knowledge of particular places and resources. And, they usually traveled ahead to scope out the area and take information back to the others.

Back then many tribal people remained in the mountains until the first snowfall in October. Before returning to the river valleys they periodically burned the sub alpine meadows to slow the growth of trees creating large open areas so plants could grow.

The forest was revered in the feeling that the earth was the Mother and the trees were the Mother's hair or covering, and neither were to be destroyed or injured according to the tribal elders.

Changes over time

During the last century material values have developed and the major product of the forest is now timber.

Change in the character of the forest has been limited. Oral history tells us intentionally set fires took place with the final burn occurring in 1918. That fire destroyed a portion of the forest in the northwest corner of the reservation known as Potato Hill, one of the locations where tribal people gather huckleberries.

Forest fires were often usually set in the fall when fire damage was low and prevented accumulation of large amounts of fuel. It also prevented the invasion of pine areas by less desirable species such as fir, and the stagnation resulting from overstocking the land with reproduction.

During the late 18th century there was a huge destructive epidemic of the pine butterfly centered in the Cedar Valley region destroying ponderosa pine over a 100,000 acre area.

Elders back in the 1950s remember the clouds of the tiny white butterflies hovering over the forest during the epidemic. Today Cedar Valley is characterized by a heavily stocked stand of young ponderosa under a scattered overstory of mature pine which survived the insect attack and served as seed trees to replenish the forest.

The greatest change of the forest took place with adequate fire protection. So successful was the management of fire that large amounts of heavy fuels have accumulated and tree reproduction has not only eliminated most of the open grassy pine areas but is converting the pine stands to fir type.

The pattern of the forest is determined by the moisture. Above the irrigated valley floor there is annual precipitation of only seven or eight inches. The dry foothills extend to an irregular line where 14 or 15 inches of precipitation occur annually allowing continual growth of the trees.

Garry oak is at the lower elevations. Proceeding westward both elevation and precipitation increase and the oak merges with ponderosa pine. The pine

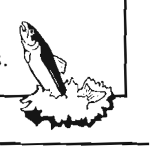
(Forest--Continued on page 16)

First timber sale

The first sale of tribal timber was made to Cascade Lumber Company of Yakima, Wash. under a contract approved Mar. 30, 1944, and a second sale to the same company in 1945.

These were comparatively small sales amounting to nine million feet of ponderosa pine timber on 2,600 acres of tribal land, and at low stumpage rates of $2.75 per million feet on the first sale and $3.00 on the second. Cutting was completed in 1946.

It wasn't until August, 1948 when a major timber sale on the Summit Creek Logging Unit created the forestry program. By that time timber values and demand increased and prices exceeded original estimates.



(Forest--Continued from page 6)

tree density, low vigor, multiple storied stand structure, previous harvest practices that removed a higher percentage of shade-intolerant species, exclusion of fire and drought conditions have all contributed to the outbreaks over the years.

The outbreak kills the tree tops introducing rot, the tree loses growth and irreparable damage to reproduction and mortality.

The forestry program is trying to reduce the host species in the stand, especially in the understory, and to increase overall stand vigor. Forestry continues the past practice of selective harvest and decreasing vertical density in hopes of controlling the infestation.

Back in 1997 Haggerty Butte II timber sale contained around four to 10 million board feet that was under attack from bark beetles and the spruce budworm. The tribal council was urged to do the cut early to save the sawlog value of the timber.

The invasion was encouraged by selective logging practices, fire exclusion and limited pre-commercial thinning that created a forest so much different than the 1800s. Back then the forest was open and dominated by ponderosa pine, larch and Douglas-fir trees. Historically, lumber markets favored larger trees rather than smaller white firs.

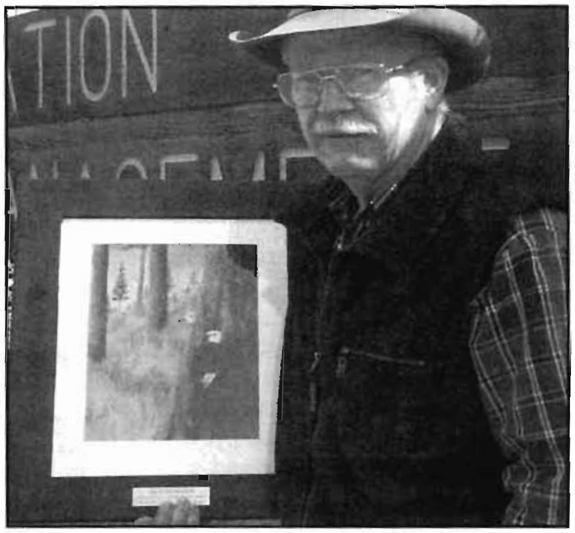
Fire prevention permitted the survival and dominance of shade tolerant white fir trees in a structure susceptible to fires, insects, pathogens, and drought as opposed to ponderosa pine. If the tribe increased the efficiency of timber sales by completing each assessment within three to six months that would have allowed forestry to tackle the destructive agents like the spruce budworm and bark beetles.

By increasing the timber sales it would close the gap between the forest growth and the timber harvest and save the sawlog values rather than the woodlog value.

But if the tribe increased the cut and sales it would increase workloads for the small staff numbers. The Yakama Nation Dept. of Natural Resources recommended the quicker evaluations of timber cuts to reduce and control the tree-rotting pests. Prescribed burns were cleared and manpower increased to thin and plant commercial forestland base. The burns were done to reduce fuels and promote natural regeneration.

Wildlife bio receives state chapter honor

Surprised with an annual award from the Wildlife Society--Washington Chapter, wildlife biologist for the Yakama Nation, Jim Stephenson says modestly that he may have been the recipient because he works to protect old growth pine.



Stephenson, with old hat, stands outside the fish and wildlife building proudly displaying annual award he received last month. Photo by Carol Craig.

Stephenson even had to pick the award up to take it to the annual meeting held Mar. 20 at Moses Lake, Wash. Another Chapter member was suppose to deliver the painting and at the last minute had to cancel. "I wasn't expecting anything and I had to haul the painting to the conference not realizing it was for me," he said.

The watercolor painting depicts old growth pine with white-headed woodpeckers on one of the trees. Soft-spoken Stephenson explains, "They depend on the old growth pine."

Just below the artwork it reads: "Leadership in Conservation" Award from the Wildlife Society of the Washington Chapter. The painting was done by Debra Davis wife of former wildlife biologist for the tribe, Ken Bevis who now works for the state.

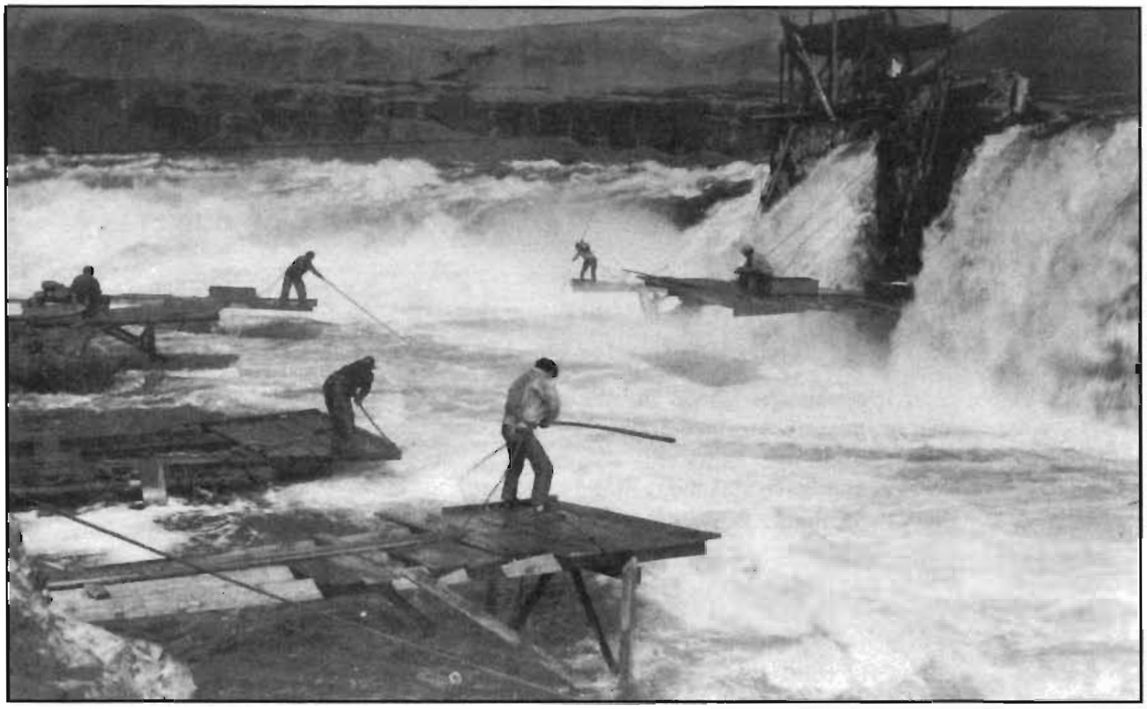
Stephenson has been with the tribe since 1996 and first joined the Wildlife Society back in 1965. "I have been with the state chapter on and off since," he said. He helped form a committee to retain and manage old growth on private and state lands. "We have more luck with the state in getting things done. We are down to five percent or less of the old growth," Stephenson said. "Right now we're getting inventory work down on old growth and don't have a really good picture of what's out there yet."

The painting is now proudly displayed in his office. "My wife says she wants to buy me a new hat...a bigger size," he quietly said with a smile.

Factoids--

Did you know that an eagle knows when a storm is approaching long before it breaks? The eagle will fly to some high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm.

While the storm rages below, the eagle is soaring above it. The eagle does not escape the storm. It simply uses the storm to lift it higher. It rises on the winds that bring the storm.



Gathering Place--Celilo Falls before inundated by The Dalles Dam.

Tribes gather for salmon celebration

By Kristi Turnquist, The Oregonian

Celilo--While Portland residents attended church and said prayers on Easter Sunday, a different kind of worship was taking place in the tiny fishing village of Celilo east of The Dalles on the Columbia River.

Meeting on land whre their ancestors had gathered for 10,000 years, members of the Yakama, Umatilla and Warm Springs celebration, the Celilo Wyam Salmon Feast and Powwow.

Most of the estimated thousand people who particpated in the three-day celebration, which concluded Sunday (Apr. 15), were affiliated with the tribes. But the event is free and open to the general public.

"It's good that they know our spiritual side and our religious side, what salmon means to us," said Bobby Begay, who coordinates the festival. "Salmon is our sacred food."

The message seemed especially important this year, when a budding Northwest drought has contribtued to an energy crisis. The Bonneville Power Administration is set to re-declare a power emergency today because of the water shortage, a move that will bar the spilling of water from federal dams for at least two more weeks. Releasing water from the dams is part of the salmon recovery plan, designed to help bolster endangered runs of salmon.

Complicating the situation is one of the biggest salmon runs in years--the April chinook fishing season on the Columbia River is the first one in 23 years. The fate of the salmon was on the minds of many. One notable attendee, Steven Wright, BPA's acting administrator, was there to experience the event, not talk about the issue.

"It's bittersweet," said Charles Hudson, of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. "But this is a day of celebration."

Tucked between basalt cliffs and the now-calm Columbia River, Celilo is near the site of the legendary Celilo Falls, an ancient tribal fishing area. "Wyam," the tribal word for Celilo, translates as "echo of the water against the rocks." An ideal natural fishing site, Celilo Falls was a gathering place for thousands of years where people would come to fish, trade and meet friend and family. There has been "first salmon" feast on the site for as long as anyone can remember, Begay said.

But the old Celilo Falls was swept away in 1957 with the completion of The Dalles Dam, which buried the falls in water. As one looks from Celilo toward the Washington side now, the once cascading Columbia is, on a quiet morning, still as glass.

"It was Salmon Central, Salmon Street," said Begay, 32, as he sliced open a fat, silvery chinook, revealing the deep-orange flesh inside. Nearby, other men labored, cooking salmon on large grills over wood fires, arranging salmon filets on sticks around a low fire and hanging filets against the side of the longhouse to dry.

Begay, who also works fro the Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, is too young to have seen Celilo Falls, but he grew up hearing "how amazing it was," he said. "We'll never know how many fish were really here. But they say you could almost walk across the falls. You'd wake up in the morning and smell it. You'd wakeup and hear the rumble of it."

As the feast--which celebrates traditional tribal foods of salmon ,deer, elk and roots--was about to be served, the sound of drums from the longhouse mingles with the swett, smoky tang of the grilling fish and meat.

Ella Jim, 59, took a break from her duties to compare the longhouse to a church.

And she credited the strong salmon run to the power of tribal prayers to the Creator.

"This fish are finally coming back," Jim said, "which is what our people prayed for.

State does turn about on lawsuit

Last January 20 tribes in Washington filed suit against the state to fix state road culverts for the sake of salmon.

Now Washington State is turning the tables and is asking the tribes "what have you done?"

During the second week of March the state filed the first legal avoidance in the case after tribes went to court to have the state fix about 500 culverts in Washington. Misfit culverts impede fish passage especially salmon.

While the tribes want culverts fixed in five years, the state says it will fix all the culverts which will take anywhere from 20 to 30 years.

The 20 tribes want the state to protect salmon habitat to get their fair share of salmon. The culvert suit is connected to the Boldt Decision which established tribal rights to half of the salmon harvest. The 1974 Boldt Decision came after a three-year trial in *U.S. v. Washington* declaring the tribal treaty fishery and non-tribal fishery were each entitled to 50 percent of the harvestable number of fish destined for tribal usual and accustomed fishing grounds and stations. That decision reaffirmed tribal management powers as well the 1855 Treaty agreement between the federal government and the tribes.

Now the state counters the tribes suit in a 22-page response demanding the court order tribes and the federal government to also fix culverts. The federal government is the plaintiff in the lawsuit.

"The tribes have violated their duty to the state by failing to inventory and correct their own road-related fish passage barriers, says the state's court papers. "Based on our information they have at least as many blocking culverts as the state does. "The court papers indicate that the federal government is also lagging behind the state and argues that the treaties don't mention habitat which does not give the tribes the right to tell the state how to spend its money.

The tribes may respond to the state's counterclaim. That's when the U.S. District Court in Seattle will begin scheduling court proceedings.

Tribe works on culverts

The Yakama Nation has been actively restoring and retrofitting culverts to help salmon get back to the different areas on the reservation and ceded lands. And the work has benefited fish as they are returning to the different locations. (See *Sin-Wit-Ki* July 2000).

"So far we have assessed and surveyed 58 culverts in the closed area and found that 48 of them are considered fish barriers," said Joe Zendt, Yakama Nation forest-fishery biologist. The culvert inventory follows the Washington State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife criteria. Other culvert work is being done in the Satus, Klickitat and Toppenish watersheds. "Additional culvert work is planned in all of these areas," said Zendt. Some are not wide enough and streambed material creates a blockage. "We will continue to assess and fix them," he said.

Tags will track fish

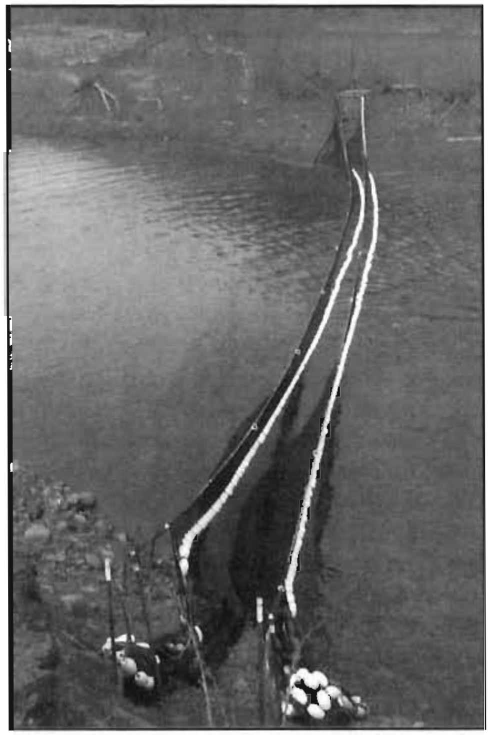
(Continued from page 2)

Swan. That is when the crew will stop tagging fish because they will not be able to operate at the Chandler facility with such a low water flow. "We'll start trapping them and taking them down to the Columbia River, otherwise they wouldn't be able to survive," she said.

The anesthetized fish were also measured and weighed then placed in tempered river water in huge plastic cans for a 24-hour recovery period.

Half of the fish were released at the boat ramp above Prosser Dam with the other half released into the Chandler Canal. "There's not much water at the dam now so the rest of the fish will probably go into the canal," Swan said.

The bigger than usual spring chinook were anesthetized to PIT tag then placed in recovery tanks at the Chandler Facility near Prosser, Wash. before being released. Photos by Carol Craig.



Klickitat River preparing salmon

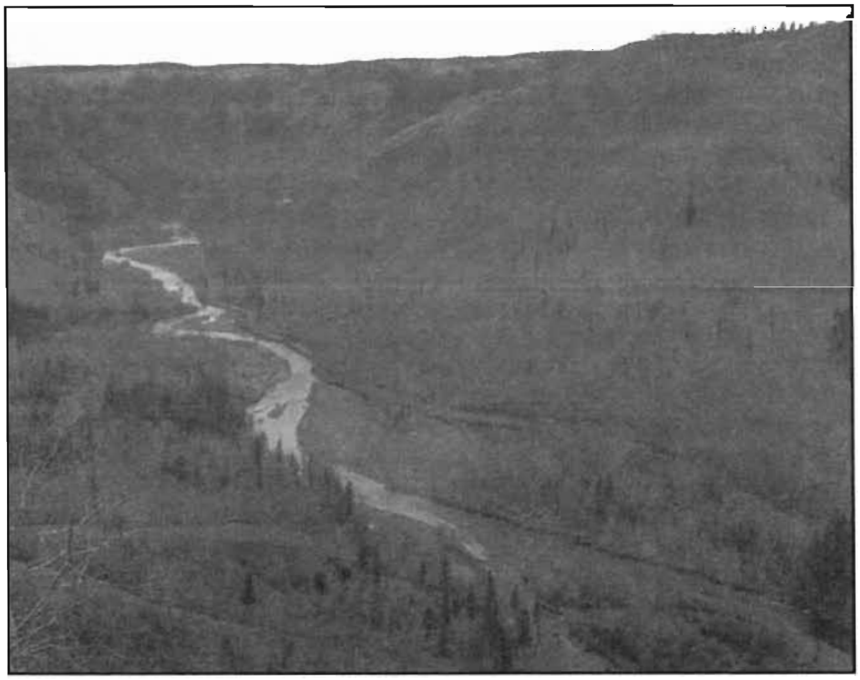
As tribe continues rebuilding runs in the Yakima Basin public question what looks like gillnets to them

Along a stretch of the Klickitat River between the Goldendale and Glenwood highways is a double net situated at Sharp's Pond holding 497,300 baby fish. "We used a double net system to have as little escapement as possible," said Matt Tomaskin, fisheries technician.

The two ponds are being utilized to acclimate the fish to that particular waterway. When the fish return as adults they will know which river to return to.

Another small pond further up has 102,000 fish that are being held so they can also get used to that river water. Both ponds were named after fishery staff, "Because we didn't know what else to call them," said Tomaskin.

Above--Sharp's Pond with double netting. Right-- View from highway. Below--William Wesley, fisheries technician II, cleans net at Matt's Pond. Photos courtesy Matt Tomaskin.



Matt's Pond can be viewed from the highways and has been a point of question for those who think the nets are tribal gillnets. "We've already had several people call and ask about the nets," he said. "They have mistaken them for gillnets and think tribal people are fishing there."

Tribal members can fish on the tributaries year-round and can only use traditional fishing gear like the dip-net or hoop-net. "We're not allowed to use any gillnets at all," said Tomaskin.

Fishery technician staff is in the process of putting together information about the acclimation site to educate the non-tribal public. "We want to erect a huge sign above the site on the highway that will explain what they see," he said. "Hopefully that will put them at ease so they'll understand we work on behalf of the fish," Tomaskin said.

The nets get a good cleaning daily to keep debris from piling up and clogging the nets so the fish will have plenty of breathing room.

President's actions don't follow his words

Guest editorial by Wil Phinney

George W. Bush ran his campaign on soundbites of "compassionate conservatism," pledging to be "uniter, not a divider."

But after jus two months of his term, the grinning plastic mask of convenience has fallen away, betraying the true, rigid, extremist ideologue beneath.

It appears now that his entire campaign, the carefully manipulated persona of middle-of-the-road moderation, was farce aimed only at capturing the White House. While Democrats are referring to GWB as "Giant Wrecking Ball," even the most conservative Republicans have got to be scratching their heads over some of our President's most recent actions.

He has wasted little time in trampling over the health of America's environment, the safety of its workers, the future of our children.

The only "compassion" he's exhibited appears to be for the poor, downtrodden oil, gas, banking and other corporate interests that were instrumental in his questioned quest for the Oval Office. (See who's moving up on the Fortune 500 list).

President Bush has assumed, erroneously, the righteousness of a scared mandate from the people. In a matter of weeks, the President has:

- Broken his specific campaign pledge to require power plants to lower their emissions of carbon dioxide, the primary contributor to global warming. The coal industry applied heavy pressure on Bush to retreat from his promise.
- Allowed higher arsenic levels in drinking water by blocking a Clinton Administration order that would have lowered the permissible level (50 parts per billion since 1942) to 10 parts per billion. The National Academy of Sciences has argued vigorously for a lower level, maintaining that arsenic in water poses a cancer danger. The industries that emit arsenic, and some local water districts, pushed for a more relaxed standard.
- Reduced cleanup requirements for mining sites on federal land by suspending hard-rock mining regulations that would have forced gold, copper, sliver, uranium and other mine operators to post bonds to guarantee they would clean up their messes.
- Allowed more logging in national forests by delaying a Clinton Administration plan to prohibit new road building on about 58 million acres of federal lands.
- Pushed for oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, endorsing legislation to allow exploration that would intruded on one of the last untouched stretches of the coastal plain. The are has been called the "biological heart" of the region, and includes critical calving grounds for the Porcupine caribou that are essential to the survival of native people there.

- Announced that he would not abide by the Kyoto Treaty on climate change, aimed at reducing greenhouse gasses and other causes of global warming and international environmental degradation. This move has prompted an outcry from countries around the globe that look up to American as the world's leader.
- Developed a budge that includes tax cuts of more than a trillion dollars, mostly for the rich, while simultaneously cutting benefits to poor, abused and neglected children, among others. We hope the reports are false that Mr. Bush will propose cuts in funding for child-care assistance for low-income families, for program designed to investigate and combat child abuse, and for a new program to train pediatricians and other doctors at children's hospitals across the country.
- Repealed workplace safety rules that were designed to protect tens of millions of Americans but were opposed as too "onerous" by business groups.

All these actions, and the appointment of an army of staunchly conservative officials throughout the federal government, have led to giddy, gleeful crowing by the hardcore right wing. Gone is the rhetoric of bipartisanship. Absent if the notion that the word "conservative" is derived from "conserve," which means to safeguard and protect, not exploit and destroy.

The ghost of Abraham Lincoln must be retching in his grave.

The spirit of Franklin Roosevelt must be weeping in his tomb.

Their current successor shames the memory of those revered, though often flawed, men who at times could focus their gaze on the nation's future, looking beyond the narrow limits of short-term political expediency.

In the second presidential debate last October, Mr. Bush declared that "No children should be left behind in America." He state that "I'm really strongly committed to clean water and clean air and cleaning up the new kinds of challenges, like global warming.

Actions do speak louder than words. He lied. And our children, our families, our communities will pay the price, now and in the years to come, if President Bush does not slow down what appears to be a relentless rampage.

Reprint with permission from the Confederated Umatilla Journal "CUJ Opinion" page, April 5, 2001.

Stabilizing river banks

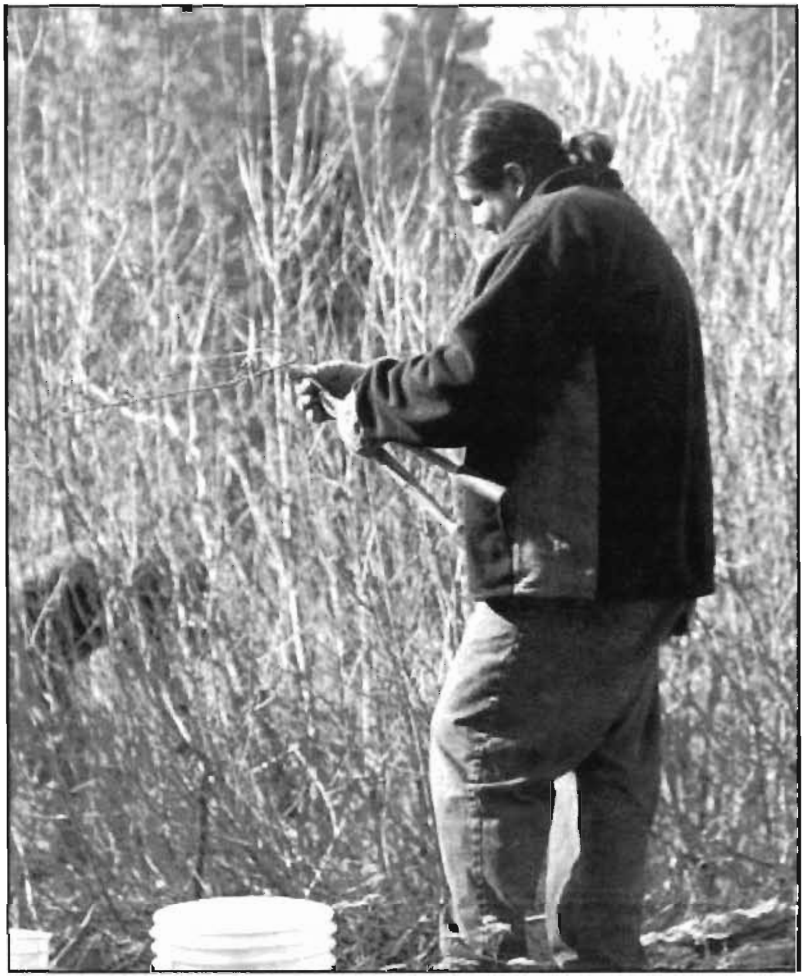
Crew members from Salmon Corps are kept busy during their tenure with the program. "They are so eager to work that some are already reaching their required hours ahead of time," said Gina George, Yakama Nation Salmon Corps Director. "I have to keep them busy and happy."

On Apr. 9-11 Salmon Corps members began doing cuttings of willow, cottonwood and dogwood trees for planting. Then they headed to portions of the Naches River to plant the cutting that will help stabilize the embankments.

In total 1,317 willow, cottonwood and dogwood trees were planted along the river. "The first day they did cuttings then the following day they planted them," George said.

Using huge cupin-like tools (cupins are a traditional tool used for digging roots) the crew completed the task earlier than anticipated. "The only thing that made it difficult to do was placing the trees among the huge rocks along the river," she said. The following week they continued planting the small cuttings and will assist the forestry department with plantings in other areas.

Corps members saw an eagle flying above at the work site and then saw a herd of elk. "There was about 80 elk we saw while driving up to the river," said Glenda Jim. "They always get excited and tell me what they saw because for some of them it is the first time," George said.



Above--Joseph Wyman snips away at the cuttings to prepare for planting along Naches River to help stabilize the bank.

Below left--Hunkering down and getting the hang of using the cupin-like tool James Tilloquots looks to see how others are doing.

Below right--Annie Hudson bends down to shove the planting tool into the ground to get the cutting into the soil. Photos courtesy Glenda Jim.

Tribes play role in harbor cleanup

Six nations are involved in the Superfund's Willamette River site

By Ben Jacklet-The Portland Tribune

It's a long way from Portland's industrial waterfront to the Yakama Reservation.

But Randy Settler says the connection between the two places is strong than most people realize.

Settler, chairman of the Yakama nation's fish and wildlife committee, represents a confederacy of 14 bands of native people, nine of which count the Willamette River among their traditional fishing grounds.

According to Settler, the link between the Yakama people and the river was guaranteed in 1855, when Chief Kamiakin took a break from fishing the Willamette to sign a treaty with the United States government.

The treaty exchanged 12 million acres of Indian land for a reservation in what later became Washington State. It also guaranteed the Yakama people full rights to fish, hunt and gather foods in their "usual and accustomed" areas--including the area today known as Portland Harbor.

The 10,000-member Yakama Nation is the largest of six sovereign nations involved in the federally mandated cleanup of hazardous waste in the river between Swan and Sauvie islands. This will be the first time that so many separate tribes have taken part in a project of the Superfund, the federal Environmental Protection Agency program to clean up hazardous waste sites nationwide.

The six tribes--Siletz, Grand Ronde, Warm Springs, Umatilla, Nez Perce and Yakama--are descended from a diverse set of clans, from the coastal whaling tribes of northern California to the appaloosa-riding Indians of the Idaho plateaus. While they have not inhabited the lower Willamette in many years, they figure they have as much at stake in the river's future as anyone.

"We've never relinquished any title to the Willamette," said Charles Hudson of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. "This is the first Superfund listing in the Columbia Basin, and the tribes want assurances that treaty law is met and treaty resources get the utmost protection."

Hudson said toxins in the Willamette are of particular concern to the tribes. Studies have shown that Columbia River tribes eat nine times as much fish as the national average.

The lamprey eels that tribal members harvest each June near Willamette Falls migrate through the harbor, and because they are a particularly fatty species, they absorb high levels of toxins in their tissue.

A slow start

The inclusion of six sovereign nations in the harbor cleanup undoubtedly will complicate an already complicated situation involving five government agencies and more than 70 potentially responsible property owners and businesses.

The first evidence of a slow start came with the delayed release of the first public document of the Superfund process.

On Feb. 8, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the EPA signed a memorandum of understanding about how they will proceed with the Portland Harbor.

The document clarified the roles of DEQ, EPA, three other public agencies and the tribes. It became official once DEQ and EPA signed it, but the agencies wouldn't release it until leaders from all six tribe had signed it.

Nearly two month passed before the EPA made the memorandum public, The agency faxed a copy to the Tribune on Mar. 28, and even then the Umatilla tribes had not yet signed it.

Wallace Reid, project manager for the EPA, allows that involving the tribes from the start may create more complexities up front, but it should keep the entire process from getting stalled in the future.

"There's no doubt that in the initial stages, it's more complex because there are more discussions you need to have and more parties you need to consult with," he said. "But I believe that the payoff at the end of the process will be significant."

For example, Reid said, a legal claim involving threatened fish or treaty rights could effectively stall the whole process and force the EPA to start it over.

Besides, as Hudson, Settler and other tribal representatives point out, it isn't just good policy to include the tribes from the beginning, it's a legal requirement based on agreements upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Tribes forced issue

The tribes lobbied hard for a superfund listing in the Portland harbor because their treaties are with the federal government and not the state. In fact, Settler points out, their

(Harbor--Continued on page 15)

Harbor cleanup involves tribes

(Continued from page 14)

treaties precede Oregon statehood.

They achieved more success in their lobbying efforts than did Gov. John Kitzhaber and Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore.

Kim Cox, the DEQ's project coordinator for the Portland harbor, said the determination of the tribes tog in federal control of the cleanup was "one of the huge reason, if not the reason," that Oregon's top politicians failed in their campaign to keep state control over the harbor cleanup.

As a "resource trustee," each of the tribes now has the right to bring a claim for natural resource damages up the three years after the harbor improvement work is finished.

Had the area not been named a Superfund site, the trustees could file such clams up to only three years after "injury is discovered"--a more nebulous and restrictive legal time frame.

But Hudson emphasized that lawsuits and traty claims aren't the impetus driving the involvement of tribes.

"None of the tribes are looking at this from a litigation standpoint," he said. "They're certainly aware of their options, but it's premature to be talking about lawsuits."

Reprint with permission from *The Portland Tribune,* newly established newspaper in Portland, Ore.

Murray's staff meet with tribe/landowners

Toppenish, Wash.--The April 13 Western spruce budworm meeting with Senator Patty Murray's staffer, Anna Knudson included the Bureau of Indian Affairs Forestry, Yakama Nation Natural Resources, United States Fish and Wildlife, National Forestry personnel and private landowners. The half-day session took place at the Yakama Cultural Center.

While Yakama staffers met with Murray's staff, other Yakama tribal members and employees were denied access to the meeting.

"When we arrived we were told that we could not go into the meeting," said Joanna Meninick from the Yakama Nation Cultural Resources Program (YNCR). Meninick along with Gladys Wiltse, YNCR and Indian Health Service Environmental Nurse, Chris Walsh were also asked to leave by tribal police who stood guard at the entrance of the 14 Tribes Room.

> ***"When we arrived we were told that we could not go into the meeting."***
>
> *Joanne Meninick,*
> *Yakama Nation*
> *Cultural Resources*

The tribal employees approached Yakama tribal chairman, Lonnie Selam at his office who gave them a letter verifying their attendance at the meeting.

"I still don't understand why we were not going to be admitted but after we showed the police Lonnie's letter, we got to sit in," said Wiltse. Later Yakama elder, Sadie Heemsah dressed in tribal regalia was also turned away.

Harry Smiskin, Department of Natural Resources Administrative Assistant said, "We have some dissenters and every time we talk about spruce budworm spraying which they are against, we can't seem to get any work done."

While the tribe advocates the spraying of Bacillius thuringiensis kurstaki (Btk) those concerned say it is destroying cultural foods as well as affecting tribal members.

Smiskin added that over 300,000 acres of forest land is being destroyed that needs work to rid of the spruce budworm. "That's why we met with Senator Murray's staff and we wanted to get something accomplished," he said.

The spruce budworm loves to munch on the needles causing devastation to the stands of trees on the closed area of the Yakama Reservation. The private landowners south of the ceded area are concerned about the effects of the budworm spreading to their area. "We're trying to see how we can work together to get rid of this," Smiskin said.

In the afternoon Knudson accompanied by Smiskin viewed several different areas on the Yakama Reservation.

When they entered Apas Goudy housing in Wapato Knudson was in awe of the deteriorated homes. "She was so struck by the living conditions that she asked to go back so she could take pictures," he said.

Knudson also toured the tribal jail, tribal court house and the Stanley Smartlowit Education Center. The tribe is seeking allocation of funds to renovate the various sites Knudson visited.

Although Senator Murray was scheduled to make the visit extended Congressional sessions made it difficult for her to leave and she decided she would send staff.

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(LaCourse—Continued from page 2)

Americans for Indian Opportunity and received the Indian Media Man of the Year at the National Indian Media Conference. He was near completion on the history of the Yakama people.

He was the eldest son of Eldon H. LaCourse and Helen Holt LaCourse. He was born in Nespelem, Washington on Sept. 23, 1938. He attended high school and graduated from St. Anthony's Seminary in Santa Barbara, Calif. He received his English Master's Preparation from Portland State University, Portland, Ore. And did non-thesis Masters Study at the University of Washington, Seattle, Wash. LaCourse was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his daughter Shirley LaCourse, Albuquerque, N.M., sisters Judith LaCourse, San Francisco, Calif., Janice LaCourse-Rosettie, Denver, CO., Jeanne LaCourse-Raymond, Seattle, Wash. and brothers Philip LaCourse, Pendleton, Ore., William LaCourse, Tacoma, Wash. and several nieces and nephews. Both Catholic and tribal Washat Services were held in Pendleton, Ore. He was buried next to his mother and father at Athena, Ore.

Forest and tribal significance

(Continued from page 7)

blends with fir and is limited in the western portion where 50 to 60 inches occurs. Fir is the West Coast forest type which constitutes the rain. Other species include western hemlock and western red cedar with some mixture throughout of western larch, western white pine, and Englemann spruce, with pure lodgepole pine type, generally at higher elevations. Various sub-Alpine species reach to the timberline on the east slope of Pahto (Mt. Adams) and the high points at the crest of the Cascades.

Grazing in the forest

Grazing use dates back to the signing of the 1855 Treaty when the forest provided summer range for the many horse herds. Back then tribal people counted their wealth by the horses they owned.

Grazing values have continued with domestic livestock replacing the horses with two-thirds of the range capacity used by non-tribally owned stock, principally cattle. The remainder is sold under grazing permit and is part of the integrated forest management plan.

Tribal members clung to their way of life and spiritual values and were reluctant to permit timber cutting. Although the potential of commercial timber and revenue was apparent earlier, timber value was low because the forest was inaccessible at that time.

It wasn't until June of 1941 during a General Council meeting that tribal members agreed to commercialization of timber through a sale program.

Since then the tribe has supported and worked to development of a wise and productive forest management program plan.