

Management, protection vital to . . .

Trap provides data on fish returns



Photo courtesy of Don Ratliff

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife employees install fish trap near Sherar's Falls enabling escapement count of fall chinook and steelhead.

With the number of fishermen fishing the Deschutes River on the rise, dams blocking the passage between spawning grounds and the ocean and increased recreational use of the river, salmon and steelhead fisheries face a threat to their existence. Diminishing returns spur biologists to seek ways of maintaining adequate population levels.

A fish trap installed recently at Sherar's Bridge on the Deschutes River is one way biologists are able to see what's going on in the river. Data collected at this site provides information on escapement of steelhead and fall chinook over Sherar's Falls.

A certain number of fish must return to spawning grounds upriver in order to maintain appropriate population levels providing for all the needs of Deschutes River users.

Besides counting fish, the trap, operated by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, enables biologists to study life cycles of returning

salmon and steelhead and the various ages at which they return.

Installed for the first time in 1977, return of progeny from the first spawning season are now being seen. With a life cycle from four to five years collected data is now beginning to have some meaning for biologists.

According to research biologist Kirk Schroeder, efficient analysis of the data can come only after years of collecting it. "To really look at this with certainty takes 10 to 15 years," he says.

With this data and results of counts taken at Sherar's Bridge of harvested salmon and steelhead by sport and dipnet fishermen, estimates of escapement can be accurately made. All of this taken together gives ample data to estimate fish population levels in future runs.

The trap will remain in the river until October 31 so all returning salmon and steelhead can be counted.

Task force to identify problems at Sherar's, recommend solutions

Developed to identify problems that exist at the Sherar's Bridge fishing site and to recommend to the Warm Springs Tribal Council solutions to those problems, a seven-member task force has been working since mid-May developing recommendations and working up a comprehensive development and management plan for the area.

The Sherar's Bridge Task Force, chaired by tribal attorney Jim Noteboom, consists of Delbert Frank, Sr., Ellen Heath, Jerome Main, Jeff Sanders, Merrit Youngdeer and Gene Greene. The task force has dealt with three primary areas of concern, those being general law enforcement, allocation of fishing sites and management of the area.

The task force was directed by Tribal Council to draw up plans and recommendations for the site. July 26, Tribal

Council was presented with development concepts for a raft take-out site, campground and day use areas. Also presented was a law enforcement plan for Sherar's Bridge.

One concern mentioned during the presentation was that of the rafters and the take-out sites used. Many rafters, said one fishermen, are abusive and intoxicated when putting out. When in this condition, said the fishermen, it is dangerous for the rafters as well as the people fishing. She urged the council to act quickly on any plans for the area.

Councilman Mike Clements also stated that there are "treaty reasons why rafters shouldn't go" beyond the proposed take-out development site, which is one mile above the bridge. When the rafters go farther, fisheries are disturbed. "The BIA needs to help us uphold these treaty

reasons," he said.

The source of financing for the proposed site development, which is approximately \$500,000, is unknown. State funds would be available, but Clements questioned the state's involvement, saying there are too many restrictions and that possibly the Tribe will lose control of the area.

However, Councilman Larry Calica stated that he didn't feel it was important where the money came from, just as long as the area was developed and patrolled adequately.

Tribal attorney Dennis Karnopp said it is important to gain control of the area for the purpose of protection of the water and land. "We need to gain some kind of control of the river use," Clements again stated that he wanted the Tribe to have complete control over the site.

The expense of the proposed development of the campgrounds could be recovered from fees charged for the use of those areas. It was proposed that the Tribe follow the same fee schedule used by the state, \$5 per night during the summer and \$4 per night during the winter.

Approximately 36,000 rafters take out at Sherar's during a nine month season. "It would not be difficult to amortize development funds" if a rafter fee was initiated, said Karnopp.

Warm Springs Chief of Police Jeff Sanders presented four law enforcement propositions. The fourth and least expensive, approximately \$19,000, was preferred by Sanders. He proposed that one officer be hired to work the area six months a year.

Yet to be selected by Tribal Council is the Sherar's Bridge committee. The committee, consisting of fishermen who use the area, will be selected by fellow-fishermen and it will be their responsibility to decide the actual fishing site allocations and to handle any



Photo courtesy of Don Ratliff

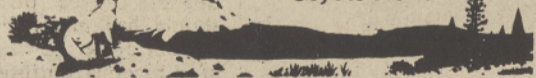
disputes that may arise. The committee will operate in a traditional way, similar to the Celilo fishing committee.

Though these plans are still in the working stages and

nothing has yet been decided as far as site development and law enforcement goes, it is felt by some that the matters are urgent and should be dealt with quickly.

Spilyay Tymoo

Coyote News



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FOUNDED IN MARCH OF 1976

Published bi-weekly by the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. Warm Springs, Oregon 97761. Located in the Old Administration Building. Any written material to Spilyay Tymoo should be addressed to:

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Subscription Rate: \$6.00 per year