

Schoolhouse salmon released into creek

By Terri Harber
Spilyay Tymoo

Tiny Chinook salmon that had called Warm Springs Elementary School their home for several weeks were released into Shitike Creek on Dec. 16 to begin their long, perilous journey to Deschutes River, then the Pacific Ocean and, eventually, back.

Fewer than one in 100 of the salmon are expected to survive the lengthy trip, said Jens Lovtang, a fisheries management supervisor with Natural Resources.

Warm Springs Chief Delvis Heath compared the salmon to warriors because both take on perilous missions. He sang to the children during a brief ceremony near the edge of the creek.

"These fish you kids have raised have a long journey," Chief Heath told the group of 3rd graders who played host to the fish that lived in on-campus incubation tanks. "They will go to the ocean and not many will come back."

He also blessed the little salmon before they were introduced into their new, natural home. Then three of the students, one at a time and representing each class of 3rd graders, carefully emptied plastic buckets containing some of the salmon into the creek.

The fish had to be acclimated to the exceptionally cold water before they could be released into the creek. Seeing large frozen patches in the water that late



Photo courtesy of Lisa Hewlett-Dubisar



Terri Harber/Spilyay

At top, the students release fish; and (above) Hewlett-Dubisar and Blueback transfer the fish to buckets.

fall morning was "unusual," Lovtang said.

He estimated the water temperature in the creek to be only 30 to 35 degrees that morning, much higher than the roughly 50-degree temperature water in the schoolhouse incubators.

"They prefer colder tempera-

tures," but a sudden change in water temperature could cause them stress, he said of the little salmon.

The Warm Springs students could be seen checking on the fish at least once a day, often more frequently, while the fish lived on campus, said Sarah Bennett, one of the teachers.

It was first planned last year to bring some baby salmon to Warm Springs students so they could watch them grow from eggs to fish. However, the timing was wrong because the children would have been out of school when the salmon would have been released, Bennett said.

The fish have proved themselves great little tools for teaching the children about life cycles, the environment and how im-

portant the salmon are in their culture, she said.

"It was very good for the children," she said. "They were very excited about it all."

School and federal environmental officials would like to see the program become permanent.

The Natural Resources Branch and the Warm Springs Natural Fish Hatchery sponsored the new science project. Warm Springs has the strongest Chinook population in the Columbia Basin.

The incubators were set up by Lisa Hewlett-Dubisar, a fisheries biologist and Kevin Blueback, an animal caretaker at the hatchery.

Ironically, little salmon at this stage of development are called "fry," Lovtang added.



Terri Harber/Spilyay

Warm Springs Chief Delvis Heath gives the blessing before the fish begin their journey to the ocean.

Legal Aid Services of Oregon provides free assistance to low-income Oregonians in many civil cases. Speak with an attorney during drop-in hours 1 to 4 p.m. on

the first Monday of the month at the Family Resources Center in Warm Springs. Or call 385-6944 Monday through Wednesday between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Indian law prof. to speak at COCC

Professor Robert Miller, Native American law professor at Lewis and Clark Law School, will speak at the Central Oregon Community College campus in Bend in January.

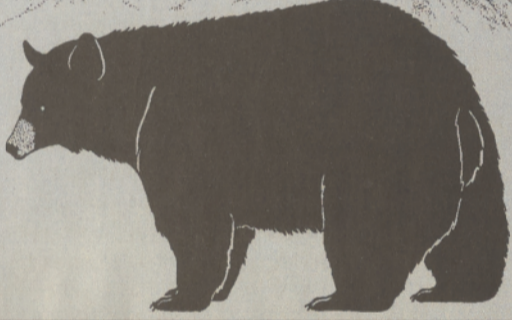
Professor Miller will speak at 4 p.m. on Jan. 21 in Wille Hall at COCC.

The school is asking that those interested in attending please RSVP. Please contact

Justine Connor, COCC Native American program coordinator, at 318-3782; or email jconnor@cocc.edu.

This is a free event. The event is on a Thursday afternoon, one of COCC's highest enrollment days, so parking is limited. Come early and utilize the campus shuttle to ensure a timely arrival.

Black Bear Diner



Grrreat Family Food

Madras' Finest Family Dining

- All Products Prepared Fresh Daily
- Entrees Roasted Daily
- Featuring Hand Cut USDA Choice Steaks

BREAKFAST - LUNCH - DINNER

Served All Day

• Senior Menu • Children's Menu • Daily Specials

All Major Credit Cards Accepted

237 S.W. 4th Street, Madras • 475-6632 OPEN 6 am - 10 pm DAILY

No Foolin – The Best Food In Town!

Cliff's Repair & Auto Sales



Approved Auto Repair



Free towing with any bill exceeding \$500

(Free towing offer good only for Warm Springs, Madras, Metolius and Culver areas.)



475-6618

330 S.W. Culver Hwy.
Madras, OR 97741

Free Battery Check & Installation with purchase