

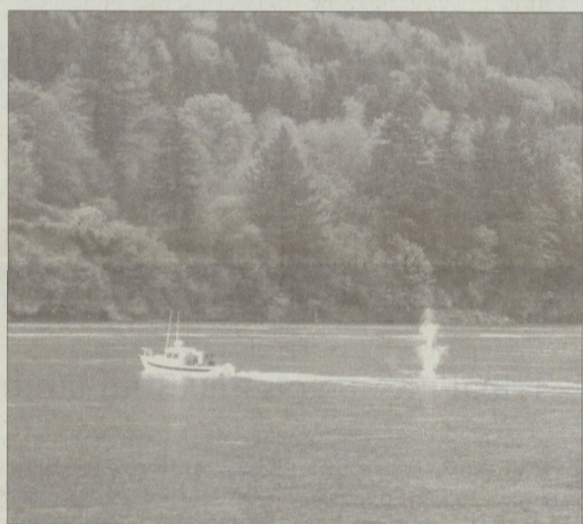
Fishing by Bonneville



Dave McMechan/Spilyay



Lyle Rhoan Sr. and Devere Charley (picture at top) land a salmon, one of several they caught that day at the tribal fishing site by the Bonneville Dam. The site, on the Washington side, drew several fishermen that day (picture above). Meanwhile, off-shore, a government boat was attempting to drive sea lions away from the area. An enforcement officer would fire an explosive device at a sea lion (picture at right). The sea lion would swim away from the boat under water, only to appear minutes later some distance away.



Snake dams should come down, former salmon judge says

(AP)—A federal judge who presided over the Columbia River Basin salmon case for years told a public television station that the Snake River's four hydroelectric dams should be breached to help wild salmon.

U.S. District Judge James Redden's comments to Idaho Public Television were recorded for an upcoming outdoor Idaho documentary and brief video and audio clips were released last week.

"I think we need to take those dams down," Redden said in the interview.

"Trying to take out a dam is not, not very difficult," Redden added. "It's a lot easier than it is putting them up. You don't just take the whole thing down, you just let the water go around it. You just dig out the ditch and let it go around."

The 83-year-old Portland judge took himself off the case last fall after earlier rejecting a third federal government plan to balance hydro-power operations with the needs of salmon and steelhead listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

U.S. District Judge Michael Simon now oversees the matter. Redden is still practicing, though with a reduced caseload.

Defenders of the Snake River dams say they are needed for reliable power production. Opponents say the harm they do to imperiled fish runs outweighs their benefits.

Redden rejected salmon restoration plans, known as biological opinions, from three presidents: Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and now Barack Obama.

Last August, he ruled that the Obama administration's update of the last Bush plan was too vague to meet the demands of the Endangered Species Act. Redden added that he didn't think habitat improvements alone would do the job and said it was time to consider new options, including removing some of the dams. He left the plan in force through 2013, when a more specific plan is due.

Redden's 2006 order that water be diverted from turbines to spill over dams and help young salmon migrating to the ocean is his top contribution, Pat Ford, executive director of the conservation coalition Save Our Wild Salmon, said last fall.

That order has resulted in increased returns of wild and hatchery salmon alike, Ford said.

35 years dedicated to fisheries

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and its member tribes recently marked their Thirty-Fifth Anniversary of service.

CRITFC and its member tribes—Warm Springs, Yakama, Umatilla and Nez Perce—are key advocates of treaty-reserved rights to salmon.

CRITFC was established on April 27, 1977 by the four tribes.

The commission was tasked with protecting the tribal fishery, restoring fish runs and establishing an intertribal enforcement program.

CRITFC serves as a technical and coordinating agency for the member tribes when addressing salmon policy and treaty fishing rights throughout the Columbia Basin.

Gravel to gravel

Working under their mission of "ensuring a unified voice in the overall management of the fisheries resources," CRITFC foresaw the need for a holistic, life-cycle approach to salmon management.

CRITFC introduced the innovative gravel-to-gravel management strategies for salmon through Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit, the tribal salmon restoration plan.

This plan has helped to reverse the decline of salmon populations in the Columbia Basin.

Last year, CRITFC developed a similar comprehensive plan for the recovery of Pacific Lamprey.

Working together through CRITFC, the tribes obtained fisheries harvest agreements under the *US v. Oregon* Management Agreement and the Pacific Salmon Treaty, and

"We need to find a solution to managing the sea lion predation that takes 15-20 percent of the (Endangered Species Act)-listed salmon."

secured funding for habitat improvement. They have utilized sources such as the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, and the Bonneville Power Administration Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Program.

"This is an exciting time for fisheries throughout the Columbia River Basin," said Gerald Lewis, CRITFC's chairman.

"The tribes have accomplished a lot for the region's fish populations over the past 35 years, but there is a lot of work that needs to be done. Our water is contaminated, fish are still listed under ESA, and the region's lamprey populations are in serious trouble. These issues must be addressed as we look forward to the next 35 years."

Era of conflict

CRITFC was formed during an era of conflict in Columbia Basin fisheries.

The commission was formed after federal courts ruled that the tribes' treaty fishing right entitled tribal fishermen to a "fair share," or 50 percent of the harvestable fish destined for their usual and accustomed fishing areas.

Committed to workforce development in the tribal communities, tribal fisheries programs began with a handful of employees 35 years ago.

Today, tribal fisheries programs are among the largest fisheries employers in the Columbia Basin.

Due in large part to tribal actions, some areas of the Basin are currently experiencing the largest salmon runs that have occurred in recent decades.

Both tribal and non-tribal harvest opportunities have increased accordingly.

"CRITFC embodies unity through action," said Paul Lumley, CRITFC's executive director. "We have demonstrated that there is strength in numbers. The past 35 years are a true testament to what we can accomplish for a common goal."

Future priorities

Chairman Lewis said, "We need to look towards the future and what we want to accomplish in the next 35 years. The commission is setting priorities and they are numerous. We need to reduce toxic contamination in our water."

"We will continue to educate the Basin that mass marking and mark selective fisheries will not increase natural spawners. We will work with our partners to redirect hatchery policies so they rebuild salmon runs throughout the Columbia Basin. We need to find a solution to managing the sea lion predation that takes 15-20 percent of the (Endangered Species Act)-listed salmon."

CRITFC is supporting a U.S.-Canada Columbia River Treaty resolution that respects salmon and other tribal trust resources.

"And we will combat the continuous efforts to decrease federal funding levels that impact our efforts to rebuild salmon runs to their full productivity," Lewis said.

Hit Squad enchilada feed at the Community Center on Friday, May 4, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

~ Mothers Day Sale ~

The Warm Springs Recreation Department is hosting a Mothers Day Sale on Friday, May 4 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Community Center. Vendors: To reserve your table, call Carol at 541-553-3243.

High Looke Lodge

Assisted Living Facility



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