

Fisheries success at Pelton-Round Butte

Last year was a big one at Pelton Round Butte, with record-breaking returns of adult Chinook from the upper basin, and funding for new restoration projects in the Crooked River.

There was the ongoing success of smolt acclimation, and the Confederated Tribes finalized plans to take additional ownership in the hydro facilities.

At the same time, the co-owner-operators—the tribes and Portland General Electric—faced serious challenges, including extreme drought and resulting low flows in the Deschutes.

With snowpack building up on the mountains and predictions of positive ocean conditions, the partners are heading into 2022 feeling optimistic about the months ahead.

Fish ladder fresh fix

At one time in the past, the Pelton Round Butte fish ladder was the longest in the world.

For a little over a decade, adult fish returning to the Deschutes from the ocean used the ladder, built in 1957, to swim safely past the hydro-power project. In the 1970s, the ladder was converted to a rearing facility for hatchery fish—a purpose it has served since that time.

In the summer of 2021, the facility operating team kicked into action to complete

repairs and upgrades to the aging facility.

Engineers and contractors performed a geotechnical survey of the entire two-mile ladder, allowing the team to identify the areas most at-risk for potential landslides. These sections were then piped and buried, so that flow will still be maintained even in the event of a rockfall. Additionally, the crew repaired the concrete, removed vegetation and sealed cracks.

In November, Chinook salmon were moved into the restored ladder, where they will remain until their release into the Lower Deschutes River in May. In two years, the fish will return from the



Courtesy CTWS/PGE



Nearly 800 redband trout entered the Pelton trap, October to December 2021 (above).

A large portion of the ladder was capped to reduce the risk of damage from rockfalls (left).

Zone 6 tribal fishery

Scaffold, and hook and line fishing is open through 6 p.m., Saturday, March 19 in all of zone 6. Allowed gear is hoop nets, dip bag nets and hook and line.

Sales are allowed for salmon, steelhead, shad, carp, catfish, walleye, bass and yellow perch. Sturgeon between 43 and 54 inches fork length in The Dalles and John Day pools; and between 38 and 54 inches fork length in the Bonneville pool, may be kept for subsistence use. Sturgeon within the legal-size limit, and caught in the platform and hook and line fishery, may be sold only if caught during open commercial gill net periods for that pool.

Sales of fish are allowed after the fishing period as long as they were landed during the open commercial season. Please call in and select number 9 for commercial fishing periods.

Smelt fishing Cowlitz, Sandy rivers

Tribal Council approved regulations regarding smelt harvest in the Cowlitz and Sandy River. Harvest may take place seven days per week from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. This is a subsistence fishery, and there is a tribal limit of 2,000 pounds but no individual limit. Sales are not allowed.

Gear is limited to dip nets and the nets must be attended continuously. The Branch of Natural Resources will have creel technicians to check your harvest, if you are not checked, you are required to report your catch to the harvest manager within 24 hours. The phone number is 541-460-0272. Please leave a message if Resources are unable to answer the phone in time. Tribal member who are fishing must have his or her enrollment card on hand. If asked, you must allow your catch to be inspected by tribal, federal or state officers.

Tribes want to boost traditional diets in federal food programs

A group of Native American tribal advocates are pointing out that food is both identity and power.

And they would like Washington, D.C., to understand this. The tribal group is seeking more control to tribes in the food program choices. Specifically, they would like more traditional foods in aid programs.

The groups are eyeing not only the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, or FDPIR, but also the Women Infants and Children

nutrition programs, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and even the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Greater tribal control would encompass funding, and include the right to buy produce from tribal farmers.

“Feeding your own people, there’s nothing better than that,” said Mary Greene-Trottier, president of the National Association of Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations.

Local job growth continues

The Central Oregon region continues to post strong hiring numbers, as 2022 is under way.

Jefferson County includes much of the reservation, including the Warm Springs area. The unemployment rate for all of Jefferson County has now fallen to 5.3 percent, fast approaching the pre-pandemic low of 4.1 percent.

Total nonfarm employment rose by 60 jobs. The county added 210 jobs over the past 12 months. The single biggest gains were with the tribes, including the enterprises.

Leisure and hospitality

added 80, and manufacturing, 40.

Deschutes and Crook counties are also seeing significant employment gains over the past year, according to the latest number of the Oregon Department of Employment.

CRITFC seeking to fill positions

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission is advertising for the following positions:

Public information specialist. This position works to forward the culture, goals and aspirations of the commission and its member tribes to the broader public through media and outreach activities. The position will write press releases, news stories, website and social media posts, and other creative writing to share the work, priorities, and views of CRITFC and its member tribes. Salary \$65,137–71,651. Portland. Closes February 22.

Treaty fisheries

community outreach liaison. This position will be support outreach, contract tracing and wrap around support services for tribal communities along the Columbia River gorge. \$37,540–39,520. Portland.

SCHISM Modeler/Oceanographer. This position will work collaboratively with fish scientists and managers to integrate numerical hydrodynamic modeling into conservation and management programs for critical fish species and stocks in the Columbia River, focusing on Upper Columbia summer and fall chinook and Snake River fall chinook, but including other salmonid species, lamprey, and sturgeon.

\$75,799–\$80,854.

Fishing site maintenance worker (2 positions). These positions will provide the maintenance of the 31 Tribal In-Lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Sites located along 150 miles of the Columbia River. \$34,496–\$36,796. The Dalles.

CRITPD-Police officer. Based in Hood River. \$51,516–\$56,261.

Dispatcher. Hood River. \$39,937–\$43,661.

HR generalist. \$57,560–63,315.

The complete job description, minimum skills, application requirements, deadlines, and pay information are available at critfc.or



A Valentines Day Wish from artist Travis Bobb.

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