

Tribes, PGE review latest on basin fisheries work

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and Portland General Electric in July hosted the Thirtieth Annual Pelton-Round Butte fisheries workshop.

The workshop keeps the stakeholders informed about the latest science for fish, wildlife, and habitat in the Deschutes River Basin.

The longevity of the event is a testament to the ongoing collaboration between partners throughout the Deschutes Basin, the importance of mutual learning, and dedication to long-term strategies for fish and wildlife.

Long-term partnership

When the partners hosted the first Pelton-Round Butte fisheries workshop in the summer of 1995, when just 29 people were invited. Now, 30 years later, the annual event hosted in Bend by the tribes and PGE, is still going strong, and this summer 86 people showed.

The workshop attendees gathered at the Oregon State University Cascades in Bend to hear the latest updates from biologists, environmental scientists and restoration leaders.

Presentations covered a



Area of Whychus Creek. The tribes and PGE have invested \$26 million for fisheries restoration along Whychus.

range of topics, from fish population trends to habitat improvement projects, to the threat of invasive zebra mussels.

“Good communication, at these workshops helps with good working relationships,” said Robert Brunoe, Secretary Treasurer-CEO of the Confederated Tribes.

“Our neighbors are not

going anywhere and the tribes also are not going anywhere, so it’s in the best interest for everyone to work together.

“When we do, we can accomplish great things to address climate change and ensure we have clean water for our communities, fish and wildlife habitat and enough of that water now and into the future.”

Megan Hill is the manager of environmental science at PGE hydro-power projects. “Despite the effects of climate change and the growth in Central Oregon, which can cause challenges, there’s a lot to celebrate,” Ms. Hill said.

Environmental advocates, outdoor enthusiasts, and representatives from tribal, federal and state agen-

cies were in attendance.

“The fisheries workshop is a unique opportunity to bring together a diverse group of people passionate about the Deschutes, to promote mutual learning and connection,” Hill said.

“It allows our biologists to share their research with the public and learn from other agencies and non-profit organizations involved in basin restoration. This collaboration helps the Confederated Tribes and PGE to improve our fisheries program.”

On Whychus Creek

Since the 1990s, when the tribes and PGE first started hosting the workshop, fish habitat in the upper Deschutes Basin has improved.

Whychus Creek, an important tributary to the Deschutes, has more water flowing through it, several key organizations—including the Deschutes Land Trust and Deschutes River Conservancy—formed to protect and restore habitat in the river.

The tribes and PGE and the tribes have contributed \$26 million to fish and water conservation.

Salmon and steelhead are now spawning and reproducing upstream of the Pelton-Round Butte dams.

On top of these habitat enhancements, salmon and steelhead are now spawning and reproducing upstream of the Round-Butte dams—something that hadn’t happened since before the hydro-power complex was constructed in the 1960s.

“While we’ve come a long way and are excited to have these fish back in their historical habitats upstream of the project, there is still a lot of work to do to reach the goals of sustainable and harvestable runs of these fish,” Hill said, kicking off the 2024 workshop.

“And that’s the purpose of today—to share information about our studies and learn from each other, in an effort to improve these fish runs for generations to come.”

Presentations from the 2024 workshop can be viewed on PGE’s Deschutes Updates webpage.

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