Traditional Food Festival

The Tribe's Cultural and Fish and Wildlife departments are teaming together to hold a traditional foods festival at the Cultural Site at noon on Friday, June 22. Everyone is invited to come sample a number of traditional foods prepared in traditional and modern ways. There will be skwak-wal or eels, camas, and hopefully some salmon and fry bread.

We are also looking for volunteers willing to help gather the camas. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to use a shovel. The camas dig is scheduled for June 8, we will meet at the Cultural department's office at 9 a.m. and carpool to the site. Reyn and Shonn Leno have generously donated the camas from their property just north of Willamina. Depending upon the number of volunteers, the dig should last 3 to 4 hours.

Camas produces a bulb that was a very important food stuff for Tribes of the West. Camas is a member of the lily family and has attractive blue flowers. The bulb was prepared in a number of ways but one of the most common methods was the camas oven. The camas oven commonly consisted of a pit lined with river rock. A large fire was built over the pit and once the fire had died down and the rocks were sufficiently heated, the pit was lined with skunk cabbage leaves. Camas bulbs were then placed on the leaves and one additional layer of leaves was placed over the camas. Then a final layer of soil was placed over the leaves and the camas was left to cook for several days. The cooked camas was often pounded into "cakes," or dried for storage.

We will be building a traditional camas oven at the Cultural Site. Don't miss your chance to taste camas from a traditional camas oven and see how it works.

Members of the Fish and Wildlife and Timber Committees will gather the eels at Willamette Falls. Northwest Tribes have been gathering skwak-wal or eels for hundreds of years at the Falls. The eels congregate at the falls during their spawning migration up the Willamette River. Eels have traditionally been netted in pools below the falls or plucked from the rocks as they use their mouths to inch up the wall of the falls. The upcoming fishing trip represents the first major return of the Grand Rondes to the falls in many years, although a number of individual Tribal members have continued to gather through the years. June 22 is your chance to taste skwak-wal prepared several different ways or to hear from the committees about the one(s) that got away!

If we have enough interest we would like to continue and expand the Traditional Food Festival on an annual basis. We've received a lot of positive feed-back and information on traditional foods and their preparation from many Tribal members while planning this gathering, but we would like to hear more. If you have information or recipes for traditional foods please contact the Cultural or Fish and Wildlife departments at 503-879-2249 or 503-879-2382.

We are very excited about providing the membership a taste of these traditional foods, so mark your calendar for noon on June 22 and join us at the Cultural Site.

Photo by Kim Mueller

Camas for Lunch?

The bulbs of the camas plant are just one of the many traditional foods that will be part of the Culture and Natural Resource's food festival scheduled for Friday, June 22. The food festival will be held at the Tribe's Cultural Site. The camas will be cooked in a traditional camas oven that will be constructed just for the occasion.

Riparian Zones and Agency Creek Restoration

By Rod Thompson, Water Quality Specialist

In recent months riparian areas have been a common subject among the Natural Resources staff and the Tribal committees working on the Natural Resource 10 year management plan. Riparian areas are important not only to the stream but also to fish and wildlife. Approximately 157 species in the Oregon Coast Range use riparian areas primarily for foraging and nesting habitat and another 32 species use the area secondarily. That is 189 species, out of 204 species (93%), that use the riparian zone for foraging and/or nesting! (Brown et al. 1985). We have also confirmed coho salmon spawning in Agency Creek, North and West Fork of Agency Creek, Wind River, Joe Creek, and Coast Creek.

Riparian areas provide large woody debris (LWD), shade, sediment control, bank stability, and nutrients to the stream. Large woody debris (logs within the stream) can slow water flows, trap sediment, form pools, provide cover for fish from predators and high flows, and are food for macroinvertebrates (water insects). Riparian trees and shrubs can provide shade to keep water temperatures cool, act as a filter by trapping sediment, and stabilize banks with their roots. Litter fall and woody debris from riparian vegetation supply the stream with nutrients and macroinvertebrates with food.

The riparian area also provides travel corridors, thermal protection, foraging and nesting areas, for wildlife. Continuous riparian areas can provide "paths" or "travel corridors" for birds and animals to travel with protective cover from predators and adverse weather conditions. Riparian vegetation provides thermal cover by regulating the temperature within the canopy and reduces large fluctuations in day and night temperatures. Riparian areas are important forage and nesting areas for amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and birds. (Ie. macroinvertebrates for amphibians, reptiles, small mammals, and birds and vegetation and berries for birds, bears, deer, and elk.) Downed woody debris (logs) provide food for macroinvertebrates and foraging sites, cover, and denning areas for amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals.

Functions provided by riparian areas also depend on distance from the stream. For example, bank stability is a function that occurs primarily within 30 feet of the stream. The occurrence of large woody debris is dependant on the potential tree height for that species of tree and area. For example, if a Douglas fir tree has the potential to grow 250 feet tall it has to be within 250 feet of the stream for it to become LWD (independent of steep slopes or ground movement). These are just a couple of examples why riparian area widths are important when planning forest management activities and stream restoration.

The Natural Resource Department over the last few years has been conducting surveys and gathering data to help the Tribe gain important stream and riparian information. These include stream habitat surveys, stream temperature monitoring, culvert inventory, fish surveys, macroinvertebrate surveys, and water quality monitoring. All this data will be used to develop the Natural Resource 10 year management plan and to manage and restore our riparian areas.

The Tribe hopes to conduct more stream restoration projects in the next few years. One restoration project, that has been prioritized by the Fish and Wildlife Committee, is the Agency Creek Restoration project along Agency Creek and the South Yamhill River below the pow wow grounds. This area has some very large bank erosion problems and is cause for safety concerns along the high banks. The Tribe is considering bank stabilization and riparian plantings to improve conditions along Agency Creek and the South Yamhill River. The project should reduce the amount of sediment being introduced into the stream, improve riparian conditions, and improve safety.

Photos by Rod Thompson

Habitat — This fallen log on Coast Creek is a good example of how natural resources in a fish habitat area can provide important things like shade, deeper pools of water and even food for macro invertebrates which in turn feed the fish. The upstream side of the log collects sediment and as the water flows over and under the log it creates a pool.

Spawned Out — This spawned out Coho salmon will provide nutrients back into the stream, which is food for juvenile fish completing the cycle. Pictured at right is a Coho male that spawned out on agency creek a half mile below the forks.