

Tribe's 'Extreme Cuisine' featured on Food Network

By Ron Karten,

Smoke Signals staff writer

"Extreme Cuisine," the new Food Network television program featuring Jeff Corwin, is more a hook than a description of the show, the host said during a visit to Grand Ronde on July 30.

"Once we get eyes on the show," Corwin said, "people will learn about other cultures."

Filming a program about the Grand Ronde Tribe's traditional hunt for Pacific lamprey at Willamette Falls, Corwin said in an interview with *Smoke Signals* afterward that, despite what the program title suggests, he was not hosting programs "just to shock," but "to help people reconnect with the sources of their food."

"I want people to think about where their meals come from," he said.

In his 14 years hosting a succession of conservation shows, Corwin has found himself between the jaws of an elephant and the fangs of a poisonous coral snake, but he said the worst perils he has faced were manmade.

In that regard, he survived a Maoist rebellion in Nepal and a coup in Cambodia, he said. "Today, I'm sliding off the rocks on this waterfall, but the bigger danger is swallowing the water" contaminated with chemical runoff.

His professional career has included Animal Planet's "Jeff Corwin Experience," "Corwin's Quest, Spring Watch and King of the Jungle," Disney's "Going Wild with Jeff Corwin," Discovery Networks' "Investigation Earth," NBC's "Jeff Corwin Unleashed," and Travel Channel's "Into Alaska" and "Into the American West." In 2007, Corwin also co-created and co-hosted CNN's "Planet in Peril" with Anderson Cooper. In 2008, Animal Planet premiered "The Vanishing Frog," a powerful documentary highlighting Corwin's year-long, global odyssey exploring the mass extinction of the planet's amphibian species.



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Jeff Corwin, host of "Extreme Cuisine," a new program airing on the Food Network, holds a Pacific lamprey after catching it at Willamette Falls while filming an episode for the series on Thursday, July 30. The hunt for lamprey was guided by Tribal member and Natural Resources manager Michael Wilson and Tribal member Greg Archuleta.

"It sometimes makes you mad at your species," he said, "but I've always been an optimist."

This year, his new book will come out. *100 Heartbeats* (Rodale) explores the plight of the planet's most endangered wildlife species and will have a companion television series under the same title.

Meanwhile, "Extreme Cuisine" focuses on foods that are "humanely and sustainably harvested, renewable and culturally significant," he said.

In Peru, where he recently filmed a show, his indigenous hosts have their choice of 4,000 different varieties of potatoes that they have grown for 8,000 years, he said.

Pacific lamprey, by comparison, can be linked to relatives that go

as far back as 450 million years, according to Tribal Natural Resources biologist Rebecca McCoun.

"Imagine," Corwin said on camera, "an animal so well-designed that it lasts that long without evolving."

At Willamette Falls, however, where Corwin's Field Producer, Ingrid Lantz, scouted location shots the day before, low water flow threatened to leave the crew without a fresh fish for their show.

On the day of the shoot, Tribal member and Natural Resources manager Michael Wilson and Tribal member Greg Archuleta guided Corwin and his crew as they worked their way along rock faces with a much diminished water

flow, but still with patches of wildly rushing water.

Four dead lamprey were among the group's first finds. Corwin signaled to his crew hundreds of yards across the water that they were large, but...and he drew his finger across his throat.

Soon, Corwin came up with two lamprey, still breathing, still suctioned on the rocks to swing their ways up the falls.

Holding a lamprey in his gloved hand, Corwin told the camera about the eel-like fish, the feeling of vertigo he was experiencing, and the felt shoes, supplied by the Natural Resources Department, that helped him stay upright on the slippery rocks.

"These rocks are absolutely treacherous," he told the camera.

"I was worried we weren't going to get one," Corwin said later, but many previously caught lamprey were cooling their jets in the Natural Resources' deep freeze back at the Tribe. A lamprey dinner for the show was never in doubt.

The television crew of 13 arrived in two sparkling Chevy Suburbans early in the day, and took off in an old Tribal skiff piloted by Natural Resources staffer Lawrence Schwabe. First filmed were sequences of Corwin leaving the dock, arriving at the Falls, and returning.

Cameraman Josh Bane shot the crew's arrival at the Falls from the PGE/Westland Paper complex across the river. Cameraman Glenn Evans followed Corwin on the rocks and in the water from closer up. Evans took a pummeling as he held an underwater camera under the falls facing up into the falling water.

"This is the most fun we've had



Tribal member CeCe Kneeland, middle, shows Jeff Corwin, left, the traditional way of preparing lamprey for cooking as cameraman Glenn Evans films them at the Tribe's Natural Resources Department on Thursday, July 30.

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