

Young ranchers receive scholarships

Devin Schreiber, Alisha Melville earn award from Wallowa County Stockgrowers

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Two \$1,400 scholarships were awarded last month by the Wallowa County Stockgrowers to youths in the process of building their own cattle herds.

Devin Schreiber, who attends Joseph Charter School, and Alisha Melville, who attends Enterprise High School, each received a scholarship, according to Stockgrowers Vice President Deanna DeMelo.

The scholarships are to purchase bred heifers to either begin or add to the youths' herds.

DeMelo said each student also received \$350 from the Wallowa County Haygrowers to help feed the animals during their first year.

The scholarships were presented during the annual dinner put on by the Stockgrowers and the Wallowa County Agricultural Resource Foundation. The foundation regularly awards scholarships to youths in agriculture-related college classes.

Last year, DeMelo said, the group awarded two scholarships, although she did not have the recipients' names or the amounts.

She said nearly 100 people attended the dinner, enjoying prime rib and a dessert auction. The COVID-19 pandemic appeared to have cut attendance at the annual function, she said.

"There were probably a few less people than usual," DeMelo said. "We had a lot of pies to get rid of. There's usually a couple more tables there."

John Williams of the Stockgrowers said that over the course of the evening they raised more than \$8,000 to go toward scholarships.



Davi Parker/Contributed Photo

Davi Parker of Wallowa takes her kids and goats on a backpacking trip in the high mountains. She said the family's does and the wethers (castrated males) go camping with them during milking season. She makes soap from the milk for her Spilt Milk Soaps business.

In a lather

Wallowa County's Davi Parker produces, sells goat milk soap from home

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — Davi Parker doesn't cry over spilled milk; she makes soap out of it — as long as it's from her goats.

In fact, some of her products look tasty, but her soap is strictly to clean the body.

"I do have some soaps that look like delicious cupcakes, but they certainly wouldn't taste delicious," the Wallowa owner of Spilt Milk Soaps said. "Goat milk is amazing stuff, whether it is used topically or internally; just don't eat goat milk soap."

Parker has been making the soap

from her own goats for six years. She started selling soap, bath and body items, lotions and shave bars — all from goat milk — about three years ago. She also makes some men's beard-care products, including beard balm and oil.

"Those, obviously, don't have goat milk," she said.

The process

The soap is made using a combination of oils and lye, Parker said.

"I use 'full milk' for all of my soaps," she said. "This means all of the liquid used to dissolve lye is full goat milk not diluted with water. I have a couple bars that are the exception — one uses half seawater we gathered from the ocean, and the other uses half beer."

To make the soap, the dissolved lye is added to the oils and blended until emulsified.



Davi Parker/Contributed Photo

Davi Parker poses with her wether Gruff. She makes soap from the milk her doe goats produce at her Wallowa home.

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Salmon: No longer the Columbia's king

Nonnative shad the most common fish found on Bonneville Dam's fish ladders

By **ELI FRANCOVICH**
Columbia Insight

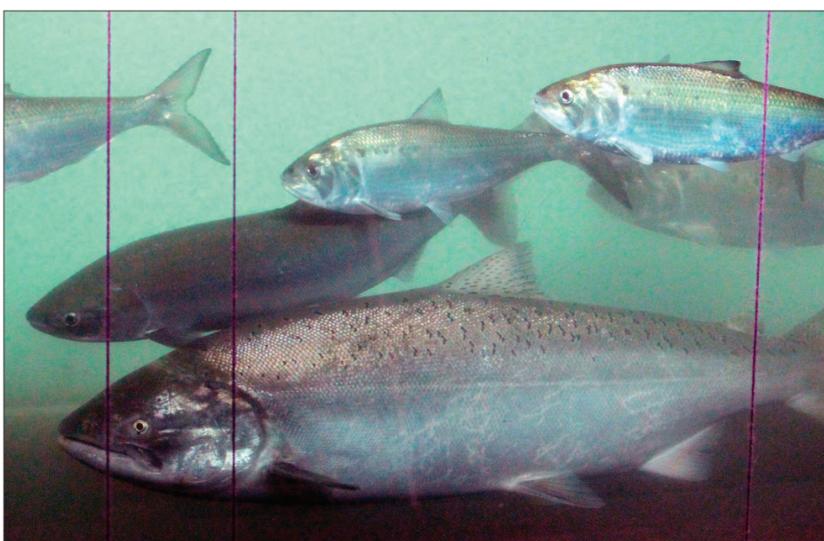
HOOD RIVER — In 1957, the steel gates of The Dalles Dam, upstream from Hood River, closed and one of North America's largest waterfalls was inundated with water.

With that, an important Indigenous cultural gathering place was flooded and an unforeseen ecological cascade triggered.

Now, 77 years later, often the most common fish found flopping up Bonneville Dam's fish ladders are nonnative shad, a silvery member of the herring family and the unlikely beneficiary of the flooding of Celilo Falls.

"The shad are, even though they run out to the ocean and come back, they are not great swimmers like salmon are," said John Epifanio, lead author of a newly published report examining the proliferation of shad in the Columbia River system.

Some years shad, which were introduced to the West Coast in the 1880s, make up more than 90% of recorded upstream migrants, according to



Rick Bowmer/The Associated Press, File

In this June 27, 2012, file photo, a sockeye salmon, left, swims past a chinook salmon, center front, and shad, above, at the fish counting window at the Bonneville Dam near Cascade Locks.

an Independent Scientific Advisory Board report to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council published in November 2021.

What impact these fish are having on native ocean-going species like salmon and steelhead still isn't clear.

While the report doesn't offer any definitive answers, it does show how ecological disruptions, whether from hydroelectric development or climate change, can hurt one species while benefiting another.

The former horse-shoe-shaped Celilo Falls is a prime example.

Before the dam began operating, the falls dropped 40 feet. Migrating steelhead

and salmon battled up and over the falls during their yearly migration.

But, for the nonnative shad the falls proved to be an unnavigable obstacle.

Now that the falls are submerged that's no longer the case.

'We're salmon people, not shad people'

Prior to 1960, there were fewer than 20,000 adult shad per year at Bonneville Dam, which is downstream of Celilo Falls.

After The Dalles Dam was built, that number rose to 1 million a year, and shad numbers have increased on average 5% each year.

That means the shad population is nearly dou-

bling every decade, said Epifanio.

In addition to the removal of the physical barrier, the hydroelectric system has also slowed the downstream flow of water, which has raised overall water temperature. It's possible shad, which can survive a wider range of temperatures than salmon, have capitalized on that fact, too.

"There have been a lot of changes. It just seems to have favored these guys and they've taken advantage," said Epifanio.

Regardless of the cause, shad numbers have increased.

What's more, they're making it farther upstream and into the Snake River

above Lower Granite Dam, said Jay Hesse, director of biological services for the Nez Perce Tribe's Department of Fisheries Resources Management. The tribe was not involved in the study.

"Their abundance is increasing to really notable levels," he said. "And their distribution at those higher levels is also expanding."

That's concerned Nez Perce biologists who worry shad may hurt their already struggling steelhead and salmon populations.

The report doesn't establish any direct link between the shad increase and the salmon and steelhead decrease. However, it does offer a few theories on how shad may negatively impact salmon.

For example, higher-than-normal shad numbers may be supporting a larger avian predator population and shad may be competing for food sources and nursery habitat.

Such a large-scale change in the Columbia Basin's migratory fish population is alarming ecologically.

And for people and cultures that venerate salmon, steelhead and lamprey, it also highlights the loss of a way of life, said Anthony Capetillo, aquatic invasive species biologist for the Nez Perce tribe.

"We're a salmon people, not a shad people," he said.

What's the problem?

It couldn't be more dif-

ferent on the East Coast, where shad are a valuable and sought-after sport and commercial fish.

Although bonier and oilier than salmon, shad are tasty. Ironically, shad populations on the East Coast are in decline.

Developing a commercial and recreational fishery in the West may be one way managers can control the proliferation of shad, said Stuart Ellis, harvest management biologist for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

While still not a popular species for anglers, shad fishing has grown in popularity in recent years.

"It's a huge amount of protein, perfectly good protein," Ellis said. "There is no reason not to catch these fish — we don't need them in the system."

The Wild Fish Conservancy is also examining experimental trapping methods that could trap shad while not accidentally trapping salmon, steelhead or other unintended species.

Epifanio and other researchers involved in the study hope their report prompts further investigation, particularly into how, or if, shad are hurting native species.

"At the very least, we just need to continue to monitor what these populations are doing in the basin," he said. "We hope that we don't just monitor. We want to have some solutions."