

WATERSHED WRAP

Quarterly Newsletter from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Fish & Wildlife Program describing watershed management efforts. Offering readers food for conversation and paper for wrapping!

Summer Solstice 2006

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The Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Fish and Wildlife Programs work in a variety of cooperative, governmental, and educational arenas in efforts to protect, enhance, and restore our fish and wildlife resources. This publication is intended to provide all people interested in the natural resources of the Coeur d'Alene Reservation information about the various programs, and to solicit your support as well as constructive criticism. The Bonneville Power Administration provides funding for this newsletter.

Thank you for your interest.

Respectfully,

Mark H. Stanger, Education & Outreach Specialist

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New Hired Lake Management

By *Rebecca Stevens, Environmental Specialist*

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe has recently hired Rebecca Stevens as an Environmental Specialist working in the Hazardous Waste Management Program under the Lake Management Department. Rebecca received her Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science from Bemidji State University, which is located in northern Minnesota.

Rebecca moved to the Coeur d'Alene area as a Student Conservation Association team leader for the Fire Education Corps in the summer of 2001 and worked with student interns to educate homeowners living in the wildland urban interface how to protect their homes and property against wildfires. Over the next 3 years Rebecca had experience working with the U.S. Forest Service in Estacada, Oregon as a Fisheries technician, she worked with the Idaho Department of

Agriculture as a Smoke Management Coordinator for the Crop Residue Disposal Program, she was a crew member for the Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) BURP program, and before coming to the Tribe she was the District Administrator for the Kootenai-Shoshone Soil & Water Conservation District.

As a new tribal employee, she will be working on a joint project with IDEQ in auditing and reviewing management action items that were identified in the 1996 Coeur d'Alene Lake Management Plan. She looks forward to continuing with her efforts to protect water quality within the Coeur d'Alene basin.

Attention:

Hangman Creek Watershed Work
Group Meeting at Plummer
Fisheries building At 6:00pm on
June 27th

Any questions call **Bruce Kinhead:**
(208) 686-6071 or **Gerry Green** 686-0312

Local Communities Working Together to Plan for Growth

By *Laura Laumatia, University of Idaho Extension*

It's construction season in North Idaho, and one doesn't have to drive very far to see how busy the bulldozers are, moving the earth to make way for the rapid influx of people moving to the area. Growth issues are the burning topics of discussion for many local communities, and the Coeur d'Alene Reservation is not immune to the pressures that rapid population increases can bring. With its amazing natural beauty,

and amenities such as Circling Raven and the Wellness Center, the area is becoming increasingly attractive to people seeking their piece of paradise. The City of Plummer recently held hearings on three annexation proposals by landowners and developers who all anticipate a population invasion as housing prices in Coeur d'Alene and Spokane continue to sky rocket.

Growth, and the many impacts it brings with it, often stirs up many concerns in small communities, and with good reason. Rapid growth is often associated with issues such as loss of open space, loss of community identity, and increased burdens on infrastructure such as water and sewage systems, sprawl, and traffic. However, when growth is anticipated and planned for, communities can take advantage of the economic boons that growth can bring and prevent some of the negative issues from detracting from their quality of life. For that reason, the City of Plummer is beginning to update its comprehensive plan to ensure that residents of Plummer and the surrounding areas can still enjoy the beauty and character of the area in future decades as much as they do today.

The City has started holding community input meetings together with the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Planning Department, which has already prepared a draft comprehensive plan for the Reservation. The goals of the two departments are to gather as much stakeholder input as possible to formulate community values and goals, and to ensure that the two plans are complementary in their objectives. The first community meeting, held at the Coeur d'Alene Casino on May 30th, saw community leaders from programs such as Tribal Social Services, Natural Resources, Lake Management, USDA-NRCS, the Benewah Medical Center, community members, and elected officials from the Tribe, City and Benewah County discuss the assets that Plummer can focus on for development, as well as starting to draft a common community vision.

The City of Plummer is required by Idaho Code to have a comprehensive plan that addresses specific areas of community development, including facilities, housing, economic development, transportation, culture and history, land use, and parks and recreation. A well-done plan gives both the City Council and the community a roadmap for decision making, and ensures that leaders make decisions in a cohesive, efficient manner. The plan is the legal backing for any ordinances, codes, or other legal decisions that are made by elected officials. The last plan was released in 1995.

The City of Plummer and the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Planning department will be holding a series of meetings over the next several months and they encourage all local residents to participate in the

progression. Please be looking out for notices, and contact Donna Spier, Plummer City Clerk, at 686-1641, or Jason Ratdke, Coeur d'Alene Tribal Land Use Planner, at 686-1800, if you would like to know more about how you can participate.



***hnt'k'wipn* update**

By Gerald I. Green, Wildlife Biologist

The *hnt'k'wipn* property near DeSmet encompasses approximately 1,015 acres that were devoted to agricultural production prior to its purchase by the Tribe. This year 118 of those agricultural acres are being taken out of production and will be planted to native grasses this fall or next spring. These areas lie along Hangman Creek and they are simply too wet during the growing season for crop production. They will be fallowed this growing season in preparation for the planting of native grasses. The restoration of agricultural lands within *hnt'k'wipn* will be a substantial undertaking that can only be accomplished by concentrating on small areas in a systematic, stepwise fashion. Once a process of restoration is established on the first 118 acres, restoration on the next area will begin.

There is a small piece of *hnt'k'wipn* that offers a view of the potential of the area. There is a forested tract that covers a maximum of 74 acres along Hangman Creek. The thick ponderosa pine regeneration is being thinned to remove the ladder fuels that could potentially carry fire into the forest canopy. Within this forested area, there is a camas meadow of about 15 to 20 acres that is of particular interest. This meadow was grazed heavily so there are signs of disturbance, but camas (*Camassia quamash*) persists in abundance. Currently, the camas, is intermixed with a thick stand of meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), which was introduced to support cattle grazing. There are relatively few other species of grasses and forbs in the meadow so some restorative efforts will need to be undertaken.

The small camas meadow offers an opportunity to learn about wetland meadow ecology. If camas harvest were practiced on this site, would diversity (the total number of different species)

increase or decline? Will meadow foxtail persist as the dominant grass if the camas is harvested regularly? Will noxious weeds present a threat to the area if the camas is actively harvested? How long does surface water persist in the meadow during the growing season? Answering these questions could provide valuable insight into the best means of managing *hnt'k'wipn* for the benefit of native fish and wildlife habitats.

If there are any questions about the *hnt'k'wipn* property or about the management actions feel free to call Gerald Green at 208-686-0312 or Cameron Heusser at 686-5521. ggreen@cdatribe-nsn.gov

Attention Fishermen: Come Try Your Luck

Rainbow trout fish stocking will be every two-month at Worley, Agency and DeSmet ponds. Fish sizes from 12in to 24in ave 1 Lbs and there will be some bigger fish stock also. Be sure to buy a fishing license. Don't forget they are now available at our office at 401 Annie Antelope Rd in Plummer, just west from the Wellness Center!



St. Joe River Navigational Aids Improvements Project Ready to Go!

By Dave Lamb, Lake Ecologist

The planned project to improve the safety of boaters operating along the lower St Joe River is ready to go thanks to the Tribal Council and Lake Management Department staff. While the project was conceived and designed back in 2004, it needed funding which it received from the Council this past January.

For those who have ever tried to navigate between Coeur d'Alene Lake and the City of St. Maries, there is a stretch of the St Joe River that passes between Round Lake and Chatcolet Lake that has no readily visible boundaries – just water, water, everywhere! This stretch of the river is plenty deep for all kinds of boats but it is lined by shallow levee remnants and old wooden pilings, many of which are leaning over or are broken off at the water level, which presents real hazards of grounding or collision. The pilings were originally placed to outline the channel but do not serve that purpose very well now!



Pilings marking the channel!

So the project that we have designed will do a number of things. It will remove all of those existing pilings and replace them with pairs of steel pilings on which US Coast Guard-approved signs (they call them “dayboards” in the business) and lights will be attached. These will direct boaters along the navigable river channel. We will also place pilings and lights to indicate the side channel entrance into Hidden Lake and Chatcolet Lake. There will continue to be a no-wake zone around the entrance to Chatcolet and the swing-span Trail bridge but new No-Wake signs on new pilings will be installed. We will be replacing all of the existing lights that are currently on the Trail bridge with new ones that actually work. And, finally, we will be placing some informational signs along the way to further help boaters find their way.

We now have a call for bids from contractors out and the bids are due in by June 8th. We expect that the project work will be performed during August and September this year. For more information, please contact me at 208-686-6206 or dlamb@cdatribe-nsn.gov.

Windy Bay update

By Gerald I. Green, Wildlife Biologist

In managing the Windy Bay Property, the Wildlife Program has had the good fortune of working with the Fuels Management arm of the Forestry Program

in reducing the forest fuels that could contribute to uncontrolled burning of the native habitats. The Fuels Management crews cut firebreaks through the brush on the property by removing the shrubs from swaths that cross the northern portion of the property. A break in the available fuels will reduce the likelihood of a wildfire spreading across the property. The crews were on the northern portion of the Windy Bay Property in the last week of March and in early April. Efforts to reduce the fuels on the Property were suspended in April to allow the nesting season to proceed undisturbed. Once the bird-nesting season has ended, fuels reduction will continue. In this region, bird nesting is generally completed by the last weeks of July, so the fuels reduction crews are scheduled to return to the property in early August to continue their work.

If you have any questions or comments about the management of the Windy Bay Property, feel free to contact Gerald Green (208-686-0312) or Cameron Heusser (208-686-5521) of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Wildlife Program.

Water Relay for Life

By Mark H. Stanger, Outreach & Education Specialist

On April 20th, I had the opportunity to participate in the 1st Annual Water for Life Relay to talk about how valuable our water is to our Tribal people. The morning started out with our lake management staff going up the St. Joe River to collect some water samples. We put the water inside of two small ring-shaped tubes, for transportation north. We then drove the boat all the way up the lake to the 3rd Street dock in Coeur d'Alene where Mayor Bloem and the American Mountain Men (Mark Wedick) MW met us. The rings were handed over to MW, and he paddled his canoe over to NIC dock. The kayakers' (Dan Jolibois and crew) took the last part of the water relay going down the Spokane River to Templin's Resort. The final resting place for the water was in Post Falls Q'emiln Park. Before heading there we still had a few more people like Lakeside Elementary students and others that helped carry the water by land (walkers, runners, skateboarders, and bikers) before it reached the park.

At the Q'emiln I talked about how every living thing on the Mother Earth needed water to survive and live. The Creator gives us soils, plants, animals, and the water so we all can live with each other and take care of the water for our future generations. Just look up in the sky and see the clouds that rain flow through to nourish the land for everybody. We are all in this together to take care of what we have today for tomorrow for all the people. Finally I blessed the water as I poured it on a tree that was just planted in the park.

I then returned the last drops of water back to Mother River as it ran past us on it's journey to the ocean! The Relay was a great reminder to our whole community of our connectedness, and our responsibility in our stewardship of the Creator's gifts.



Ka-Ten-Hoy-Ten, Mark Wedick and Cd'A Mayor Bloem

Resistance Board Weir successfully traps first fish trapped in the main stem of Hangman Creek

By Bruce Kinkead, Fisheries Biologist

This past spring the first migration trap ever placed into the main stem of Hangman Creek was successfully deployed and maintained from March through May. The concept of a Resistance Board Weir was first conceptualized for the Hangman system several years ago because of its ability to respond to a flashy hydrograph (flow regime) present in Hangman Creek during the spring months. Flows in Hangman at Stateline can go from 1 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 1,000 cfs in just one day of rain as happened two years ago in May. Frequent rain-on-snow-events largely flowing thru lands impacted by a high road density, grazing and dry land farming, and timber harvest make for a Fisheries Biologist's nightmare when trying to track migration patterns.

The trap itself is designed to respond to higher flows by increasing its "dig" into the stream channel using resistance boards placed within the channel. When flows increase, it forces the boards down, which in turn pops up the actual fence like barrier. This barrier forces the fish to enter a tube entering a live box. The actual blueprint of the design was made for larger fish such as bull trout, and alterations to the size of PVC pipe and spaces between each piece had to be modified to fit the smaller trout found on the Reservation. The first prototype was actually deployed in Lake Creek first and has been capturing fish at higher rates than previous trap designs. Because it was considered too risky to deploy the trap below HWY 95, and genetic studies did not indicate fish coming from the Spokane, the Hangman trap was set up just downstream of Nehchen Creek to sample fish moving upstream from Sheep and Mission Creek and upstream of the confluence with Sheep Creek.



This Redband trout was the first fish ever trapped in the mainstem of Hangman Creek using a Resistance Board Weir in March 2006.

A primary question of the project is whether Rainbow trout still make their way up from Long Lake and the Spokane River and into Hangman to swim to the headwaters to spawn, or are the fish presently seen in the tributaries merely resident fish. With fish occupying the upper reaches of Mission, Sheep, Nehchen (formerly Squaw), and Indian Creek, we wondered if fish within these four separate drainages were mixing. Genetics studies concluded they were not related to fish in the Spokane River but fairly close to the fish found in California Creek, a tributary on the lower end of the Hangman System in Washington. Fish within the Reservation were found to be very closely related with each other, but fish from Mission and Sheep drainages were slightly different from those found farther up the drainage in Indian Creek and Martin Creek (east of the Reservation). We also wondered if the Cutthroat trout in Upper Nehchen Creek were migrating outside of that sub watershed and mixing with the rainbow.

Within days we trapped our first fish and recorded the first trout in this section of the creek in more than 20 years. The fish were also the largest found in Hangman by our study, but not large enough to conclude they were reared in the Spokane River. As with an initial research tool, the fish trapped this year partly answered questions but left others unanswered. We have concluded that fish are migrating between tributaries on an infrequent basis. This is significant because should disease or drought wipe out fish in one subbasin, it will be possible for fish to recolonize the area as long as the habitat is suitable.

With the success we had this year, we plan to reinstall the trap for at least the next three years and get it installed at an earlier date to capture fish that may be

migrating earlier than anticipated. I would like to thank Dr Dale Chess, Dan Jolibois, Glenn Lambert, and Ron LaSarte, who were instrumental in bringing an idea to realization.

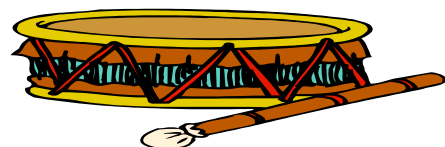


This Cutthroat trout caught in the Resistance Board Weir in Hangman Creek was processed which includes weight, length, and taking scale samples to determine age.

Looking for Students and Volunteers for Tribal Natural Resources Camp

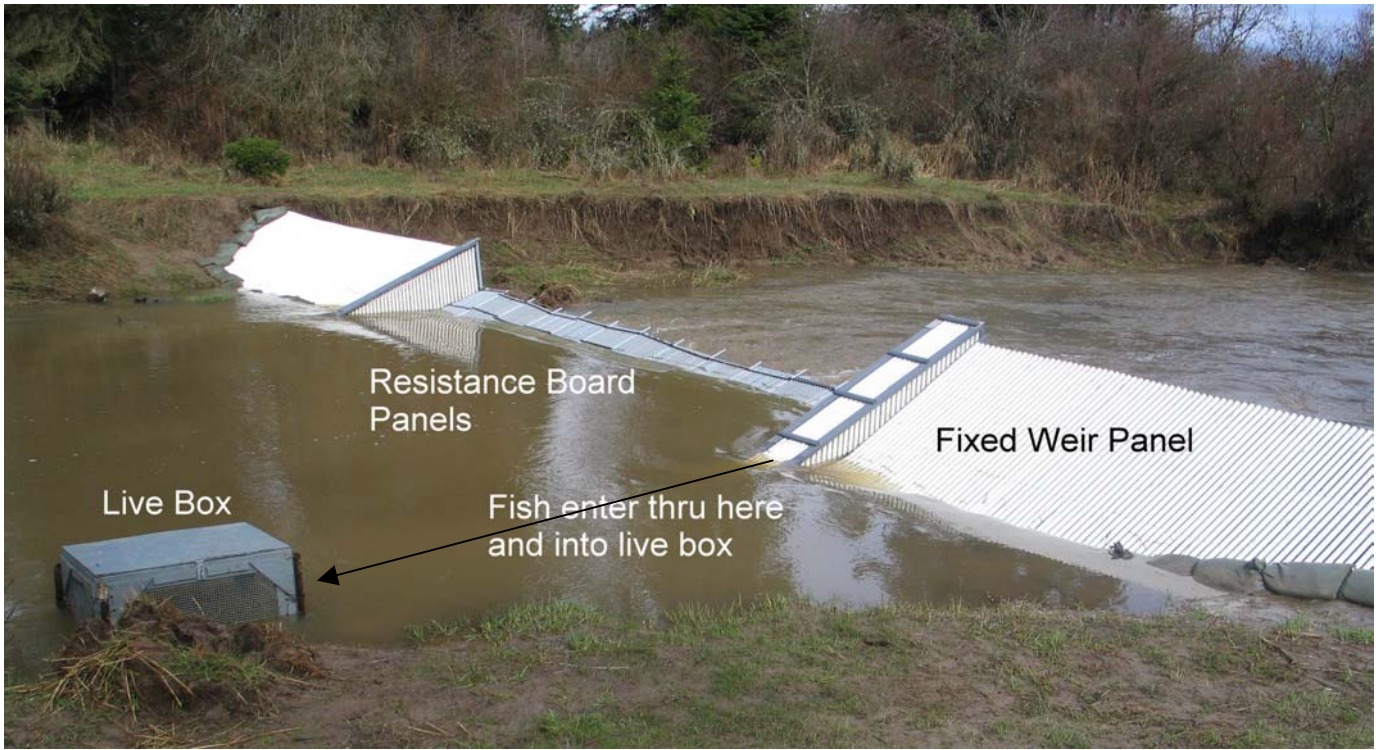
By Jordan Justice, Summer Intern

Starting June 26th-July 1st The Tribe will be hosting the **Inter-Tribal Natural Resource Camp** for natives between ages 14-19. We will be camping at Camp Larson on Lake Coeur d'Alene. Different local Tribes and National Forest Service employee will be participating in this year's camp. These Tribes include: Nez Perce, Coeur d' Alene, Kootenai, Kalispel and Spokane Tribes, Forest Service Districts include: Nez Perce, Clearwater, Panhandle, Payette, and Colville. This year's camp will teach the youth traditions about Fisheries and Forestry and more about their surrounding and ecosystems. The youth will compete in obstacles that involve teamwork and leadership skills. One of the key points will be writing journals and doing some fish shocking with some of the Fisheries technicians and biologists from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.



The youth will also be visiting the National Forest Service Nursery in Coeur d' Alene, and tour the Spokane Tribe and State Fish Hatchery in Ford, Wash. We are having a culture night on Thursday the 29th.

We will be looking for adult volunteers to help with the camp. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer or attend as a student please call Mark H. Stanger at (208) 686-0131 or Carla at 686-6803.



Resistance Board Weir were put in Hangman Creek, March 20006, showing finished construction of panels and live box. Tube connecting fixed panels to live box is not visible under water.