

# Q'E'YMINN HE

# 'ULHNSIKWE'N WATERSHED WRAP

\*The Watershed Wrap is now the q'e'yminn he 'ulhnsikwe'n The translation in the Coeur d'Alene language is, "about the Watershed". The term for watershed meaning literally everything belonging to the watershed: the water, people, plants, fish, wildlife, cultural uses and air, as well as the impact of our activities!

SPRING/SUMMER 2017

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*Semi-annual newsletter from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Natural Resources programs describing watershed management efforts. Offering readers food for conversation and paper for wrapping.*

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Pullout seasonal calendar & calendar of events
- Join us for Water Awareness Week!
- Happenings in Hangman creek
- Update on our Cutthroat trout conservation efforts

## To Flood or Not To Flood

By Thomas Biladeau, Habitat Restoration Biologist

In the immortal words of Shakespeare: "How can we decideth at which hour the wat'r is our cousin 'r foe? Shalt we continueth to square with moth'r nature?" To flood or not to flood, that is the question.

The spring of 2017 is shaping up to be one of the most extreme runoff seasons we have seen in recent years. The St. Joe River crested at 38.42 feet, 6 feet above flood stage and the seventh highest recorded level. Lake Coeur d'Alene hit an elevation of 2134.8 feet,

to the floodplain. A typical response to protect infrastructure from floods such as these is to prepare for the future by restricting flood waters to the streams or lake they originate from. This has been done through the construction of levees or dikes, and by digging relief channels and deeper streams with the ability to carry higher flows. Sadly, implementing these types of actions many not achieve the intended results and frequently come at a cost to the natural environment.

Floodplains are an integral part of stream and lake ecosystems. In order to function properly, the two must interact with one another. During periods of runoff, the floodplain serves to distribute runoff energy across a large area, thereby decreasing erosion within stream channels. At the same time, runoff water is providing these areas with sediment and nutrient inputs that are vital for a healthy plant and wildlife community. Natural flooding each year is even essential for farming in many areas of the world - think of ancient communities on rivers such as the Tigris-Euphrates, the Nile and the Ganges. During the summer, the floodplain returns the favor to the stream by providing a slow return of cool and clean water back into the channel. This in turn provides a healthy environment for riparian plants and stream-dwelling fish and wildlife. Furthermore, floodplains typically support wetlands which help to filter and neutralize harmful chemicals and toxins before they enter a stream or lake.



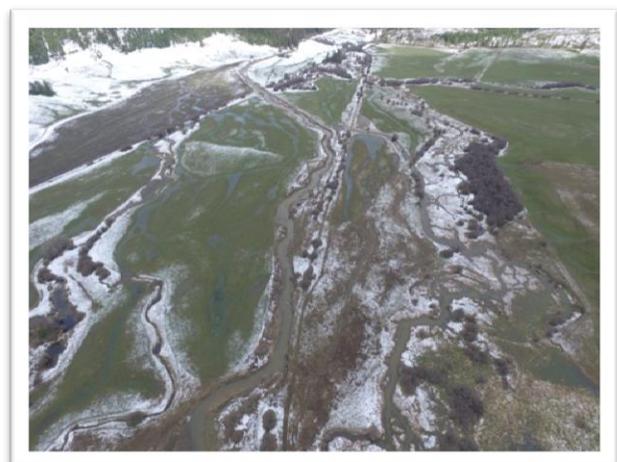
*Sediment is transferred downstream from the Hangman watershed into the Spokane River due to high rates of erosion, February, 2017 (photo courtesy of Cutboard Studios).*

In watersheds throughout the Palouse region, much of the historic floodplains have been abandoned, or are active less frequently, as a result of stream channelization that was done as these areas were developed for other uses. The Hangman Creek watershed in particular has had extensive alterations to promote agriculture and development in the floodplain which has drastically altered ecosystem function. This has led a flow regime with extreme highs and lows and high levels of erosion and sediment transfer down the watershed

While other agencies may work to isolate floodplains - particularly in developed areas - the Coeur d'Alene Tribe Natural Resources Department is working to preserve and reconnect them. A large restoration project was initiated in 2013 in upper Hangman Creek

and has to date reconnected over 400 acres of floodplain. This was accomplished by returning the stream to a historic channel which is between 4 and 5 feet deep and gently meanders across the valley. In doing so, we abandoned a channelized ditch that the stream ran through, which was between 8 and 14 feet deep and ran straight down the center of the valley.

We will continue to work in this immediate area to restore native vegetation and provide a continuous area of habitat for trout and other wildlife. Projects similar to this will be implemented throughout the Hangman watershed in the years to come with the intention of improving the ability of the entire area to support diverse fish and wildlife communities and human uses.



*Before and after photos of the reactivated floodplain and restored reach of Hangman Creek.*

## sk'waqhl'u' Habitat in the Hangman Watershed

By Gerald I. Green



The sk'waqhl'u' (sharp-tailed grouse), were once a prominent bird species within what is now the Coeur d'Alene Reservation, particularly the Hangman or Palouse portions of the Reservation. However, a sighting of a sk'waqhl'u', sharp-tailed grouse or prairie chicken has not been reported within the Coeur d'Alene Reservation in approximately a hundred years. As the production of dryland grain crops expanded and Palouse Prairie became rare, the sharp-tailed grouse were removed from this area. Today, the closest population of sharp-tailed grouse can be found west of Davenport, Washington in the scablands of the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area.

Before modern agriculture, the sharp-tailed grouse did very well in the bunchgrass communities of the eastern portion of the Palouse Grasslands. This eastern Palouse was afforded just a little more moisture than the drier lands in the central portion of the Columbia River Basin. As a result, the plants of the eastern Palouse were a mix of bunch grasses and broadleaf forbs such as balsam root and sunflower. This 'bunching' growth form of native Palouse vegetation provided openings for movement and foraging for the sharp-tailed grouse, while cover under the bunched vegetation was never more than a few steps away.

There haven't been any sk'waqhl'u' reported within the Coeur d'Alene Reservation in more than a hundred years. However, their historic prominence in the area has lead the Wildlife Program to ask questions about the habitats needed by sk'waqhl'u' so we can determine whether there is a possibility of its return. The literature suggests that a minimum of 32 square miles of functional habitat is needed for a population to persist. In total, all open land within the Hangman Creek portion of the Coeur d'Alene Reservation is 4.6 times larger than that minimum size requirement. Thirty two square miles is roughly equal to a square area bounded on the west side by the Reservation

Boundary, with DeSmet on the southeast corner, and Highway 95 at the Windfall Pass Road on the northeast corner. There is certainly plenty of space within the Coeur d'Alene Reservation for sharp-tailed grouse. But the current quality of that space as sharp-tailed grouse habitat is a question that is the focus of some effort by the Wildlife Program.

The sk'waqhl'u' needs to find three distinct habitats within its range: lek habitat, spring/summer nesting and brood rearing habitat and winter habitat. Sharp-tailed grouse are known for their dancing courtship displays, which occur primarily in March and April. A specific site where sharp-tailed grouse gather to display and dance is known as a lek. A lek is usually located on an exposed knoll with dense grass or small shrub escape cover close by. Male grouse gather, usually in groups of 12 to 25 to compete and dance on these leks and females choose from among the competitors. A search for "sharp-tailed grouse" on YouTube will provide a list of surprisingly good videos of the dance of these open country grouse.



*The Prairie Chicken Dance originated from the Blackfoot Confederacy and imitates the Sharp Tailed Grouse mating dance. Photo courtesy of: Samuel Torpey University of Idaho Powwow 2017*

Lek locations can change. Usually, however, a specific lek will remain active over several succeeding years. There is no evidence that lek habitats are limiting for any identified sharp-tailed grouse population. Somehow, the grouse gravitate to these locations when the time is right, conduct their business and disperse into the larger landscape for the remainder of the year. It's remarkable that they can escape predators such as hawks and coyotes while gathered together and preoccupied with courtship at these exposed locations.

Sk'waqhl'u' move from the open knobs of lek habitats to the bunched vegetation of the arid grasslands for the late spring and summer nesting and brood rearing. The grouse have developed a way of nesting, hiding and traveling amid the bunched vegetation that served them well until the Palouse vegetation disappeared. Hens could hide themselves and their nests under the bunch grasses and balsam root. When chicks hatched, hen and chicks abandoned the nest area to forage for insects. After the brood rearing is completed and the cold, insect free winter months arrive, the birds move into the deciduous shrub and tree communities along the stream courses and drainage bottoms. Within these deciduous habitats associated with drainages, they forage for the buds of aspen, birch, willow and hawthorn.

While leks draw a lot of attention and are used by managers to count a population of sharp-tailed grouse, nesting and winter habitats provide the sustenance needed by individual birds and limits in these habitats will limit populations. Assessing these potential habitats on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation and the original potential of that habitat can tell us how far we are from habitat that will sustain sharp-tailed grouse.

The only quality spring/summer nesting habitat left within the Coeur d'Alene Reservation is approximately 100 acres atop Liberty Butte. The steep slopes of the Butte and its rocky soils prevented the heavy tillage that became so prevalent in the lower elevation, less rocky Palouse. But, while grain fields are not optimum for sharp-tailed grouse, they can be used to some marginal degree.



Also, some agricultural fields are enrolled in Continuous Conservation Reserve Programs that foster grassland communities within the Reservation. Determining the usefulness of these habitats can help us identify potentials for nesting habitat improvements.

The future for winter habitats within the Coeur d'Alene Reservation is more promising than that of summer habitats. Improving stream, floodplain, wetland and drainage habitats for native salmonids within the Coeur d'Alene Reservation overlaps with the wintering needs of sharp-tailed grouse. Restoring floodplain habitats to improve the hydrology for native redband trout in the Hangman Watershed also improves the wintering habitat for sharp-tailed grouse. At this point, however, only about 6% of the potential wintering habitat for sharp-tailed grouse supports stands of deciduous shrubs and trees such as aspen, birch, willow and hawthorn. But as restoration of streams to support a fishery continues, habitats for sharp-tailed grouse will improve.

## Assessing plant Survival In a Warming Climate

By Gerald I. Green



The Wildlife Program planted 1,540 native deciduous trees and shrubs in 2015 within areas undergoing restoration to benefit native fish and wildlife. The winter and spring of 2015 were warm and dry and the summer was exceptionally so. Recall the news of record drought and elevated water temperatures that killed salmon throughout the Columbia Basin that year. We were worried that none of our freshly planted nursery stock would survive under those conditions.

The plantings came with their root systems contained in one gallon square containers that are 14 inches tall and are 4 inches across at the top. These plantings are appropriately called “tall-ones” and we have chosen to purchase nursery stock in these containers because of their extra deep roots and the fact that they can be easily planted with a 4 inch auger.

In May of 2016, we counted the survivors and found that 31% overall made it through these harsh conditions to grow another day.

Looking through the list of species planted and the respective survival rates, we learned that our planting strategy could benefit from a bit of an adjustment. For example, none of the Sitka willow we planted survived, and the Scouler willow evidenced the next lowest rate of survival. Consequently, Sitka willow will likely be dropped from the prospective planting list at many sites. The low survival of Scouler willow came as a surprise since it is adapted to drier sites. A closer look at the Scouler indicates that it does better when planted among rocky soils. Since the substrate within our floodplain planting areas are generally fine textured soils, the Scouler willow will only be planted if we encounter a rock outcrop. Reviewing the survival of willow and other plantings helps to emphasize the importance of matching the habitat to the needs of the species.

When we purchased plants in 2015, few aspen were available at the time. Aspen are the preferred winter food source for beaver and they will cut this species, provided it is available, before they will harvest any other. Where aspen stands are dense and close to streams, beaver are plentiful as are their dams.

Plant Species	Service Berry	Aspen	Bebb Willow	Pacific Willow	Scouler Willow	Sitka Willow	Mackenzie Willow	Totals
<b>Total Planted by May 4, 2015</b>	230	40	450	230	335	35	220	<b>1,540</b>
<b>Percent Survival as of June 2016</b>	83%	30%	32%	18%	14%	0%	20%	<b>31%</b>

*Species planted in spring of 2015 and percent that survived to continue to grow through spring of 2016.*

We substituted service berry for aspen in 2015 since they provide a good forage crop of berries for sharp tailed grouse, which is also a species of management interest. Service berry evidenced the highest rates of survival, with 83% of the plantings still living in the spring of 2016. Unfortunately, service berry is not among the species listed as important in providing beaver forage. Since beaver dams are often the essential ingredient in the processes that support wetland ecosystems, there is a tradeoff in deciding whether to plant aspen or service berry at a given site.

It goes without saying that planning in advance is important to any significant project. With regard to planting, this means finding a grower at least a year in advance to ensure that the desired species are available when it is time to plant.

Having to make a choice between what is desirable and what is available doesn't always further the goals of a project.

While the overall survival of the spring 2015 plantings was low, we were ultimately encouraged given that it was such an unusual and challenging year. Dry conditions were evident early in the spring and persisted through the entire summer. Planting "tall-ones" surely helped bolster survival rates because the roots were deep in the soil on the first day of planting. As the benefits of restoration projects begin to accrue and shallow groundwater remains in the floodplain longer, survival rates as well as growth rates are expected to improve as well. Reestablishing deciduous shrubs and trees within the floodplains of our project sites may be challenging but it is not an impossible task at all.

# WATER AWARENESS WEEK 2017

## SIKWKWE'SHITSTSUT

**Visitors can rotate through informational stations with opportunities to see how we trap and tag fish, age and measure trees, monitor water quality, identify plants, address erosion issues, learn to speak the Coeur d'Alene language and other hands on activities. This year's event will also include tribal elders as well as traditional drumming and singing.**

**Come Visit Us Daily from 9am - 1pm**

**Week 1: May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Week 2: May 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Directions:**  
 Turn West off US HWY 95 onto Settlers Rd  
 Turn Right on Rew Rd (Old Hwy 95)  
 Proceed north approximately 2 miles  
 Turn left onto Ford Road  
 Parking at the gravel pit



[www.facebook.com/cdatrIBE.fishandwildlife](http://www.facebook.com/cdatrIBE.fishandwildlife)

# Taking a Look Back at the Dawes Act

By: Barb Scaroni

Do you ever wonder why some allotments on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation contain mostly farmland whereas others are timbered? Well, the answer may surprise you, but it was based on practical concerns of Tribal people who relied on reservation timberlands for firewood, fencing, and construction material they regularly needed for upkeep on their farms.

Scarcity of firewood was a big issue to homesteaders on the Washington side of the Reservation. Cold Palouse winters spent in a drafty house exposed to icy winds created a strong demand for firewood. The closest source for many settlers was the adjacent Coeur d'Alene Reservation. They were not allowed to gather wood on the Reservation, and had to travel long distances to bring firewood home to their prairie homes. Many new arrivals to this area heard word that the Tribe possessed the very best farmland in the northwest. Eventually, the pressure to open the Reservation for homesteading, against the strong refusal of the Tribe, caused the US Government to break earlier promises made.

An article from 1904 in the Colfax Gazette states, "There should be no delay in opening the reservation. There is neither sense or justness in letting a half million acres of fertile land lie idle in the Palouse country. It is not to the point whether it lies in Idaho or Washington. The point is that 400 Indians can have no possible use for so much land. President Roosevelt favors the opening, Kootenai county favors it and the congressmen from both states are working for it. The last congress appropriated \$25,000 for the surveying of the land and the survey should proceed."

That was the mindset of people at the turn of the century. Despite forceful protests from Tribal leaders, the deed was done. Chief Peter Moctelme's trip back to Washington DC to try to turn the tide of events was futile. Even though the Tribe had been told in an 1889 agreement that, "no part of the reservation shall ever be sold, occupied, open to



Coeur d'Alene Chief  
Peter Moctelme

white settlement or otherwise disposed of without the consent of the Indians residing on said reservation", in Washington, he was told how lucky the Coeur d'Alenes were to receive 160 acre allotments instead of the 40 to 80 acre allotments other tribes had been forced to take. When government representatives heard reports that the Tribe would resist allotment by force, they told Tribal leaders that anyone that did not choose an allotment would have one selected for him or her by the government.

The Allotment Act allowed only crop land or grazing land to be taken by Tribal members. After each Tribal member received 160 acres, the remaining land would be opened for non-Indian settlement. Vast reservation areas that supplied forest products would be lost to Tribal members. To supply their needs for construction materials and fuel, timber land that could be cleared for farming could be taken under the allotment system. Some people chose to do this. After he was forced to give up his summer residence near Lake Chatcolet, Peter Moctelme himself chose to break his allotment into two pieces—one that was forested, and one half a mile away in farmland. His two pieces sat on the edge of his wife and children's allotments, where prior to allotment they were farming 400 acres.

An advertisement titled "INDIAN LAND FOR SALE" with a central image of a Native American on horseback. The ad promotes "FINE LANDS IN THE WEST" and includes a table of land sales by state. Below the table, it states that 350,000 acres will be offered for sale in 1910.

Location	Acres	Average Price per Acre	Location	Acres	Average Price per Acre
Colorado	5,211.21	\$7.27	Oklahoma	34,664.00	\$19.14
Idaho	17,013.00	24.85	Oregon	1,020.00	15.43
Kansas	1,584.50	33.45	South Dakota	120,445.00	16.53
Montana	11,034.00	9.86	Washington	4,879.00	41.37
Nebraska	5,641.00	36.65	Wisconsin	1,069.00	17.00
North Dakota	22,610.70	9.93	Wyoming	865.00	20.64

FOR THE YEAR 1910 IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 350,000 ACRES WILL BE OFFERED FOR SALE

For information as to the character of the land write for booklet, "INDIAN LANDS FOR SALE," to the Superintendent U. S. Indian School at any one of the following places:

ALABAMA	MOBILE	MISSISSIPPI	MEMPHIS	SOUTH CAROLINA	CHARLOTTE	WASHINGTON	PORTLAND
ARIZONA	TUCSON	MINNESOTA	MINNEAPOLIS	TENNESSEE	MEMPHIS	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE
CALIFORNIA	SAN FRANCISCO	MISSOURI	ST. LOUIS	TEXAS	DALLAS	WASHINGTON	SPACED
CONNECTICUT	HARTFORD	NEBRASKA	OMAHA	UTAH	SALT LAKE CITY	WASHINGTON	SPACED
DELAWARE	DOVER	NEVADA	SPRINGFIELD	VERMONT	RAISINVILLE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
FLORIDA	JACKSONVILLE	NEW YORK	ALBANY	VIRGINIA	RICHLAND	WASHINGTON	SPACED
GEORGIA	ATLANTA	PENNSYLVANIA	HARRISBURG	WEST VIRGINIA	CHARLOTTE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
ILLINOIS	SPRINGFIELD	RHODE ISLAND	PROVIDENCE	WISCONSIN	MADISON	WASHINGTON	SPACED
INDIANA	INDIANAPOLIS	SOUTH DAKOTA	SIOUX FALLS	WYOMING	CHEYENNE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
IOWA	DES MOINES	VERMONT	RAISINVILLE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
KANSAS	TOPEKA	WEST VIRGINIA	CHARLOTTE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
KENTUCKY	LEXINGTON	WISCONSIN	MADISON	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
LOUISIANA	MONROE	WYOMING	CHEYENNE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
MAINE	PORTLAND	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
MARYLAND	BALTIMORE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
MASSACHUSETTS	BOSTON	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
MICHIGAN	LANSING	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
MINNESOTA	MINNEAPOLIS	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
MISSISSIPPI	MEMPHIS	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
MISSOURI	ST. LOUIS	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
MONTANA	BILLINGS	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
NEBRASKA	OMAHA	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
NEVADA	SPRINGFIELD	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
NEW YORK	ALBANY	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
NEW JERSEY	TRENTON	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
NEW HAMPSHIRE	CONCORD	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
NEW MEXICO	SAN FRANCISCO	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
NEW YORK	ALBANY	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
NORTH CAROLINA	CHARLOTTE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
NORTH DAKOTA	BISMARCK	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
OHIO	COLUMBUS	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
OKLAHOMA	OKLAHOMA CITY	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
OREGON	PORTLAND	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
PENNSYLVANIA	HARRISBURG	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
RHODE ISLAND	PROVIDENCE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
SOUTH CAROLINA	CHARLOTTE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
TENNESSEE	MEMPHIS	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
TEXAS	DALLAS	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
UTAH	SALT LAKE CITY	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
VIRGINIA	RICHLAND	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
VERMONT	RAISINVILLE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
WEST VIRGINIA	CHARLOTTE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
WISCONSIN	MADISON	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED
WYOMING	CHEYENNE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SEASIDE	WASHINGTON	SPACED

WALTER L. FISHER, ROBERT G. VALENTINE,  
Superior of the Interior

Advertisement for the government sale of "allotted Indian land"; such practices led to the drastic reduction of Indian-owned

Over time, retaining allotments supporting timber yielded multiple benefits. Trees increased in size and value as the years went by. Even though few people lived on their allotments in later years, timber sale income provided substantial income. During the years of the housing bubble, record income came off allotments. During periods between timber harvests, allotment forests supported big game and other wildlife habitat and shaded streams and reduced erosion in the Hangman Creek watershed.

# Cutthroat Trout Conservation Project Continues



**B** iologists with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and Idaho Department of Fish and Game are resuming efforts this spring to give cutthroat trout a better chance of survival in Coeur d'Alene Lake.

The goal is to remove northern pike from Windy Bay while cutthroat trout are migrating to reduce the occurrence of northern pike preying on the trout before they have a chance to spawn in Lake Creek, which enters the lake in Windy Bay. As in the previous two years, a combined crew of Tribal and State employees will catch pike in Windy Bay with gill nets, then the State crew will transport and release the captured pike in Cougar Bay where they are less likely to prey on native cutthroat trout and are more readily available to anglers. Transport of fish will continue until catch rates in Windy Bay decline to the point where it is no longer cost effective.

While the idea of transporting these predatory fish seems to defy logic, according to some Tribal staff, it represents a compromise that has allowed both fishery co-managers to endorse this first of its kind working relationship. Moreover, the Tribe views this as such a critical component of a conservation strategy for native cutthroat trout that moving forward together is one of the most compelling parts of this project. Nevertheless, even this part of the strategy will be scrutinized as this project moves forward in the future.

“The idea is to reduce the threat to cutthroat trout, while creating more opportunities for anglers to fish for and catch pike in other parts of the lake,” said Andy Dux, Regional Fishery Manager for IDFG. Both the Tribal and Idaho fishery management plans place a priority on cutthroat trout conservation. Idaho’s plan also calls for providing diverse recreational fishing opportunities in Coeur d’Alene Lake.

Biologists are interested to see if pike previously tagged and released in Cougar Bay have returned to Windy Bay. The hope is that the pike have remained on the north end of the lake where fishing pressure is high. At the end of the three-year project, the findings will help to determine if this strategy can be used to reduce the predation threat on cutthroat trout in Windy Bay into the future.

The project has produced encouraging results so far. In 2015, fisheries staff captured 311 northern pike in Windy Bay over a 7 week period. In 2016, just 161 were removed during six weeks of fishing. The initial results from this spring indicate that 105 fish were removed over 3 weeks before the nets started coming up empty.

“It’s gotten much more difficult to catch pike in Windy Bay, so this leads us to believe that the vast majority of pike in the bay have been removed,” said Angelo Vitale, Fisheries Program Manager for the Coeur d’Alene Tribe.

Since the project started, approximately 74% of the captured fish survived and were transported to Cougar Bay. By-catch of other fishes, including cutthroat trout, has been minimal. In order to examine information regarding movement patterns and harvest rates by anglers, staff tagged all fish before releasing them. Tag returns provided an estimated harvest rate by anglers of 34% in 2015 and 17% in 2016, meaning that anglers have caught a fair number of the transported fish. Importantly, most of the fish were caught near Cougar Bay and less than 1% have been documented moving back to Windy Bay.

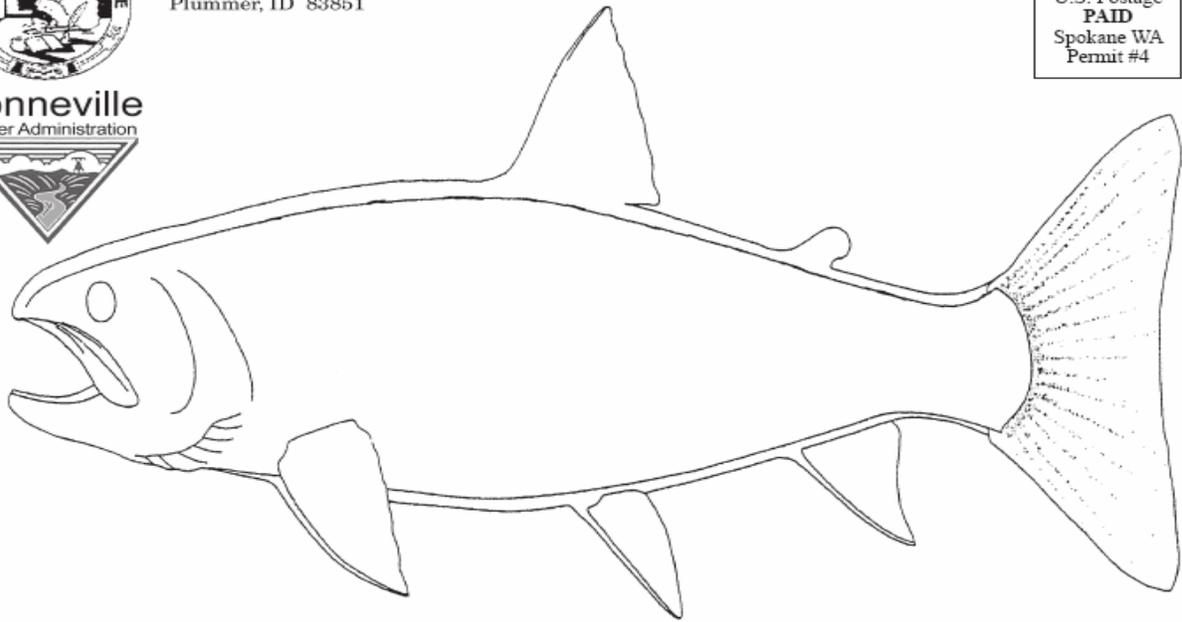
Biologists with the Tribe are monitoring the number of cutthroat returning to spawn in Lake Creek. They are hopeful that the run size will see a boost following two years of reduced predation in the lake. “Cutthroat generally spend two to three years in the lake before they spawn, so we hope we start to see a return on our investment of time and effort beginning this year,” said Vitale. In recent years, cutthroat numbers in Lake Creek have averaged around 300 spawning adults and as many as 8,000 juveniles that move between the stream and lake each year. Increasing numbers of cutthroat is just one important measure of success for this project. Another is improving survival for a whole community of fishes that occupy the lake and are valued by the public.

Some of these values are being expressed by Tribal members and the anglers that fish in Coeur d’Alene Lake. A recent survey of more than 400 anglers indicated that a majority place a high value on the recovery of a thriving cutthroat trout fishery in the lake. Furthermore, nearly 70% voiced support for this Windy Bay effort to give cutthroat trout a fighting chance. That is a good bit of encouragement for anyone that has a stake in the outcome of this project.



Fish, Water And Wildlife Program  
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The Coeur d'Alene Tribal 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 Fish and Wildlife of the Coeur d'Alene Reservation information about our program, and to solicit your support as well as constructive criticism. Thank you for your interest.

