

# Q'E'YMINN HE 'ULHSIKWE'N WATERSHED WRAP

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

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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.

## CDA Tribe eagle aviary project update

By Nathan Albrecht, Wildlife Biologist

Over the past several years, the Wildlife Program has been working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Birds of Prey Northwest (BOPNW), the



This is Mqhwqin, one of the bald eagles that will move to the Tribal Aviary this year

local raptor rehabilitation facility near St. Maries, to get permitted to obtain eagle feathers for Tribal members. A Native American Tribal Eagle Aviary Permit was finally secured in October of 2016; the first to be issued to a Tribe in the Pacific Northwest. We then built two enclosures on BOPNW property, and brought them to capacity, housing 8 eagles (4 bald and 4 golden). Our goal all along has been to

become self-sufficient by building a Tribal eagle aviary on Tribal property that can be maintained by Coeur d'Alene Tribal staff. With the help of Tribal Wildlife, Fisheries, and Facilities we have made significant progress towards this goal over the course of this past winter.

The first step in this project was to find a site for the aviary. The site needed to be Tribally owned; relatively close to Plummer; have power and water; but also be removed from development and activities that would disturb the birds. While we considered several sites, a property near Sanders that had been purchased by Avista Utilities on behalf of the Tribe, to provide mitigation opportunities for wetlands and wildlife, fit all of the criteria.

Last fall, we began the process of converting an old, decrepit home and shop into the Tribal aviary. The process began with removing old structures, debris and site leveling. We then refurbished the existing shop so that it can be used as a meat processing and storage room, as well as a classroom and eagle exam room.

The next stage of the project is now underway. Over the next couple of months, we will be building the actual aviary building, which will house the eagles. The structure will essentially be a long pole building with

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wooden slats and netting for the walls and roof. Once this building is complete, we will move the eagles from BOPNW to our new aviary site.

From that time forward, we will be responsible for the daily care of the eagles. We will still partner with BOPNW for routine eagle exams, but the process of gathering food, daily feedings, cage cleaning, and other tasks will be coordinated by the Wildlife Program. Over the next several months, we will begin the process of identifying and training volunteers on the details of eagle care. Our hope is that we will form a dedicated team of people that will share in the task of caring for our Tribal eagles. While this is a significant responsibility, it is certainly one that should be very rewarding to all those involved.



## The future of Columbia River dams

*By Thomas Biladeau, Fisheries Habitat Biologist  
Supporting Information provided by John Harrison,  
Northwest Power and Conservation Council*

The current and future status of the four federally operated dams on the lower Snake River are continually in the headlines. Up here on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation, we may not think that decisions associated with these dams have much influence on us. However, legislation introduced by Washington representatives McMorris Rodgers (R) and Newhouse (R)\* centered on these dams, should it be passed, would set a precedent that would stall or all together stop any scientific review of how operations could be changed at all the dams within the Columbia River basin to improve survival of migrating salmon.

Until recently, operations of the Columbia River Federal Hydrosystem were under the jurisdiction of the long-running Federal court proceeding *United States v. Oregon*\*\* initiated in 1968 and recently dismissed in March, 2018. This suit was brought forth in order to support the fishing rights of the Columbia River Tribes that preserved the treaties with the U.S. ratified in 1855. They argued that operations of these federal dams and the jurisdiction to regulate tribal fishing rights by Oregon (and ultimately Idaho and Washington) at usual and accustomed areas limited the Tribes treaty rights to harvest salmon. This gave the Tribes much more authority over how fisheries are managed and harvested, and ultimately how the federal dams are

operated. In March, a U.S. District Judge dismissed the case in favor of a negotiated settlement consisting of a ten-year management agreement drafted by Pacific Northwest Tribes, States, and NOAA Fisheries. The federal court did state however "they hold the power to reopen this case in the event a dispute arises concerning the parties' Management Agreement that requires judicial review."

The federal court system is set up as an objective observer. They hear cases which argue both sides of an issue and make an educated decision (ruling) based on those arguments. Congress however does not operate under those same guidelines. With a tendency for congress to ignore science in order to appease lobbyists who favor economic development, we would expect decisions on dam operations to favor whomever has the most influence. Sadly, this typically comes down to the people with the deepest pockets which influence upcoming elections. Salmon lobbyists typically are not in this category.

If the introduced legislation by McMorris Rodgers and Newhouse is accepted into law, congress would have the ability to override any decision the court has made regarding operation, scientific review, or management of these dams. Typically, federal court decisions are based on balancing dam operations while striving to increase salmon returns. This requires rigorous scientific analysis and also leaves the option open to investigate the possibility to remove the four dams on the lower Snake River.

### Snake River Dam Facts

The lower Snake River dams are run of the river dams which provide up to 4% of the regions energy, mostly during the spring while runoff is occurring. They provide a 140-mile avenue for barge transport of nearly 67 million bushels of wheat a year. Ice Harbor is the only dam which provides irrigation for agriculture. These dams provide very low levels of flood control, as they are not designed to alter reservoir levels for water storage and/or power generation.

Survival estimates of juvenile salmon across the concrete structure of the dams has improved to 96% - 99%, however, survival of wild juvenile salmon through the reservoirs behind the dams is as low as 32%. This is significantly lower than survival rates in the free-flowing river. In reservoirs, juvenile salmon are subjected to slow moving water which leaves them much more susceptible to predation by birds and other fish. The reservoirs significantly slow down the juveniles on their migration to the ocean as well. During the migration of adult salmon back upstream, fish ladders slow down and

crowd salmon, leaving them more susceptible to disease and injury. Summer migrating fish such as sockeye, steelhead, and chinook, along with resident sturgeon and trout, are subjected to abnormally high water temperatures due to impounded water behind reservoirs. This results in higher rates of mortality and a decrease in returning adults for harvest opportunities and spawning.

*\*Along with Representatives McMorris Rodgers and Newhouse, additional support for this bill is expressed by State Representatives Gianforte (R-Mont.), Labrador (R-ID.), Herrera Beutler (R-Wa.), Schrader (D-OR.), and Walden (R-OR.).*

*\*\*The parties to the U.S. v. Oregon litigation and harvest management include the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho; the United States (NOAA Fisheries); the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakima Nation.*



## Survival rates of cutthroat trout increase following removal of northern pike

By Jon Firehammer, Fisheries Research Biologist

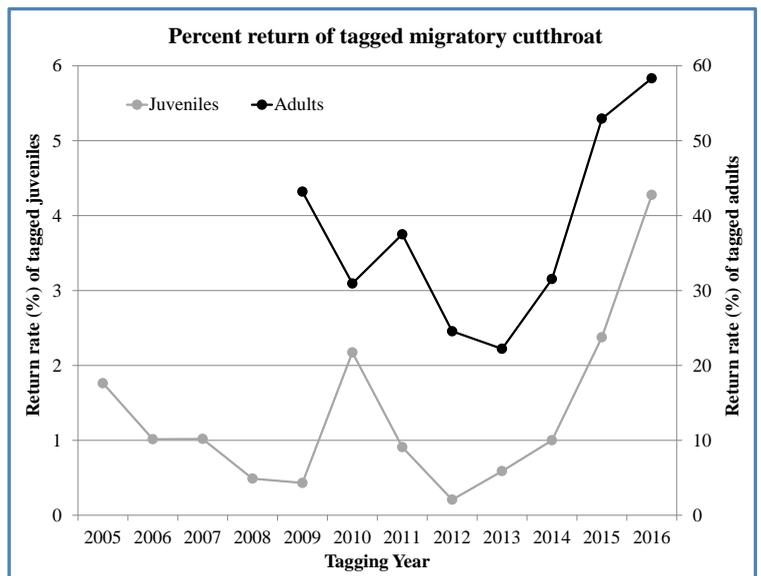
Trapping results have shown a promising trend for cutthroat trout that ascend Lake Creek in the spring to spawn. More than 4% of juvenile trout that moved out of this creek and into Coeur d'Alene Lake two years ago have returned this spring as spawning adults. Though this percentage does not seem that large, it is four times greater than what usually has been observed in prior years. Over a ten-year period from 2005-2014, juvenile trout that left Lake Creek to access the productive feeding grounds in Coeur d'Alene Lake typically returned two years later as spawning adults at percentages that did not exceed 1%; only twice did return rates approach 2%. So what has changed to give rise to this recent upturn in survival?

Starting in 2015, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Fisheries Program has been using gill nets to remove northern pike every year from Windy Bay to increase survival rates of cutthroat trout. Northern pike, a non-native invasive predatory fish that was illegally introduced into the Coeur d'Alene basin in the early 1970's, has been shown to consume large numbers of cutthroat trout in the lake and to have a substantial impact on the population of spawning fish that is destined for Lake Creek. In the spring, pike congregate

in the shallow, weedy areas of Windy Bay to spawn, which coincides with migratory movements of cutthroat trout. Adult trout are moving through the shallow areas of this bay to migrate up Lake Creek to access upstream spawning grounds. In addition, juvenile trout are moving downstream out of Lake Creek and through this bay to enter the lake. Thus, both adults and juveniles are vulnerable to the voracious feeding habits of northern pike during these springtime periods. The Fisheries Program expected that annually removing pike from these shallow areas of Windy Bay should decrease predation and therefore increase the chance that fish survive and return to spawn in future years.

So far it seems to be working. In 2015, the fisheries staff removed 310 pike from Windy Bay. This spring only 57 pike have been captured, which suggests that we are making a dent in the pike population that inhabits this bay. This reduction of hungry mouths has given rise to the four-fold increase in juvenile trout survival. To put this in perspective in terms of numbers, if only 100 juveniles survived in the past to return two years later to spawn, a similar number of out-migrating juveniles would now produce 400 spawners under the current conditions. This is a significant increase in the number of first-time spawners for this cutthroat population.

In addition, because cutthroat trout can spawn several times in their lifetime, we have been able to track the percentage of adults that return to the lake and come back in following years as repeat spawners. Prior to pike removal efforts, only around 30% of adults on average would return to Lake Creek to spawn again. Currently, we are finding that about 55% of adults are coming back, which is almost a two-fold increase. Thus, the removal of pike is not only helping juveniles survive



to spawn, but our efforts are also helping the larger adults to come back and spawn multiple times.

These results are indeed encouraging. And it could get better. The juveniles that exited in 2016 that have returned at over 4% experienced a pike population in Windy Bay that was more numerous than what it is now. It may not be unreasonable to expect the survival rate of juveniles to exceed 5% as pike numbers continue

to diminish from our netting efforts. If this trend in increased survival rate continues over time, the number of spawners that ascend Lake Creek in the spring should climb to the point where a seasonal fishery for cutthroat trout can once again be established. Stay tuned for updates on the status of adult cutthroat trout in Lake Creek as we continue to remove this 'toothy predator'.



## Fisheries program receives grant for natural resources internships

By Gina Baughn, Natural Resources Education Specialist

**O**n April 18<sup>th</sup> the Fisheries department received word that they will be awarded \$20,000 from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for a Coeur d'Alene Tribal Natural Resource Youth Internship Program to support the goal of recruiting native youth into natural resource based careers. The funding provided by this grant will support summer internships for up to five graduates over a period of two years. Recruiting efforts will target young people who are nearing completion or have recently completed high school, but have not yet enrolled in a post-secondary education program. They will be assigned to participate in special projects currently underway within the Tribe's Natural Resources and Lake Management departments, while simultaneously being supported by the Tribal Department of Education in pursuing post-secondary training and education.

This program hopes to build on the tribe's long standing Natural Resources Summer Youth Internship Program by identifying those youth who have expressed interest in a natural resources career and place them within the paid internship positions made available through this grant. Tribal staff will work with these students to identify their long-term career goals and their goals for the internship as the first priority in the program. One of their first tasks assigned to the interns, will be to meet with the Tribal Department of Education Native American Career and Technical Education Program (NACTEP) staff to begin enrollment in a recently developed University of Idaho Tribal Natural Resources Stewardship Certificate program. This program includes a 1-credit restoration field course that will be available to the interns, and funded by NACTEP. Connecting these programs will also result in the potential award of college credit for work completed during the internship. These intern positions will simultaneously focus on developing a core set of field skills as well as strengthen the connections between the youth's indigenous knowledge and a culturally-based environmental restoration ethic that serves the larger goals of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.

## The Return of the King

By Gina Baughn, Natural Resources Education Specialist

**T**he Coeur d'Alene Tribe marked a historic moment on May 1, 2018 as more than 170 students and community members stepped gingerly down the banks of Hangman Creek with small plastic cups, each holding a small salmon that would be released into what was once one of the most productive salmon streams in the region. The sun - breaking through dense clouds

that had poured rain the day before - shown brilliantly on proceedings that were heavy with emotion and spiritual purpose, but also marked by joy, laughter and a powerful sense of hope for the future.

Tens of thousands of salmon once swam up the Spokane River each year, destined for spawning grounds in the Hangman Creek headwaters. But following the construction of Little Falls Dam on the Spokane River in 1900, these fish were condemned with extinction. Preceding the dams, one fish weir located at the mouth of Hangman Creek was reported to catch 1000 salmon a

day for a period of thirty days a year; and salmon were recorded as “pouring” into Hangman Creek near Tekoa, Washington in the 1880’s and 1890’s. It was these little salmon, in small plastic cups, that would be the first of their kind to swim in these waters in well over 100 years.

Their journey began on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January, 2018. Some 250 eggs of Okanogan-stock summer Chinook were picked up from the Chief Joseph Hatchery in Bridgeport, Washington and transported in wet burlap bags to the Coeur d’Alene Indian Reservation. The eggs were then separated into three tanks and raised by school children from Lakeside Elementary, Coeur d’Alene Tribal School, and the Coeur d’Alene Tribe Early Childhood Learning Center, as part of a new Smłich (Salmon) in the Classroom educational program. By the end of April, the salmon were beginning to outgrow their tanks, and the last flush of melting snow from the headwater hills marked the best time to release fish. A few fish had also grown big enough to be tagged, so that tribal biologists would be able to monitor their downstream movements. After five long months in classroom tanks, on May 1<sup>st</sup>, the small Chinook salmon were finally released into Hangman Creek. The very first salmon, freed from the confines of its small plastic cup, was released to cheers and celebration as it quickly disappeared under the surface of the water.

The celebration was well attended by local school children, Coeur d’Alene tribal staff and members of the community. The Tribe’s Natural Resources Director, Caj Matheson, provided opening remarks followed by a prayer and blessing given by tribal member Jeanie Louie. Tribal councilmen Ernie Stensgar and Chief Allan each spoke about the significance of the day. Then the audience listened as tribal elder Merle SiJohn, who was celebrating his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, walked into the circle and spoke: “To see the salmon back in Hangman Creek again, is an honor”. He acknowledged a red-tailed hawk that flew over head as he spoke. “Not only did our ancestors harvest the fish out of the creek but the red tailed hawk did too. All the animals that walk here had something to do with that salmon. The salmon has been gone for, I don’t know how many years, and today we will get to see it come back. The Salmon, from today on, will feed our brothers again.” He closed by saying, “The salmon that were put in the creek today - their ancestors were here before them, just like our Coeur d’Alene Indian ancestors that first fished at this creek - and someday these younger generations will be able to do the same”.

Merle’s words were an echoing of the hope – shared by everyone present - that this celebration would

renew a lost connection to the past, and provide a spark of excitement for the future of salmon recovery here on the Coeur d’Alene Indian Reservation.

With the help of our younger generations, we will continue this new tradition in the hopes that the salmon will someday flourish here again.



*To see more photos and to be the first to know about events like this happening in our community follow us on the Fish & Wildlife Facebook page @cdatribe.fishandwildlife*

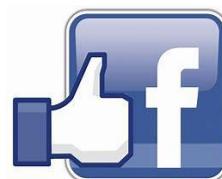
# Meet the new Lake Management staff



Hello, I'm Peter Mahoney I recently accepted the Manager position in the tribes Cultural Resources Protection Program under the Lake Management Department. I have been blessed with an amazing wife and four beautiful children, all of which share my love for the outdoors. Previous to this assignment I spent the last four years working at Marimn Health, first as a Lifestyle Coach in diabetes prevention, then as the Traditional Physical Activity Coordinator for the REACH grant. During my time in both of those positions my focus became doing what I can to improve the quality of life for all members of our community, a focus that will continue to drive my work here in Lake Management. Currently I am preparing for several summer events including the family canoe build, canoe journeys, lake celebration day, qhest life gathering, hndesnet camp out, and much more. Through these activities, I hope to increase our community's cultural connection to all the natural resources we have available to us. Canoes, plants, traditional foods, and anything our people once used, I want to see us using again. On that note I would like to say lim lemt.sh for taking the time to read this, I greatly appreciate the opportunity that I have received to help make our community a better place. If anyone has any questions about projects I am working on or would like to find out how they can help: **Please feel free to contact me at 1(208) 686-0981!**

Ah qhest, my name is Jordyn Nomee and I was recently hired as the new cultural project coordinator under the Tribe's Lake Management Department. One of the primary goals under this program is to develop a Rites of Passage program for the youth in this community. Currently, I am attending North Idaho College to gain an associates in American Indian studies to further my education to teach people not only about our tribe but all American Indians. I am very excited to work with our youth to better the future for the Coeur d' Alene Tribe.

**If you have any questions regarding my program feel free to email me at [jnomee@cdatribe-nsn.gov](mailto:jnomee@cdatribe-nsn.gov) Lim lemtsh!**



*Looking for more information on the happenings in the Tribe's Lake Management Department? Visit the Coeur d'Alene Lake Management Plan page:*

**ATTENTION**  
**COEUR D'ALENE TRIBAL MEMBERS**  
**\*NOW AVAILABLE\***  
**HEYBURN PARK**  
**COEUR D'ALENE TRIBAL RECREATION PASS**

**COEUR D'ALENE TRIBAL RECREATION PASS**

Winter is coming to a close and it's a great time to get out and/or start making plans to recreate on the Lake and River. As a reminder, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) require a Motor Vehicle Entry Fee (MVEF) to park and recreate in Heyburn Park.

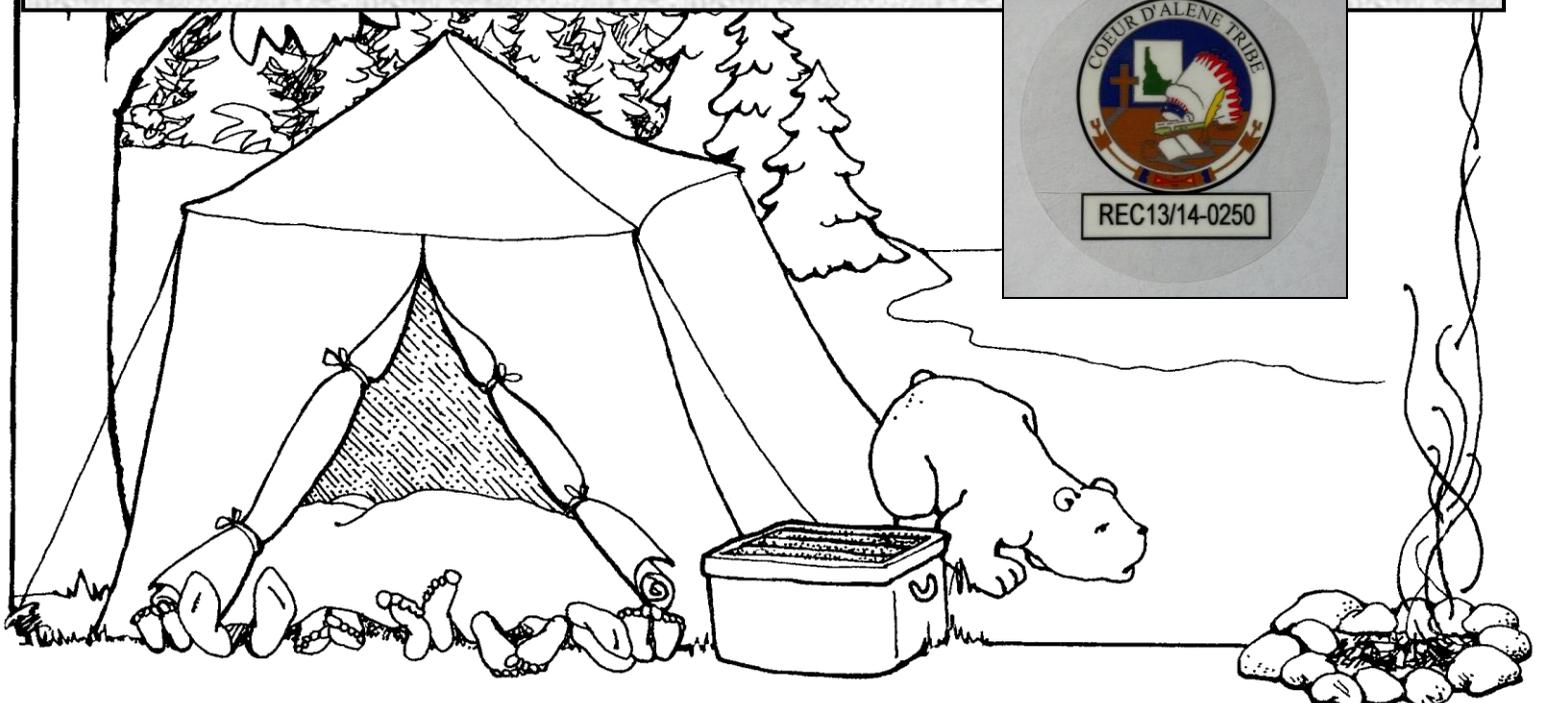
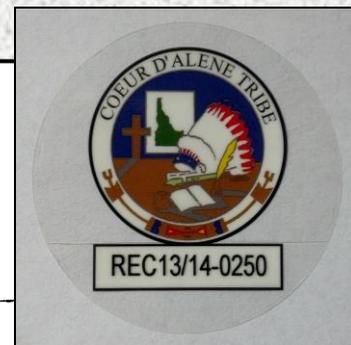
The Tribe has developed a Tribal recreation pass/vehicle sticker that will serve as a substitute to the MVEF for Tribal members visiting Heyburn Park. IDPR will honor this pass as a substitute to the MVEF, due in part to our co-ownership and management of the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes. Specific to State managed recreation sites; this pass is only valid for Heyburn Park and will not serve as a substitute for the MVEF at other IDPR facilities, outside of the Reservation.

However, Kootenai County Parks and Waterways has agreed to honor this pass for Tribal members parking/launching vessels at Kootenai County boat launches within the Reservation, such as Spokane Point, Harlow Point, and Fullers Bay.

The vehicle sticker must be placed in your window, and can be picked up, for no fee, at the reception desk of the Felix Aripa (Shi'ttsin) Building, 401 Anne Antelope Road, Plummer, ID, one block west of the Wellness Center. Please bring your tribal identification card, vehicle registration, and the vehicle the sticker will be attached to. Tribal members may obtain passes for each vehicle registered in their name. The recreation pass will be valid through the 2018 calendar year. You will be able to obtain a new, two-year pass, at the end of 2018, for the 2019-2020 calendar years.

Remember, you must have this pass/sticker on display to avoid being issued a citation by IDPR and/or County Park Rangers. The pass is for Coeur d'Alene Tribal members only and Tribal government vehicles.

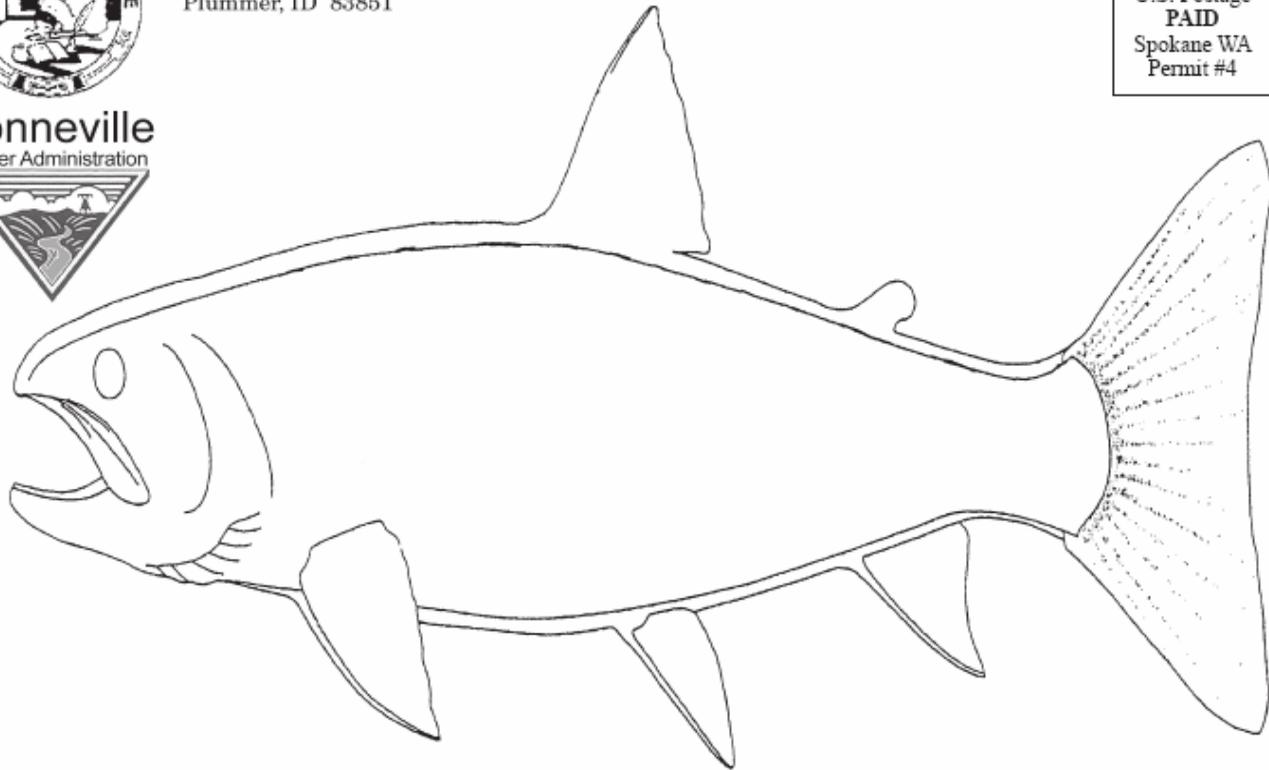
If you have any further questions or concerns please call (208) 686-5302.





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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.

*A Special Thank You  
to Frankie SiJohn for  
delivering this  
beautiful canoe  
replica on behalf of  
Gary and Jan  
Dupree, now on  
display in the Felix  
Aripa Building  
Conference Room*

