



News Release

February 22, 2012

Contact: Emily Washines 509-865-5121 ext.6315

Yakama Nation Fisheries Releases Study about Methow River Recreation Use

Twisp, Washington –Yakama Nation Fisheries recently completed an assessment of recreation use of the Methow River between Winthrop and Twisp. The assessment prompts the tribe to consider the safety of the most novice users of the river when developing habitat restoration projects. The Middle Methow Reach receives heavy recreational river use during the summer months. The study shows that a majority of river users were from out of town, with minimal experience of the river conditions in the Middle Methow Reach.

Habitat restoration work begins with a broad, science-based assessment of the river where restoration work is likely to increase the amount of spawning and juvenile-rearing habitat for salmon.

"This is part of our process to better understand the nature of potential interactions between river recreation and engineered wood habitat," said Hans Smith, Habitat Biologist for Yakama Nation Fisheries. "We will develop solutions that allow restoration work to proceed and minimize potential conflicts with river users."

The Middle Methow Reach Recreational Use Assessment will be used by project staff to develop habitat restoration projects, appropriately sized and located, to minimize public safety concerns.

Copies of The Middle Methow Reach Recreational Use Assessment are available on the Yakama Nation Fisheries website at <http://Yakamafish-nsn.gov/Habitat/UCHR/UCHR.html>

About Yakama Nation Fisheries

The Yakama Nation Fisheries Program strives to preserve, protect, enhance, and restore culturally important fish populations and their habitat. The Fisheries Program employs more than 200 professional and technical staff members and manages 104 fishery management projects in eight sub-basins (White Salmon, Wind, Klickitat, Rock Creek, Yakima, Wenatchee, Entiat and Methow). We combine our traditional knowledge of the river system with cutting-edge science. The Upper Columbia Habitat Restoration Project works with local communities and landowners to restore spring Chinook and steelhead populations to self-sustaining harvestable levels.

###



Yakama Nation Releases Study about Methow River Recreation Use

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) Why did the Yakama Nation Fisheries decide to commission the study about Middle Methow Reach Recreational Use?

The Middle Methow Reach is an important area where salmon habitat improvements may contribute significantly to the recovery of salmonids listed under the Endangered Species Act. The Middle Methow Reach is deficient in the amount and diversity of wood habitat needed for salmon. Given the public safety concerns about river recreation use and engineered wood habitat in the Middle Methow Reach, we commissioned a recreational river usage study. This study will be used by project staff to develop habitat restoration projects that are appropriately sized and located to minimize public safety concerns.

2) How does this Recreational Use Assessment fit in with the process?

Our restoration work begins with a broad, science-based assessment of the rivers and watersheds. Our project will go through three distinct phases: assessment, design and implementation. This study is a necessary step for the assessment and design phases.

3) Are there more details to offer on the findings?

The study captured the range of recreational use. Our assessment shows that a highly novice user group exists that are unfamiliar with the area and are typically ill prepared for the inherent risks associated with recreating in a dynamic river corridor. We are considering the safety of the most novice users of the river when deciding on the placement and designs of our engineered wood habitat projects.

4) Specific Recommendations that have come out of this?

Local emergency response personnel will be consulted in advance about our plans to install wood habitat projects. We will provide clear information to emergency response entities about where these projects are located in the Middle Methow Reach.