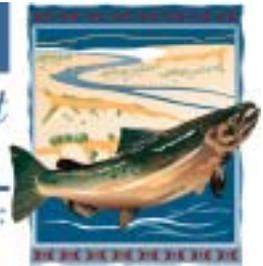


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Hanford Reach National Monument

Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge

... protecting the last of the free-flowing Columbia River.



June 19, 2004 Public Affairs Chief visits Hanford Reach NM

On Saturday, June 19th, the new Washington Office Chief of Public Affairs Jeff Fleming and Joan Jewett, RO External Affairs Chief toured the Hanford Reach National Monument with Project Leader Greg Hughes. The trip began with an ascent of Rattlesnake Mountain, one of the highest, treeless mountains in the U.S. From the summit the visitors took in expansive views of the 195,000 acre Monument and the Hanford nuclear site. Hughes explained that the Monument lands consist of the original buffer zone for the Hanford site established in 1943 and is co-managed by DOE and USFWS.



Established as a National Monument in June 2000, the Presidential Proclamation states, “The Monument is a biological treasure, embracing important riparian, aquatic, and upland shrub-steppe habitats that are rare or in decline in other areas. The Monument contains one of the last remaining large blocks of shrub-steppe ecosystems in the Columbia River Basin.....” Hughes pointed to obsolete Cold War infrastructure and modern cell towers which may conflict with protection of the unique natural and cultural resources highlighted in the Monument Proclamation. Jenna Gaston, Monument Cultural Resource Manager, shared insights on the Native American history of the area and the significance of the mountain, known as *La Liik*, to the tribes. *La Liik* is acknowledged as a Traditional Cultural Property for its spiritual connection as part of tribal origin stories and as a vision questing site.

The last leg of the outing brought home the importance of the Columbia River to anadromous salmon on their upstream journey. The 51-mile Hanford Reach is the last natural spawning grounds remaining in the 1200 miles of the river. About 80% of the fall Chinook salmon population spawns within the Monument. From the river, David Smith, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist, discussed fishery issues, biological resources, and extensive fire rehabilitation efforts recently accomplished by the



Monument. A close-up view of the prominent White Bluffs, with its regionally renowned vertebrate fossils, also highlighted the river trip. The White Bluffs landslide investigation, currently proposed for Congressional appropriation, is another issue affecting the Monument. The on-going slides, which are at least partly related to circumstances beyond Monument lands and control, are impacting fisheries, paleontological, and cultural resources. The finale to the day was appropriately, a fresh salmon bake at the local park in Richland.