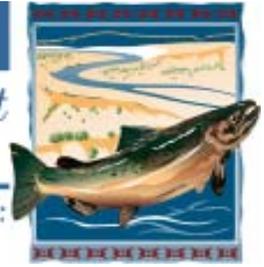


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

*Hanford Reach National Monument  
Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge*

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



**April 6, 2005**

## **Cooperative Safety Training Program for Hanford and Mid-Columbia Refuges**

Safety is the prime concern at Hanford Reach National Monument and the Mid-Columbia National Wildlife Refuge Complex and is the responsibility of every employee. Refuge Operations Specialist/Collateral Duty Safety Officer, Jack Heisler, took the initiative for the Department of Interior's Safety and Health Awareness Week, 2005, organizing a half day event for staff at both stations. Safety and health awareness were the themes of the mandatory training session. Small employee groups rotated through five training stations, each designed with an individual theme on safety.



Fire safety is one aspect that we never take lightly, especially in the arid shrub-steppe of Eastern Washington. Our fire crews combined efforts to provide information on fire behavior and the various types of fire extinguishers used at field stations. Every employee had to demonstrate the proper use of the extinguisher for the instructors. Portable, mobile and base radios was the theme of another station which proved very beneficial to staff who were not as well versed in radio operations as the fire crews. Frequencies, repeater stations and general operations of each type of radio was covered. Safety requirements for ATV's was presented so that staff members understood the potential for injury by not following

proper riding techniques and safety guidelines. An issue for all staff is work station ergonomics. Though meant to make our lives easier, computers, desks and chairs can cause body and mind stress and even injury if improperly positioned. Field staff must also understand ergonomics while operating vehicles, equipment and tools. Finally, an excellent station on the hazards of critters was presented. We were not talking bears and cougars, rather bites from rattlesnakes and mosquitoes, how to avoid them and what to do if you can't. A lively discussion on West Nile Virus concluded the session.

In all, 35 staff members finished the morning saying that they had learned something new at each presentation and plans for improving next year's training are already underway. Heisler reported, "Safety Day went great! I would like to thank all the instructors and staff for stepping up and participating to make this cooperative program a success."

