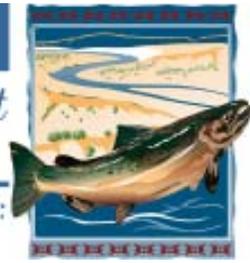


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

*Hanford Reach National Monument  
Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge*

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



**April 4, 2005**

## **Salmon in the Classroom Program Expands in Eastern Washington**

Hands-on science just took on a whole new meaning! On Friday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, students participating in the Salmon in the Classroom Program said good-bye to their salmon as they released them into the Columbia River. The Franklin Conservation District (FCD), with funding from the Department of Ecology and the Environmental Protection Agency, is currently sponsoring the Salmon in the Classroom Program for nine schools within Franklin County, up from two in 2003 and four in 2004.



There were a total of 429 elementary school students and 350 middle school students participating in this year's release.

Students received 200 eggs from a designated hatchery and cared for "their" salmon while learning about life histories and habitat requirements. By becoming salmon stewards, the students have become more aware of local waterways and more conscious of, and knowledgeable about, local water quality issues in the Columbia Basin. The program also informed students that the agricultural community supports realistic, science based salmon recovery efforts. Students released the salmon as fry after studying the streams and creeks into which the fish were released.



The Salmon in the Classroom program, established in 1991, was created as an educational project to encourage respect for water resources and promote responsible behavior towards the environment. By raising salmon in their classrooms, students learn about water quality and habitat issues, and discover the inter-relationships of species and conditions within a given watershed. This program also provides aquariums, organizes field trips, and hands-on in-class presentations on salmon and water quality.



After sending their salmon on their journey to the ocean, students rotated through nine learning stations set up in Chiawana Park and staffed by representatives from cooperating agencies. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was represented by Wildlife Biologist Heidi Newsome from Hanford Reach



National Monument discussing the Columbia River watershed and McNary National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Educator Naomi Sherer covering aquatic wildlife. Fishery Biologists Todd Newsome and Melinda Davis from the Yakama Indian Nation demonstrated pit tagging, radio telemetry and electrofishing techniques used in research. Other programs included water quality testing with the Department of Ecology, macroinvertebrates with South Columbia Basin Irrigation District, a water obstacle course laid out by the Benton-Franklin Health Department, and the Bureau of Reclamation's Rolling River Trailer. McLoughlin Middle School students even designed a game of Salmon Jeopardy to test fish knowledge savvy.



Credit must be given to organizer Heather Wendt, Resource Conservationist, Franklin Conservation District for bringing together all the partners in education to present a day of unforgettable learning.

