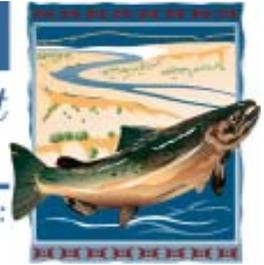


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

*Hanford Reach National Monument
Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge*

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



March 24, 2005

Hanford Hosts Monument Tour for Marcus Ward, DOI Special Assistant

National Monument staff hosted a jet boat tour of the Hanford Reach for Marcus Ward, Special Assistant for the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks during his recent visit to Eastern Washington. Mark Miller, Supervisor of the Central Washington Field Office, organized the trip for Mr. Ward, and was accompanied by Rich Johnson, Assistant Fisheries Supervisor, Howard Schaller, Columbia River Fisheries Program Office, Pat Sousa, Ecological Services from the Regional Office, Supervisory Fisheries Biologist Don Anglin and Monument Project Leader Greg Hughes. The tour was the precursor to the April 15th presentation of "Fall Chinook Salmon Habitat Analysis and Stranding/Entrapment Evaluation in the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River." This study was prepared by the Columbia River Fisheries Program Office and funded by USFWS, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.



Beautiful weather, fantastic scenery, and abundant wildlife provided a backdrop for lively discussions including the upcoming Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) re-licensing of Grant County PUD's Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dams, the effects to spawning and rearing habitat from widely fluctuating river flow levels created by water releases from the dams, and the recent 2-D hydraulic modeling study of the Hanford Reach. With the Priest Rapids Dam re-licensing project underway, a closely coordinated effort between Fisheries, Ecological Services, and Refuges is targeted at ensuring that the best available science is used in the re-licensing agreement. The 2-D model will be a valuable tool in crafting river management strategies to minimize the impacts of fluctuating water levels that currently rise and fall as much as ten to twelve feet daily. The Hanford Reach is the last major natural spawning grounds on the Columbia River and provides approximately 15% of Southeast Alaska's commercial Chinook salmon fishery. The Priest Rapids/Wanapum FERC relicensing process represents a rare opportunity to reform hydrosystem operations to benefit the bright fall Chinook stock that spawns and rears in the Reach.



This is an example of several divisions of the USFWS coming together with outside partners in support of a project that will aid in the conservation and protection of the wild populations of fall Chinook salmon and other aquatic species found in the Columbia River.