



# LOWER SNAKE RIVER COMPENSATION PLAN

# FISH FOR THE FUTURE



MATT HOW GRAPHIC - USFWS



JAMIE ROBERTSON, IDFG

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN LSRCP

**JANUARY 2023**



# Lower Snake River Compensation Plan

FISH FOR THE FUTURE



## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

It was a great month in the hallways of LSRCP. We started Tanya Wiley, Budget Analyst, on-staff and wrangled both Anna Copeland and Brian Devlin to help with training. Tanya's extensive expertise with Department of Defense is only second to her willingness to learn about our program. She's going to be great resource for all of us in the future!

I spent a week at Dworshak National Fish Hatchery as the USFWS and Nez Perce Tribe dial-in what new operations look like. Mark Drobish, FWS Hatchery Manager, is retiring in March, and basically all production operations will be fully transitioned at that point. The FWS will still have staff onsite to fulfill the joint management specified by the Snake River Basin Adjudication settlement, but in administrative rolls. Chris Foster (christopher\_w\_foster@fws.gov), Dworshak Coordinator, is slated to start his new role in February.

I found myself on familiar footing pushing a few pond brooms at Dworshak. Brought back old memories and some time to reflect on all the day to day efforts that make this program happen. Keep it up!

Lastly, I did escape the winter blues with my wife, Amber, in Cabo for 5 days with some old friends. I managed to hook the first striped marlin of the trip (and my lifetime) which promptly pulled off 400 yards of braid and crossed two other boats. I heard several strings of words in Spanish that probably shouldn't be repeated, but somehow we managed to keep the fish on the line and land it. Growing up a kid that dreamed about nothing, but fishing, I never even imagined catching a marlin - nor having the opportunity to try. Let's keep dreaming and trying to make LSRCP even better - you never know what we might hook into!

Stay safe and have fun out there!

-Nate



.....  
*Mierda...Mierda...Mierda!*  
  
*Not what you want to hear on a trip of a lifetime to Mexico.*  
.....

# ANNUAL OPERATING PLANS

SPRING CHINOOK FRY

## Annual Operating Plans

Winter is the season for Annual Operating Plans across the basins. LSRCP attends these meetings to review how on-station fish are performing, broodstock return estimates, and changes to the next brood cycle.

We're continually seeking out improvement opportunities in all aspects of our portfolio; including those areas in Northeast Oregon and the Salmon basin identified as substantially below Chinook return goals. The goal is to make significant advancement in objectives in the next ten years: LSRCP 2032.

As laid out during the ISRP there are several major areas to consider:

- 1) **Management Needs** - Where are more fish needed on the landscape, how do changes fit within U.S. v Oregon negotiations, and what are natural population limitations?
- 2) **Infrastructure** - What can existing infrastructure do and what modifications can be made, including staying within current NPDES permits?
- 3) **ESA** - How might our actions affect critically endangered stocks and what bandwidth is available for BIOP and HGMP modifications?
- 4) **Monitoring and Evaluation** - What other dials can be tweaked like size at release, release locations, release timing, etc. etc. to maximize adult returns?

Thanks for everyone's willingness to push outside the boxes and explore what is possible within LSRCP!





# CLEAWATER HATCHERY ROOF

## Clearwater Hatchery Building Roof

When it rains, it pours. As you can imagine, LSRCP receives no shortage of emergency repair requests between scheduled repairs and replacements. We try to weigh all of the requests against the current needs across the program and the most cost effective repair or replacement.

Roofs always fail at some point. The Clearwater Hatchery roof was slated for replacement sometime in 2027 on the 5-year plan at about \$1.2M. However, when the hatchery staff asked LSRCP to reconsider the timeline, it catches our attention when 5-gallon buckets are already deployed for leaks.

Thanks for bringing this one to our attention. And, we wish this was unexpected, but a prolonged build-up of deferred maintenance projects has left us open to these failures. We expect the \$25M reserve distribution clause (RDC) funding from Bonneville Power Administration will be available near the end of February 2023 and we'll start tackling these problems in earnest. In the meantime, if anyone has some larger buckets - Clearwater may need a few....





GARY SPEAKING TO STAKEHOLDERS

# GARY JAMES CTUIR

## Gary James, CTUIR Program Manager, Aug 1982 - Feb 2023

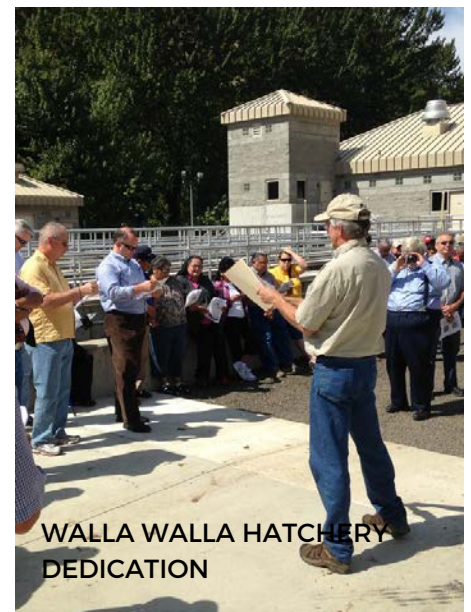
Gary James received a BS Degree in Fisheries from Oregon State University in 1979. Following college he worked for numerous agencies including NOAA, USFWS, BLM and ODFW. Gary was the first fish biologist hired by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) in 1982. His first month on the job, he was tasked with the providing the CTUIR testimony at the Lookingglass Hatchery dedication event. Practically at the birth of LSRCP mitigation programs. Later, in the late 90's, Gary was involved with BPA funding of the Lostine and other satellite programs for Lookingglass Hatchery that put fish back into in-kind locations. As he states, "more than just returning fish to a concrete fish ladder at the hatchery for a fish fight."

Gary has managed the CTUIR Fisheries Program for the last 40 years and has been instrumental in building it to one of the most accomplished programs in the region with an annual budget of over \$20M and about 70 FTE. Gary supervised all aspects of the tribe's Fisheries Program including coordination with tribal policy, co-managers, funding agencies and the public in planning, implementation and monitoring of the tribe's water/fish projects throughout NE Oregon and SE Washington. CTUIR projects support a "River Vision" approach which describes ecologically healthy floodplain conditions necessary to protect, restore and enhance tribal First Foods for the perpetual cultural, economic, and sovereign benefit of CTUIR. Projects include instream flow restoration, fish passage, floodplain habitat enhancement, hatchery actions, lamprey and freshwater mussel research and restoration, fish harvest management, and monitoring and evaluation of all the above to determine project success. Notable accomplishments of CTUIR's Fisheries Program includes restoration of water, salmon and fisheries in the Umatilla and Walla Walla rivers after nearly a century of absence. Major floodplain restoration has been implemented in over 50 stream miles covering over 24,000 acres. Use of hatchery programs has resulted in both enhanced fisheries and supplementation of natural production. CTUIR is a national leader in lamprey and freshwater mussel restoration. Innovative translocation and artificial production and supplementation techniques are being employed to rebuild populations. Gary has been a passionate leader and resource advocate in many regional and local fisheries restoration planning forums for over 40 years. Gary is retiring at the end of February 2023 and will be looking forward to increasing his "fish business" in the field.

-Gary James



GARY AND MIKE MC CLOUD



WALLA WALLA HATCHERY  
DEDICATION



# MIKE FLESHER ODFW



MIKE AT WORK?

## Mike Flesher - 43 years for ODFW

Please help me congratulate Mike Flesher on his upcoming retirement. Mike began working for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) in April 1980, as an Experimental Biological Aid for the "John Day Salmon Study"—an evaluation of spring Chinook salmon in the John Day River basin that concluded in 1985. The final report from that work (available here), was often referred to by Hiram Li (OSU Fisheries Professor) as "one of the greatest agency fishery reports of all time." Mike also operated the trap at Sherars Falls on the Deschutes River during breaks in his John Day seasons.

After his tenure in John Day, Mike had the distinction of working at the North Umpqua hydro project for 1 day! Following that, he worked several years for West Region Research and Development on Rogue River salmonid studies. Mike moved over to the Eastern Oregon University campus in La Grande in 1989 and was instrumental in building the Eastern Region Fish Research program as an Assistant Project Leader. The program in those days was known as "Northeast Oregon Research and Development" and was initially housed in the basement of the campus radio station! Mike has provided leadership, guidance, and snacks to legions of staff in the East Region Fish Research program while working on angler creel surveys and ongoing evaluation of the hatchery summer steelhead programs in Northeast Oregon. Mike signs every office birthday card with his tagline "Let's go huntin' ." and his e-mails are easily recognized by the enthusiastic use of an exclamation mark at the end of every sentence! When you see Mike in hunting camp, he will be easily recognizable as the one with the baseball hat and big smile who is setting out the table of snacks and encouraging you to just take one more bite of food.

Mike's last day with ODFW will be February 28th, and if 43 years of data correctly inform our model, he will be the first in the office and last to leave. As he reflects on his years of service, Mike is especially proud of his contributions to helping restore popular summer steelhead fisheries in the Grande Ronde and Imnaha river basins. Thanks for everything you have brought to East Region Research and ODFW Mike, and cheers to a long and healthy retirement!



BUDGET APPROVED RAIN GEAR



ON THE MEASURING BOARD

- Joseph Feldhaus

# CHRIS FOSTER DWORSHAK COORDINATOR



DWORSHAK CHINOOK RACEWAYS

**Chris Foster, US Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Christopher\_w\_foster@fws.gov**

I grew up in the Central Valley of California where approximately 25 percent of the nation's food supply is produced. Supporting agriculture in the area are multi-use water resource projects. These projects provide flood control, power generation, irrigation, and recreation. My father was the president of a local bass club and I often fished with him in weekend tournaments. In the third grade, I won my first tournament. Using my tournament winnings, I purchased several freshwater aquariums increasing my interest in fish. I was hooked!

Shortly after high school, I moved to the Pacific Northwest to continue my education at the Mt. Hood Community College. After completing an AS degree in Fisheries Technology, I transferred to the University of Idaho where I earned a BS degree in Fishery Resources. During my time in college, I worked summer jobs supporting fishery projects with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Idaho Fish and Game. I spent those summers hiking into remote areas, snorkeling pristine waters counting steelhead and Bull Trout. I also had fun electrofishing lowland lakes around Lewiston, Idaho. My first job out of college was at the Lyons Ferry Fish Hatchery before leaving to work at the Lower Granite Dam. I continued my federal career at the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery where 1.2 million spring Chinook Salmon are produced annually. In 2017 a once in a lifetime opportunity with Tacoma Power became available. I was hired to commission and manage a newly constructed 32-million-dollar juvenile fish collector on the upper Cowlitz River.

My wife Lisa has supported me throughout my education and fisheries career. We have 3 kids: Reeve (12), Alyssa (7), and Jesse (3). We adopted Jesse last summer, bringing our 7-year foster journey to an end. No longer restricted to Washington State, we have been looking to relocate back to Idaho. I have a great understanding of the Columbia River basin and the many challenges ahead for the region. I take pride in being a public servant and naturally connect on a personal level with diverse groups of people. As a project manager in fisheries, I constantly seek creative ways to meet goals using a collaborative process. I often reflect on those whom I have had the privilege to work alongside and consider them all as part of my story. Returning to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, I look forward to writing the next chapter.



-Chris