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Number 48

HERALD

of Lemhi County

Idaho

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Salmon and steelhead recovery efforts explored . . . Governor Little's workgroup tour projects in Lemhi Basin

by Haley Pijl
Governor Brad Little's workgroup on salmon and steelhead recovery met for the second time July 30 and 31 in Salmon. This comes after this year's poor Idaho fish returns. Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG) biologists are predicting another year of poor returns of large steelhead to the Snake and Clearwater rivers and its tributaries.

Poor returns are the new normal so we need to act urgently," said Hayes. "The workgroup's goal should be to restore wild fish well-distributed throughout areas in Idaho in harvestable and ecologically significant abundance. Recovery goals and plans need to be based in science."

The first day of the workgroup's visit, July 30, involved a tour of habitat improvement projects in the Lemhi Basin. Stops on this tour included a visit to the Eagle Valley Habitat Restoration Project where an open irrigation ditch has been converted to a buried pipeline - doubling the amount of water on Bohannon Creek to benefit steelhead and resident fish.

IDFG Jeff Dilucia and Jen Smith of the Lemhi Regional Land Trust walked the workgroup through the restoration efforts and talked about the importance of flood plain connectivity and off channel habitat to juvenile rearing in both the summer and winter. It was stressed that these type of restoration projects are only possible through strong partnerships with landowners, the community and resource managers.

IDFG Paddy Murphy guided the workgroup on a tour of a fish screen on the Lemhi River. He discussed habitat connectivity and the Lemhi flow agreement. Murphy also demonstrated the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration criteria for the fish screen and shared with the group the details of the Idaho fish screening program.

The workgroup toured a screw trap - which consists of a large cone suspended between two floating pontoons. Water flow then rotates the cone and funnels a portion of the migrating fish into an underwater holding tank at the back of the

trap. This enables an assessment to be obtained of downstream migration timing and the abundance of juvenile salmon and steelhead.

Mike Edmondson, from the Office of Species Conservation, guided the tour of the screw trap and discussed monitoring results obtained through fish sampling. He described strategies for habitat improvement in the Upper Salmon Basin.

This tour gave workgroup members a chance to see first hand the efforts being made to save Idaho's fish in Lemhi County. "Tribes, conservationists, landowners, irrigators, government agencies and other Idahoans are working together to save our fish." (See Governor Page 3)

Open meeting law violated by school commission

The Idaho Public Charter School Commission (PCSC), August 1, voted unanimously to accept responsibility and adopt recommendations made by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to remedy violations of Idaho's open meeting law that occurred during a PCSC executive session meeting held last April.

The OAG conducted an investigation as a result of complaints received after a PCSC executive session meeting was inadvertently recorded and mistakenly released in response to a public record request.

The OAG recommended the PCSC acknowledge publicly that they violated the law. (See Open Page 3)



Forecast
Friday - Sunday
Partly to Mostly Cloudy
With a Slight to 80%
Chance of Showers and
Thunderstorms
Highs - Low 70s to 80s
Lows - Mid 40s to 50s

Temperatures

| | High | Low | Prec. |
|----------|------|-----|-------|
| July 31 | 93 | 52 | trc. |
| August 1 | 90 | 53 | .04 |
| August 2 | 86 | 50 | - |
| August 3 | 90 | 48 | - |
| August 4 | 93 | 52 | - |
| August 5 | 91 | 52 | - |
| August 6 | 90 | 52 | - |

NWS data from Lemhi County Airport

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hoans have created the most amazing habitat on Earth for our fish. Good work has been done and we need to do more," stated Hayes.

The following day, July 31, the workgroup held a meeting at the IDFG office in the Jo Wenger conference room. Members were welcomed by Idaho Representative Dorothy Moon who led a discussion on rural Idaho communities and their perspectives on salmon and steelhead.

The meeting that started at 8:30 a.m. ran most of the day - concluding around 3 p.m. It featured a number of panel discussions with subjects ranging from funding for habitat improvements and types of improvements.

There were several presentations including one from Chad Colter, director of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Fish & Wildlife Department. Colter discussed the Shoshone-Bannock's Salmon River Habitat Enhancement Program as well as their efforts on Panther Creek, the East Fork of the Salmon River and the Yankee Fork of the Salmon River.

Chris Beasley, salmon biologist and biometrician from Biomark, led a question and answer session on the adult smolt portion of the salmon life cycle and the various roles habitat plays in producing fish. Beasley presented the Lemhi as a microcosm of what habitat looked like historically, how it has changed and how to get it back to what it once was.

The meeting provided multiple opportunities for public comment

"Today I choose life. Every morning when I wake up I can choose joy, happiness, negativity, pain . . . To feel the freedom that comes from being able to continue to make mistakes and choices - today I choose to feel life, not to deny my humanity but embrace it."

— Kevyn Aucoin

and open discussions. "What we heard today was that if we are going to recover salmon and steelhead, we need to focus on all of the things that are limiting our fish," said Hayes.

"This includes habitat and also hydropower, hatcheries and harvests. By tackling these issues in Idaho and the region, we hope to find win-win solutions together for salmon and steelhead restoration that are equitable, just, sustainable and prosperous for all Idahoans.

"Idaho's iconic fish populations are spiraling toward extinction despite the hard work of many local communities. If Idaho loses salmon and steelhead, not only will these species perish - an integral part of Idaho's history, culture, economy and outdoors life will also disappear. Bold action is needed now to develop solutions together that will keep communities whole and not leave Idahoans behind."



Art Critique Group meets every fourth Thursday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Purple Easel Gallery.

Pinochle players meet from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Salmon Public Library every Monday and Thursday.

Bingo is held on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the Eagle's Hall.

Adult pickleball meets at 8 a.m. at the city tennis court Monday through Friday. For more information, call 208-756-7137.

River of No Return Photo Club meets every fourth Wednesday at the Purple Easel Gallery at 7 p.m.

Salmon Arts Council meets every third Thursday at 6 p.m. at the Salmon City Center.

Trivia Night every Wednesday at the Pork Peddler at 7 p.m.



Nick & Helen and all of the staff of Bertram's Brewery would love to wish

Dixie Noonan

all of the very best in
her retirement.

We will all miss you Dix!