



Natural Resource Department News and Events, Spring 2009

April 8, 2009

Greetings Tribal Members,

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health! I am writing to provide updates and introduce employees of our Natural Resource Department. Recently we hired two new employees to assist the Natural Resource Department in 2009. Their names are: Jim McClure - serving as the Maintenance Worker; and Mike Arend - serving as the Creel Census Taker. In addition to Jim and Mike, other employees of the Natural Resource Department include: Kent Bloomer serving as a Resource Technician, and William Cowan serving as the Natural Resource Department Director. As many of you know, William Cowan is a tribal member and a Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Recently an agreement was negotiated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to allow William to continue service as the Natural Resource Department Director for 2 more years. Also, this is the second year Kent is working for the Tribe. Kent's introduction is presented below.

Our two new employees, Jim and Mike, have served the Tribe in short-term capacities. Jim served as a Maintenance Worker for 3 months last year. We welcome him back for the next 9 months. Jim's extensive maintenance and construction experience should help us repair, upgrade, and maintain facilities and equipment on the Reservation.

Last year, Mike served as a Noxious Weed Technician for 3 weeks. Mike is a hard worker and eager to meet many of our tribal members while serving as a Creel Census Taker. When you are visiting the Reservation, please welcome these individuals as employees of the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe.

With the above employees and some assistance from the Environmental Coordinator (Ron Johnny) we are ready to manage the forthcoming cutthroat trout spawn run. On March 31 we installed the fish trap. Thus far, no fish have been captured or seen in the creek likely due to sporadic weather of short periods of mild temperatures followed by snow flurries.

Aside from managing the fisheries, there are many tasks and projects to complete in 2009. These include: water quality monitoring funded by an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant; range improvements including drilling two wells, installing livestock water facilities and fences funded by EPA, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); revision of a non-point source pollution management plan and development of a wild horse management plan funded by EPA; noxious weed management funded by BIA and US Fish and Wildlife Service; and installation of water flow and snow monitoring instruments funded by BOR. In addition the Natural Resource Department has been working hard to foster partnerships with other Tribes, Federal agencies, State agencies, non-governmental organizations, and volunteers. On May 16, the Natural Resource Department invite your participation in a workshop on the Reservation to learn more about tribal natural resource management services and activities planned for 2009 and into the future. The workshop will start at 10:00 am and continue until mid afternoon. Please mark your calendars to join us. We look forward to serving you in 2009.

Sincerely,

William Cowan – Natural Resource Department Director

AN INTRODUCTION FROM OUR RESOURCE TECHNICIAN

My name is Kent Bloomer and I have been employed with the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe as the Resource Technician for the Natural Resource Department since February 2008. I have a B.A. degree in Environmental Studies from the University of California Santa Cruz, and a M.A. in Geography from San Jose State University. Prior to coming to SLPT, I worked on a project at the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge investigating the response of songbirds to fire in sagebrush systems.

My primary duties as the Resource Technician are managing the Tribe's Water Pollution Control Program funded by an EPA Section 106 Clean Water Act grant, range projects associated with controlling noxious weeds, administering all aspects of the Tribe's geographic data, including the maintenance of the Tribe's Geographic Information System (GIS) database, acquiring external sources of spatial data and collecting field data using GPS. I also assist the Natural Resource Department to administer Bureau of Indian Affairs contracts for Fisheries and EPA Nonpoint Source Pollution grant obligations.



I'm grateful for having the opportunity to be employed by the SLPT. I have learned so much this past year and look forward to serving the Tribe into the future. I'm also looking forward to meeting more tribal members on Election Day when the Natural Resource Department will be providing a water quality outreach and education workshop.

NATURAL RESOURCE DEPARTMENT WORKSHOP SCHEDULED FOR MAY 16

On May 16 to begin at 10:00 am, the Natural Resource Department will present a workshop at the Reservation to share information on the following programs:

- Water Quality Management Program
- Noxious Weed Management Program
- Non-Point Source Pollution Management Program
- Range Improvement Projects

TELEPHONE USAGE

Satellite telephone service on the Reservation went on the blink in 2007. Throughout 2007 and 2008, the satellite phone provider was replacing satellites which caused sporadic connections and extremely high frequency of dropped calls. As a consequence the Tribe had to invest in more

expensive satellite phone equipment and service. Due to this expense, the Tribe's satellite phone service can only be used for work related business and emergencies.

US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO ENHANCE FISH PASSAGE ON MAHOGANY CREEK

In November, 2008 a defunct irrigation diversion structure on Mahogany Creek located near the east Reservation boundary was removed and the area was restored to promote natural stream function and enhance fish passage. This irrigation control structure was constructed in the mid-1930s; however, lack of use and maintenance caused the structure to deteriorate. Consequently, turnout gates broke or rusted closed, willows and wild rose started to surround the structure with roots and branches growing between foundation and stem walls, and the structure eventually filled with silt causing floor boards to rot. Previous fisheries staff identified this structure as a migration barrier for fish to jump over, especially during low flow periods and drought. Around 2003 or 2004 fishery staff attempted to construct a plunge pool downstream of the structure to



enhance fish passage. Unfortunately, this restoration effort eventually blew out leaving plastic debris and fence posts in the stream. Additionally in 2004 or 2005 the Tribe was awarded a



contract from the Bureau of Reclamation to remove this structure; unfortunately, funds were taken back as no progress had been made on the project. In 2007 during a drought year, the Tribal Chairman (Chairman) and Natural Resource Director (Director) witnessed about 10 fish in a 15 minute period smacking themselves on the walls of the structure while trying to jump over to seek spawning habitat upstream. At that moment, both the Chairman and Director agreed, something had to be done...

In 2007 a proposal to restore Lahontan cutthroat trout habitat was submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). The Service supported the proposal to remove this structure as it would enhance fish passage and promote safety. The process to remove this structure required much planning, including archeological clearance and environmental analysis to ensure the project would not compromise cultural or historic resources or promote extensive erosion. With these factors in mind, a team of experts representing several Federal agencies and a private ecologic restoration consulting firm, Otis Bay Ecological Consultants (Otis Bay), was assembled to design and engineer a plan to remove the structure and restore stream connectivity for migrating fish and stream organisms.

In November 2008, the structure was removed and the site restored by a team of Otis Bay and tribal Natural Resource Department staff. Otis Bay arranged to have nearly 60 cubic yards of 2-foot or greater diameter rock delivered to armor the stream channel after the structure was removed. Additionally, Otis Bay provided all heavy equipment to perform the restoration work,

including: an excavator, a skidsteer, a dump truck, and a flat bed trailer. Tribal Natural Resource Department staff provided general logistic, labor, and monitoring support while work was being performed to divert water around the work site, construct and maintain fish screens to prevent fish entry into the work zone, and the construction of temporary coffer dams to divert the water.

This project was a success due to planning, luck, and geomorphic expertise of Otis Bay. We were fortunate to have clear weather during mid-November to accommodate delivery of rock and heavy equipment. The restoration work was completed within 2 days and with less than 18 hours of on-the-ground disturbance time. There was minimal siltation of the stream, no observed fish mortalities, and 30 fish were salvaged downstream of the structure while the work zone was being dewatered. Although this restoration site looks a bit barren without overgrown streamside vegetation, there is sufficient willow and wild rose root mass to allow for speedy colonization of native riparian vegetation. We invite you to revisit this site in two or three years to compare these photos with changes promoted by this restoration project.



Before



After

MORE SEASONAL JOBS MAY BE OFFERED IN MAY

Recently the Tribe was notified that we were awarded grants to treat noxious weeds from nationally competitive proposals offered through the Tribal Wildlife Grant program of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Tribal Noxious Weed Program of the BIA. If we are successful with meeting grant requirements before the onslaught of weed emergence this season, plans are underway to hire and train noxious weed herbicide applicators. Positions will likely last between 4 – 6 weeks. Be on alert for job announcements soon.

SALE OF GAS ON RESERVATION DISCONTINUED

Please be advised that sale of gas on the Reservation has been discontinued due to environmental and billing problems. The location of fuel storage tanks on the Reservation has been determined to be an environmental risk to contaminate surface water especially during periods of flood or earthquakes. Additionally, there were a few incidents where tribal members did not pay their fuel bill. Due to these issues it was decided to discontinue storage of large quantities of fuel on the Reservation until environmentally sound storage facilities are in place. When visiting the Reservation, please pack additional fuel as there will be no fuel available for sale.