

Education Undammed: The White Salmon River Experiential Learning Project

Jeanette Burkhardt
Yakama Nation Fisheries
P.O. Box 215
Klickitat, WA 98628
Email: jeanette@ykfp.org

ABSTRACT:

Education and outreach activities are integral to the work of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group and the Yakama Nation Fisheries Program serving the watersheds of the Middle Columbia River. Beginning in 2009, these three organizations collaborated on a Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund grant to provide rich, place-based educational opportunities surrounding the imminent and historically significant removal of Condit Dam on the White Salmon River. The goal was to involve local students and the community during the process of dam removal and subsequent restoration, thus providing a more hands-on understanding of watershed health, salmon and stewardship of local watersheds centered around an event of both local and national relevance. The White Salmon Experiential Learning Project involves in-school presentations and field trips, both before and after dam removal, and outreach to the community at various events. The project will culminate in 2013 with an opportunity for community members and students to take part in hands-on restoration of the former reservoir. The project has sparked lively discussions on the choices and trade-offs related to our natural resources, and has served as a jumping-off point for related projects and topics. Assistance has been provided along the way by regional partners such as PacifiCorp, the U.S. Forest Service, Columbia Gorge Ecology Institute, Underwood Conservation District, and interested community members.