

Kíye tim'náahawqsix 'anaqónmam cukwenéewit

- We are not hearing or understanding the teaching

It is true, the Nez Perce homeland is nearly 100 miles from the lower Reach of the Mid-Columbia River at the Hanford site. However, Tribal knowledge and use of areas off Nez Perce homelands share just as much importance/significance/integrity as those areas located within the Nez Perce homeland.

These are areas that are used for, but not limited to, the gathering of roots and berries, hunting and fishing and other cultural activities. The knowledge of the locations of these areas; the trails to them; and when they (foods, medicines..etc..) become available are part of a greater knowledge we could summarize as a seasonal round. The seasonal round is best described as a return to a specific area for the purpose of gathering resources: food, medicinal or otherwise. It is not the act of following resources wherever they occur but rather a return to an area to gather resources based on prior knowledge or experience.

This knowledge is believed to originate as gifts from the animal people as told in the story "*Peléeynin háacwal*". In the story, *XáXaac* (Grizzly bear) adopted the boy and cared for him, showing him the knowledge of the foods, medicines, places and trails by which to travel to them. *XáXaac* encouraged the boy as he returned to his people to share this knowledge so his people will survive and live well.

The words of Elders echo, that this knowledge, this teaching is not for us to keep to ourselves. It is for us to carry and pass along for those yet to come. An example of this knowledge, teaching and understanding is *Te'* (spirit in everything). It is defined as a spiritual connection with the animals and the land. From this also comes "*Tamáalwit*" (the natural law) and how foods, plants, animals, birds, and water are used to connect the people to the land, and the land to the people.

Kíye pewc'éeye háawtnin'

- We are restoring

Our research goal is to understand the relationship the Nez Perce had with the Mid-Columbia area which includes the Hanford Nuclear site. In understanding that relationship, our vision of Restoration should include restoring the relationship, the use and the knowledge we had with this land.

Our vision is to maintain a presence and to seek restoration funds that will, because the contamination at Hanford is long lived, keep the tribe involved in monitoring of the site until restoration is achieved. The Nez Perce Tribe believes that the ultimate goal... should be to restore the land to uncontaminated pre-Hanford conditions for unrestricted use. This includes air, soil, groundwater, and surface water. Tribal members, ecological resources, and cultural resources within Usual and Accustomed areas should not be exposed to any potential adverse risk above that which has always existed for the tribe prior to the establishment of the federal government projects and facilities at Hanford in 1942. (NPT ESV-NP-05-411)

For further info on NRDA at Hanford see:

http://www.nezperce.org/~erwm/Projects/Entries/2014/10/8_Natural_Resource_Damage_Assessment.html or

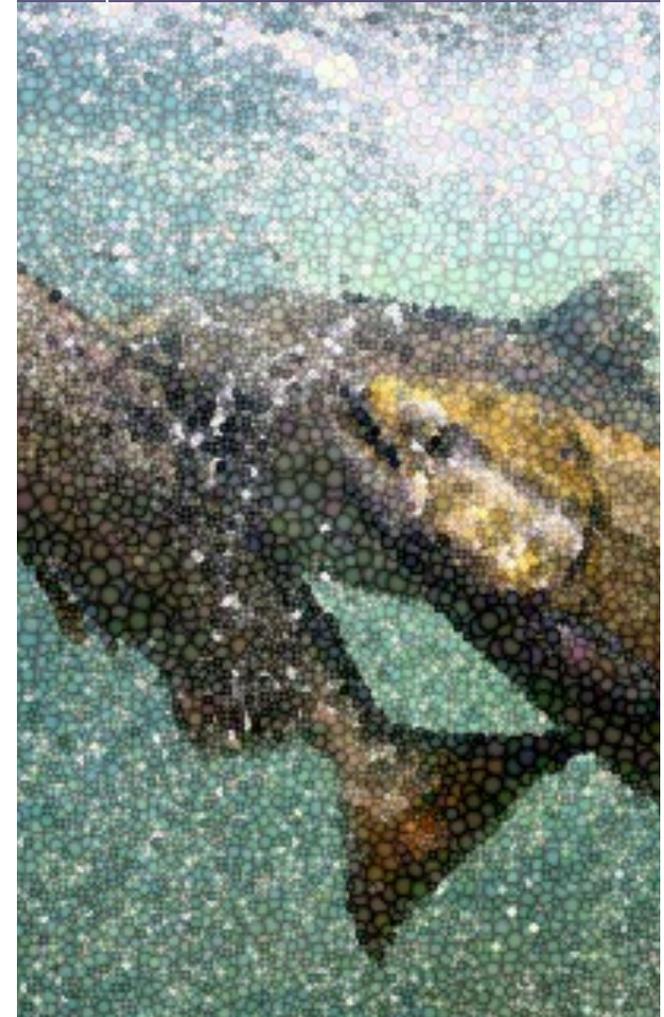
ERWM <http://www.nezperce.org/~erwm/Welcome.html>



Nez Perce Tribe

Natural Resource Damage
Assessment + Restoration
(NRDA+R)

Tribal Service Loss Study



'Ehée, 'ínim himyúume kaa liláwtiwaama, Qe'ciyéw'yew,

The Nez Perce Tribe's Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Department (ERWM)/Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) Program is hosting Public Meetings to ask the people if they could assist in explaining the relationship tribal members have with the Mid-Columbia River area, also known as the Hanford Nuclear site. This relationship could include any stories, oral histories, family histories, fishing, hunting & gathering locations and names, and/or life events associated with, including traveling to and from, this area.

Understanding this relationship will assist in developing a baseline from which the Tribe can determine injury and ultimately a loss. This identified loss may be a tool in guiding the Tribe's interests in what Restoration could look like at Hanford. This handout will attempt to explain a little bit about the Nez Perce and the Hanford Nuclear site. Again, Thank you for your participation in this effort.



- Lalíik (Rattlesnake Mountain)

Nuunim tamáalwit kaa wéetes kaa waq'náawit wisíix naqsníix

- Our Law, the land, and our way of life, are One...

The Hanford Nuclear site and the Mid-Columbia River are Usual and Accustomed areas the Nez Perce used over time. Times that correspond to a specific event, like travel to or from resource gathering areas that are extremely important to the Nez Perce. We recognized at least nineteen different events throughout the year. At least, thirteen of those refer to foods and at least six of those reference fish. Traditionally, the Nez Perce regularly visited many areas in the Northern Great Basin, Northwest Coast, Plateau and the Plains for purposes of fishing, hunting raiding, recreation and trade.

This area and other areas like *Ky'síis* (Sacagawea Park) were places people would come together to fish, dig roots, trade, gamble or catch up with friends and family. Items traded were foods, materials and tools not found in each other's backyards. For example, the Nez Perce traded with the Wanapum bringing buffalo hides and paints pigments and foods like *q'émes* receiving in turn tule mats, twine, white paint, *tiitáan* (bitterroot) to name a few. Being of sister tribes we also shared a spiritual relationship some of which carries on today. Ceremonies, care of the land and foods, cultural sites, histories and stories and names of locations are a just few examples...

Cultural areas like that of Rattlesnake Mountain and Gable Mountain on the Hanford site are still recognized by our people. However, it is not understood whether the Nez Perce had names or stories associated with these areas. The Yakama, Wanapum and Umatilla call Rattlesnake Mountain *Lalíik*. The meaning is believed to describe land above water. Tribal history describes a time when water flooded the land washing away all things caught in it. This event is still remembered, although the last flood of that size was nearly 12,000 years ago.

In the 1940's, the seizure of the Mid-Columbia area by the U.S. Government's Atomic Energy Commission and Department of Defense restricted access and cut relationships with all tribes and bands known to use this area. After beginning production of heavy metals and creating by-product hazardous waste and releasing it into the environment, it did not take long for the Tribal people to notice things were not right. Although, fishing is significantly talked about, the Hanford site was also acknowledged to contain vast amounts of roots, berries, deer, elk, and medicinal & industrial types of resources.

