Watershed Restoration in Nez Perce Treaty Territory: A Holistic Approach

Nez Perce Tribe
Department of Fisheries Resource Management
Watershed Division
The lands and waters of the Nez Perce traditional territory represented the “natural capitol” which allowed us to survive and prosper.
“...the right of **taking fish** at all usual and accustomed places,...

together with the privilege of **hunting, gathering roots and berries**, and pasturing their horses and cattle upon open and unclaimed land.” (1855 NPT Treaty, Article 3)
Present Circumstances

Families in Poverty 29.4%
Unemployment 19.8%
In winter 62%
Ratio of Tribal Death Rate to Non-Tribal Death Rate 1.7

Traditional activities such as fishing, hunting and gathering roots, berries and medicinal plants also build self-esteem for Nez Perce peoples - and this has the capability to reduce the level of death by accident, violence, and suicide affecting our people. When you engage in cultural activities you build pride. Your are helped to understand what it is to be Nez Perce. In this way, the salmon, the game, the roots and the berries and the plants are the pillars of our world. - Leroy Seth
The NPT DFRM will protect and restore aquatic resources and their habitats. This is an integral piece of the Nez Perce way of life and belief that has the up-most respect for the Creator, all species, and the past, present, and future generations to come. This mission is consistent with the reserved rights stated within the NPT's 1885 Treaty with the U.S.
Department of Fisheries
Resource Management

- 100+ Full-Time Employees
- 7 Divisions:
  - Administration
  - Conservation Enforcement
  - Harvest
  - Production
  - Research
  - Resident Fish
  - Watershed
NPT DFRM Watershed Mission

The DFRM Watershed Division mission is to protect and restore watersheds and fisheries resources throughout Nez Perce Territory, which are critical for future generations. This work has its roots in protecting tribal sovereignty and treaty rights reserved under the Treaty of 1855. These activities are accomplished using a holistic approach, which encompasses entire watersheds, ridge-top to ridge-top, emphasizing all cultural aspects.
Nez Perce Tribe
Treaty Territory
13.3 Million Acres
(Tribe owns approx. 150,000 Acres)

- 3 States
- 6 National Forests / BLM
- 12 Counties
- Private Landowners
What We Are Faced With...
Project Activities

- Watershed Assessments
- Road/Trail Improvement & Decommissioning
- Fish Passage Improvement (e.g., Culvert Replacement)
- Riparian Restoration and Fencing
- Off-site Livestock Watering Systems
- Stream Channel Restoration and Bank Stabilization
- Watershed Monitoring (e.g., water quality, vegetation, etc.)
- Weed Inventory and Treatment
- GPS/GIS Inventory and Mapping
- Outreach and Education
- Nez Perce National Historical
- Trail Maintenance
Funding Sources
(diversification)

- BPA Projects
- Pacific Salmon Recovery Fund Projects
  - Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission
  - State of Idaho
- NOAA Community Based Restoration Projects
- Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) Projects
- National Forest Foundation Project
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service Project
- Forest Service Funded Projects
Partners

- US Forest Service
- Private Timber Companies (ex. Potlatch Inc.)
- Conservation Districts
- NRCS
- State Departments (ex. Fish and Game, Dept. of Lands)
- Private Landowners
- Local Non-profit Groups
- Local School Districts
- Local Universities (U of Idaho, WSU)
Road Survey and Assessment

Legend

- SW Lapwai Creek Roads

Stream Channel
Immediately After...
Three Years Later...
Analysis and Prioritization

Lapwai Creek

Legend
- Watershed Boundary
- Land Ownership
  - Bureau of Land Management
  - Idaho Department of Fish and Game
  - Idaho Department of Lands
  - Tribal Trust
  - Tribal Fee
- Fish Passage
  - Impassable
  - Passable

Big Canyon Creek

Legend
- Passage Status
  - Impassable
  - Passable
- Land Ownership
  - Bureau of Land Management
  - Idaho Department of Lands
  - Tribal Trust
  - Tribal Fee
  - Watershed Boundary
Nevada Creek Culvert Replacement

Before Replacement

After Replacement
Stream Bioengineering
Off-Site Watering Systems

Livestock Exclusion Fence
Planting
The Battle...
Bio-Mechanical Ammunition...
Monitoring and Evaluation
Monitoring & Evaluation

- Temperature
- Sediment
- Water Quality
- Channel Morphology
- Riparian Canopy
- Bank Stability
- Large Woody Debris
- Biological
  - Fish
  - Invertebrates
  - Diatoms
Accomplishments To Date

- Watershed Assessments → 8
- Passage Barriers → 58
  - Habitat Returned → 145 miles
- Roads Decommissioned → 527 miles
- Roads Improved → 13 miles
- Riparian Protected (Fences) → 22 miles
- Native Vegetation Planted → 675 acres
- Noxious Weeds Treated → 210 acres
- Banks Stabilized → 16 miles
- Off-site Water Developments → 6
- Trail Maintenance → 25 miles
- Conservation Easements → 250 acres
- Schools / Outreach → 13 schools; 500 teachers; 5,500 students; 6 interns
Watershed Educational Mission

Have an education and outreach component tied to each of our project areas throughout the Nez Perce Tribe Ceded Territory. These education and outreach programs will be available to students of all ages ranging from Head Start through college, interested community members, and partner agencies. Our programs will encourage students to pursue careers with the Nez Perce Tribe in fisheries or other natural resource areas.

- Our projects have included over 600 students in education and restoration activities.
- Conducted Treaty Workshops for Agencies and Landowners
Outreach and Education

Healthy Habitat, Healthy Fish
A Watershed Guide For Landowners

Big Canyon Watershed BPA Projects

We Can Help!
Landowners interested in participating in the watershed project should contact the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District or the Nez Perce Tribe Fisheries Watershed Division. Contact information for both agencies is located on the back of this brochure.

Lapwai Creek Watershed Project
Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District
2020 E 72nd Ave., Suite 104
Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 746-1688 ext. 3

Nez Perce Tribe
Department of Fisheries Resource Management
P.O. Box 1131
2020 E 72nd Ave., Suite 104
Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 746-7314 and 3042
Contact: Boat World, Selah

The WDFW (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife) has produced this brochure in cooperation with the Nez Perce Tribe and the Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District. The purpose is to inform project participants and the public about fish habitat, water quality, and riparian resources.
Watershed Education
Policy Tools

It is extremely important to have the policies within agencies with land management authority in place, for protection of all Treaty Resources and our investments.

- Inter-tribal
- Educating other stakeholders (presentations and workshops)
- Coordinating activities with federal and state agencies
- Commenting on federal/state/private proposals and projects (e.g., timber sales)
- Appealing bad projects
- Going to court to make a stand (e.g., North Lochsa Face Project) Forest Plan Revisions (Boise, Payette, & Sawtooth)
Awards

- American Fisheries Society - “Best Riparian Project”
  - McComas Meadows Restoration Project
- USDA Forest Service - “Rise to the Future Award”
- Special recognition USFS - “Outstanding Performance on Riparian Fencing Project”
The Goal...
What is a truly restored watershed (how do you define it, measure it)?
Nez Perce Tribe
1863 Reservation
Indian Land Ownership

- Allotted Trust Land
- Tribal Trust Land
- Tribal Fee Land
Employment

- 15 Tribal Member Employees
  - 40% of total staff
- 22 Professional Staff
  - 7 Tribal Members
- 16 Technical Staff
  - 8 Tribal Members
  - Typically hire between 10 and 20 seasonal employees
  - Send personal letters to all tribal members receiving higher education scholarships through the Tribe
- Developing internship program
- Long-term employment development through the educational pipeline
- Fire Re-rehabilitation – Nez Perce 20 man fire crew
Outreach and Education

- Watershed Education Curriculum (7th - 12th Grade)
- Watershed Education Field Trips
- Classroom Presentations
- Community Meetings
- Informational Flyers and Brochures