



Summit Lake Paiute Tribe

Natural Resources Department Newsletter

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*Summit Lake Paiute
Tribe Natural Resources
Department*

*Promoting Conservation,
Protection and
Enhancement of Tribal
Natural Resources*

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Weather and Road Conditions

Weather has been cold and **SNOWY** at the Reservation this winter. At the time of this publication the SnoTel station installed near the headwaters of Snow Creek in the Black Rock Range, is reporting 41 inches of snow! According to the Palmer Drought Index scale the area is currently not experiencing drought conditions and is considered moderately wet.

Although we are thankful for the snow, it has left roads wet, muddy, and in some cases impassable. The road to the Reservation that runs past Soldier Meadows Ranch is rutted and washed out along the route, and is completely impassable at the base of the Reservation.

Access to the Reservation is possible from the north. However, at this time many of the roads within the Reservation are impassable due to snow drifts and will be extremely muddy

Below: Reservation road March 21, 2019.



once the snow melts. Travelers are advised to use extreme caution. Bring a shovel in case of getting stuck, and extra food, water, and appropriate clothing in case you need to wait for or get help. Be sure to tell someone of your planned travel and when to expect to hear from you.

Fishing Permits Enclosed!

Your Fishing Permit for 2019 should be included with this newsletter. If it is not, please contact the Tribal Administrative Office for a replacement. Fishing Permits are issued to “adult” Tribal members over the age of 16, and should be in your possession while fishing on the Reservation. The Tribal Council set the catch limit for 2019 at 3 fish per adult member and 1 fish per minor.

James Waddell, Fish and Wildlife Biologist

New Employee!



Hello, my name is James Waddell and I am pleased to join the Natural Resources Department as a Fish and Wildlife Biologist. I have 15 years of experience as a Wildlife Biologist working on an array of projects across the country from mountain lion research in Colorado to endangered gray wolf reintroduction in New Mexico. In addition to a Bachelor's of science degree in ecology and evolutionary biology from the University of Arizona, I hold a Master's of natural resource management degree with an emphasis in both wildlife management and geographic information science from Oregon State University. I recently moved to Reno from Montana where I worked as a Wildlife Biologist at Glacier National Park assisting with grizzly bear management and researching a rare bird, the black swift, for my graduate research.

I am captivated by natural resource management issues with particular concern regarding the conservation of threatened and endangered species. Additionally, I feel most at home working in remote and pristine landscapes such as the Summit Lake Reservation. The opportunity to work with both the Lahontan cutthroat trout and sage-grouse is one that I am grateful for and I am proud to serve the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe in their efforts to conserve these species and the landscape upon which they rely.

Jaclyn Knapp, Fish and Wildlife Biologist

New Employee!



My name is Jaclyn Knapp, I am very excited to join the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe's Natural Resources Department as a Wildlife Biologist. I am born and raised in Reno and I graduated at the University of Nevada, Reno in 2016 with my Bachelor's degree. Once I completed my degree I got the opportunity to manage a wildlife reserve in Ecuador in which we mainly conducted research on the Andean cock-of-the-rock a type of bird that also does lek displays similar to sage-grouse. After that experience I continued to enhance my knowledge and experience as a wildlife biologist by working a variety of seasonal jobs. Most recently I finished a 9 month position studying pygmy rabbits throughout the Nevada great basin. On my free time I enjoy climbing, hiking, fishing, birding and pretty much anything in the outdoors.

My primary duties for the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe Natural Resource Department will be working on the Greater Sage-Grouse project, in an effort to better understand the population dynamics and conservation needs for the Reservation.

John Whitefield, Fish and Wildlife Biologist

New Employee!



Hello, my name is John Whitefield. I am excited to join the Natural Resources Department of Summit Lake Paiute Tribe as a Fish and Wildlife Biologist.

I am from Reno and a 2016 graduate of the University of Nevada, Reno with a degree in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. My previous experience with the USDA-ARS as well as The Nature Conservancy has lent me knowledge of local flora as well as restoration practices in the Great Basin aimed at mitigating impacts of wildfires. Most recently I worked as a contractor for the National Marine Fisheries Service in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska aboard commercial fishing vessels which has prepared me for my current position, primarily with the Summit Lake Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. I look forward to assisting on other projects as well throughout the year. When not working I enjoy fly-fishing, rock climbing, skiing and hunting. I have a general passion for and interest in the natural world which I hope will serve me well during my time here at Summit Lake Paiute Tribe.

Returning Employee!*Nick Rzycka-Filipek*

Hello, my name is Nick Rzycka-Filipek and I am excited to be starting my third year as a Fish and Wildlife Biologist for the Natural Resources Department. I come from Colorado where I double majored in trout fishing and ecology. After graduating I worked throughout the Rocky Mountains in Colorado and Wyoming working with federal, state, private and nonprofit organizations in management and conservation of fisheries, water, and habitat. I now call Nevada home and spend my time exploring northern Nevada and the Sierra. Over the past two years I have worked on a variety of projects on the reservation to conserve wildlife, land, and the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. I primarily work with the Cutthroat Trout to assess the population as part of the long term study currently being conducted by the Natural Resource Department and its partners. This year marks the exciting fifth year of study and I am excited to see science lead the way in the conservation of these special fish. I look forward to meeting you on the Reservation and am always available to talk fish.

**Returning Employee!***Marisol Dionicio, Natural Resources Technician*

Hola!!! My name is Marisol Dionicio and I am very happy to begin my second year with the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe, working as a Natural Resources Technician. I am originally from Hidalgo, México where I grew up. In 2015, I graduated as an Engineer in Natural Resources Management from the University of La Sierra Hidalguense (UTSH), and during my second year in collage I got some experiences working at Ecologic Park Chipinque, in Monterrey North of México. I also had experience working with small communities South of Hidalgo, improving good agriculture practices specifically for coffee.



In 2016, I moved to Reno, NV and I been striving to improve my working skills in different jobs one of them was at the Charles River Lab. After that, I got the privilege to come here, and be part of this amazing adventure, improving every day, and helping to accomplish our goal that is to preserve the Tribe's Natural Resources, and care for the future of Summit Lake. Besa Ka te pe'a – teepu matugu (Treat our mother Earth good). Sa'a u!!!

Returning Employee!*Elizabeth Schmid, Natural Resources Coordinator*

Greetings! My name is Elizabeth Schmid and I am delighted to begin my second year with the Natural Resources Department. I grew up in Wisconsin and received a Bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. I have a variety of experience in biological, environmental, and educational work. I moved to the Reno area in 2013 after falling in love with the terrain and have since been happy to call it home.

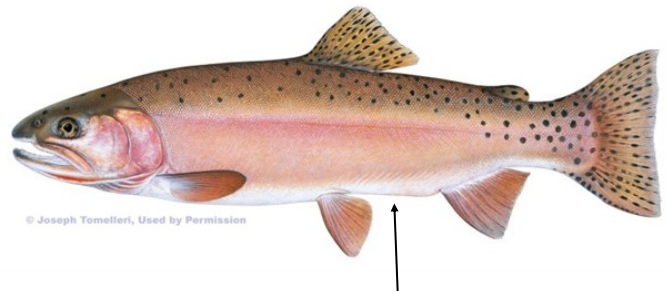
I look forward to continuing to assist with implementation of the natural resources and environmental programs of the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe. 2019 is going to be a great year!



2019 Tribal Hunting and Fishing Regulations

REGULATIONS FOR 2019 FISHING SEASON:

- Fishing limits for 2019 were established by the Tribal Council at the March 16, 2019 meeting:
3 fish allowed per adult Tribal member and 1 fish allowed per minor Tribal member per year.
- Tribal members must be present on the Reservation to take their limit of fish.
- Except for spouses of Tribal members, fishing by non-tribal members is prohibited.
- A non-tribal member married to a Tribal member may assist their spouse in fishing or fish in place of their spouse, as long as the Tribal member is present on the Reservation. Their take in fish per year is limited to the number of fish to which the Tribal member is entitled.
- Mahogany Creek is closed to all fishing in and above the fish trap and 100 yards below the fish trap (marked by the fence crossing the stream) from March 1 to June 15.
- **All of Mahogany Creek is closed to fishing from September-December 2019.**
- Tribal members may use dip nets and fishing poles to catch fish. The use of live bait, chumming, gaff hooks, spears, traps, wire fences, or other implements to take fish is prohibited.
- Remember- the fish you catch could potentially have been tagged. Please have a Tribal employee scan your catch before cleaning it. PIT (Passive Integrated Transponder) tags are small, bead-like capsules inserted just below the skin of a fish. Tribal members fishing this spring should bring their fish to the Tribal Compound to be scanned for the presence of a PIT tag so that it can be removed before eating. The diagram below shows where PIT tags are located in fish.



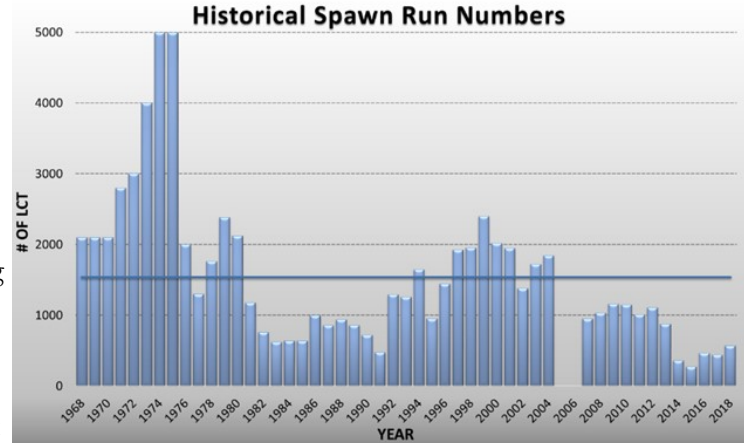
REGULATIONS FOR 2019 HUNTING SEASON:

- Hunting within the exterior boundaries of the Reservation is permitted to Tribal members provided that hunting is conducted in a safe manner.
- A non-tribal member married to a Tribal member may assist their spouse in hunting or hunt in place of their spouse, as long as the Tribal member is present on the Reservation.
- Firearms are not to be discharged within 300 feet of buildings, land assignments, or areas known to be occupied by Tribal members or employees. Firearms are not to be discharged from motorized vehicles, or at night.
- At the March 16, 2019 meeting the Tribal Council supported the continuation of the sage grouse hunting moratorium for 2019 in light of the ongoing sage grouse population study. Based on preliminary data from the study, the sage grouse population is showing indications of a concerning downward trend.

Fisheries Management Decisions

Throughout 2018, various fisheries management activities were conducted. The annual spring spawn run of LCT was monitored from March to June at the fish trap on Mahogany Creek. A total of 569 spawning fish passed through in 2018. This number is up slightly from the last four years, likely due to more adequate stream flows experienced for the last three years. Despite this slight increase, the number of fish entering the creek to spawn over the last five years continues to be dramatically lower than historical spawn run numbers.

A continuing study has been implemented over the last several years to better understand the recent dramatic fluctuations in the number of spawners and attempt to estimate the population size. Based on preliminary estimates, numbers of adult fish in the lake are alarmingly low. This may mean that young trout are not surviving to make it to the lake to grow into healthy adults and sustain the population. On a positive note, preliminary estimates also suggest the population is no longer decreasing at the dramatic rate it had been. This could potentially mean that the population is beginning to stabilize from the adverse effects of the severe drought the region recently experienced (2012-2016). The data suggests that the population is still recovering



Above: Graph of historical spawn run numbers up to 2018.

and is at risk of continuing its downward trajectory if immediate conservation actions are not taken.

Additional work is planned this summer by the Natural Resources Department to verify the accuracy of these findings and implement management strategies to ensure recovery from recent drought.

Until we can confirm that the population will rebound, the Natural Resources Department recommended to the Council that the reduced fishing limits of 3 fish per adult and 1 per child implemented in 2018 remain in effect for 2019.

2018 Fisheries Activities

Throughout 2018, the Natural Resources Department continued to conduct fisheries related activities. The annual spring spawn run was monitored from March to June 2018. Fish headed upstream to spawn in Mahogany Creek must swim into the fish trap. There, staff weighed and measured the fish to determine their health, and safely returned them to Mahogany Creek upstream of the fish trap where they continued their journey to spawn.

In the spring, summer, and fall, boats and nets were used to capture fish from the lake. The fish were PIT (passive integrated transponder) tagged and released back into the lake. Their movement was then tracked throughout the year, allowing employees to better estimate fish numbers and track movement patterns. Fish were also captured and PIT tagged from Mahogany and Summer Camp Creeks using various methods throughout the year. Since 2012, staff have been utilizing PIT tags placed in fish to track movement throughout Summit Lake and Mahogany Creek. These transponders can be detected by stationary monitoring equipment along Mahogany Creek as well as identify individual fish when staff members catch them.

In the spring and fall, an effort was made to better understand the number of young trout moving from the creek to the lake. To do so, nets were placed in Lower Mahogany Creek. The fish were weighed and measured and then returned to the stream where they could continue on their way to the lake.

In addition to monitoring the fish directly, the Department is tracking the effects of climate change on the LCT fishery. In-stream measuring devices continuously record stream temperature and amount of water at various locations on Mahogany Creek. There are also several other pieces of monitoring equipment that capture data regarding weather and snowfall in the watershed.

2018: The Year In Review

Noxious Weed Management

The Natural Resources Department continued to manage noxious weeds on the Reservation. Depending on the location and species of noxious weed, different management techniques were implemented based on best practices.

Physical removal of tamarisk was implemented along the Summit Lake shoreline. This meant digging out, by hand, the plant's long tap roots that can grow many feet into the earth. Mowing was used to cut down Reed Canary Grass near Mahogany Creek. Herbicide treatments were used to treat perennial pepperweed, hoary cress, and non-native Canada, Scotch, and Bull Thistles during 2018. This treatment was applied to approximately 25 acres on the Reservation. Treatment areas included, the wet meadows north of Mahogany Creek, areas of the Summit Lake shoreline, Snow Creek, One Mile Spring, and roadways. Treatments for noxious weeds will continue in 2019.



Above: Tamarisk plant dug out along Summit Lake shoreline.



Above: New sign posted at Reservation boundary.

New Signage

On your next trip to the Reservation, be sure to stop and check out the new signs posted along the Reservation boundaries on BIA routes 0001, 0002, and 0003. In September 2018, four new signs were posted to replace the previous ones from 2009 that contained outdated and inaccurate information and had fallen into a severe state of disrepair.

The new signs were designed by the Tribe's Program Assistant to better reflect the Reservation's beauty and provide important and accurate information to passersby. This information includes prohibited activity, warnings about the area, directions to the nearest hospitals and gas stations, and a map indicating public roads and Reservation boundaries. Two Tribal Fish and Wildlife Biologists designed and constructed new frames for the signs to ensure their stability and should last for years to come.

2018: The Year In Review Continued...



Sage Grouse Study



The Department’s Greater Sage Grouse radio telemetry study resumed in 2018 to continue research on sage grouse using the Reservation and surrounding area. Staff captured and put tracking devices on 11 new birds in 2018, bringing the total number of trackable birds to 28.

Throughout the year, fixed wing airplane flights helped locate the radio collared birds, and employees followed up on foot to see what types of habitats males and females were using, as well as determine whether females had nested or if birds were alone or with a flock.

Employees continue to gain a better understanding of where male and female sage grouse go and what habitats are important to them during various parts of the year. This information can then be used to improve and protect these and similar habitats on the Reservation.

Road Improvements

Below: Tribal maintenance worker spreading road base gravel.



In 2018, road repairs were made to BIA routes 0001, 0002, and 0003 on the Reservation. A total of 9.6 miles of road were repaired. Repairs included the addition of gravel substrate and grading. The Tribe’s Maintenance Worker spread this gravel along damaged roadways where erosion and washouts had occurred using the Tribe’s backhoe loader. Using the Tribe’s motor grader, the Maintenance Worker reshaped the road improving drivability and drainage.

Herbarium Collection

In 2017 the Natural Resources Department began work on creating a herbarium: a collection of preserved plant specimens present on the Reservation. The herbarium is used to catalogue and identify flora in the area and serves as a historical record of vegetation changes over time.

The process of creating a herbarium specimen includes collecting as much of the plant as possible, pressing and drying it, and mounting it with information about the plant.

The herbarium collection continued to expand in 2018 with new species collected, identified, and mounted.



Above: Lupine specimen collected in 2018 for the Herbarium Collection.

Range Inventory

In May and June, staff conducted a Range Inventory at six locations throughout the Reservation. This inventory provides a baseline of rangeland health. This information will be used to monitor changes over time and better implement management strategies to improve the health of the range. Sites with different soil types were selected to be inventoried to provide a good representation of the different soil and vegetation communities present across the Reservation. The following information was collected at each site: photos, soil horizon, soil compaction, soil stability, landscape features, foliar cover, foliar gap, plant height, species composition, sagebrush shape, disturbance indicators, conservation practices, and rangeland health notes.

A Note from the Department Director

Greetings Tribal Members!

Happy Spring! Although winter seems to be hanging on at the Reservation this spring with lots of snow still on the ground, I am excited for what this new year is bringing. The snowpack in the mountains above the Reservation is the most that has been recorded since the SnoTel site was installed in 2012. This should mean plenty of water when spring finally does arrive, and all of the wonderful things that go along with it.

The Natural Resources Department has some new employees, and some who are returning, but all of them are excited to get to work on our wide array of projects. We have worked hard over the winter to get ourselves ready to go when the lake thaws and the snow melts enough to get around the Reservation.

I am honored and grateful for the opportunity to continue serving as the Natural Resources Department Director, and look forward to the daily challenge of upholding the mission to “Promote conservation, protection, and enhancement of Tribal natural resources.”

Please feel free to stop by, call, or email me if you have any questions or want to learn more about the exciting projects the Natural Resources Department is working on!

Sincerely,
~Rachael Youmans



Activities Planned for 2019

Some of the exciting projects the Natural Resources Department has planned for 2019:

- Activities surrounding LCT management: managing the spawn run at the Mahogany Creek Fish Trap, additional capture of fish from the lake and streams for PIT tagging, water quality and meteorological monitoring, and hydroacoustic surveys of the lake.
- Tribal employees will continue studying sage grouse throughout 2019 by collaring birds and tracking those that are collared. If you find a sage grouse mortality or a collar, please report it to the Natural Resources Department so that we can add it to our data.
- Noxious weed treatment will resume in 2019 to continue the fight to preserve the Reservation's native vegetation and landscape. Please let us know if you notice noxious weeds on the Reservation so they can be treated.
- A new building will be installed at the Tribal Field Station in 2019 that will be used to store the Tribe's heavy equipment in order to better protect them from the harsh elements of the area.
- A variety of habitat restoration projects for sage grouse and watershed health will be implemented in 2019.

The Tribe has become more reliant on the Tribal website to communicate announcements with Tribal members in an effort to reduce the cost of mailings. Please frequently check the Tribal website for Job Announcements, Council Meeting agendas, and other announcements and updates. Check out the website: www.summitlaketribe.org