



# Summit Lake Paiute Tribe Newsletter

March 2015

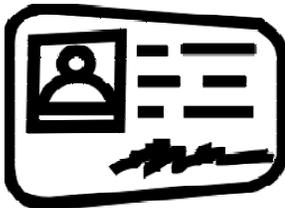
(Photo Courtesy of Rachael Youmans)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Greetings! We begin this March 2015 Newsletter with several announcements listed below. These are followed by descriptions of completed and upcoming projects the Natural Resources Department (NRD) will be undertaking in 2015, as well as photos and biographies of new NRD employees and excerpts of Hunting and Fishing Regulations. There will be a lot of activity going on at the Reservation this year, and we are excited to tell you about these projects.



### Fishing Permits Included With Newsletter



Your Fishing Permit for 2015 should be included in the envelope with this newsletter. If it was not, please contact the Tribal Administrative Office for a replacement. Fishing Permits are only issued to "adult" Tribal members over the age of 16, and should be in your possession while fishing on the Reservation. The catch limit for 2015 was set by the Summit Lake Paiute Council at their February 14, 2015 meeting at 5 fish per adult Tribal member and 2 fish per minor Tribal member. Transportation permits can be obtained by contacting Tribal employees at the Tribal Compound. After fishing, please remember to bring your catch of fish to the Tribal Compound so employees can scan your fish for PIT tags (more information on PIT tags found later in this newsletter).

### Tribal Job Openings

The Natural Resources Department is currently accepting applications for a Creel Census Taker. Tribal preference applications will be accepted by mail or hand delivered to the Tribal Administrative Office until 3:00 p.m. on March 13, 2015. Future job openings will be posted on the Tribal website at: [http://www.summitlaketribe.org/Employment\\_Opportunities.html](http://www.summitlaketribe.org/Employment_Opportunities.html). Position openings for Noxious Weed Technicians are expected to be posted soon.



### Snowpack Monitoring

Reminder! It has been a very dry winter, but you can monitor the amount of snowpack in the upper watershed of Snow Creek by viewing the Tribe's Snotel data online. The Snotel site records snowpack, temperature, and other parameters that help keep an eye on the climate at Summit Lake. Check it out at:

<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/nwcc/site?sitenum=1194&state=nv>.



## 2015 HUNTING AND FISHING REGULATIONS

If you will be traveling to the Reservation to fish or hunt, please observe the regulations below. In addition, make sure you are prepared for any circumstance: bring extra food and water, a shovel, appropriate clothing, and two spare tires.

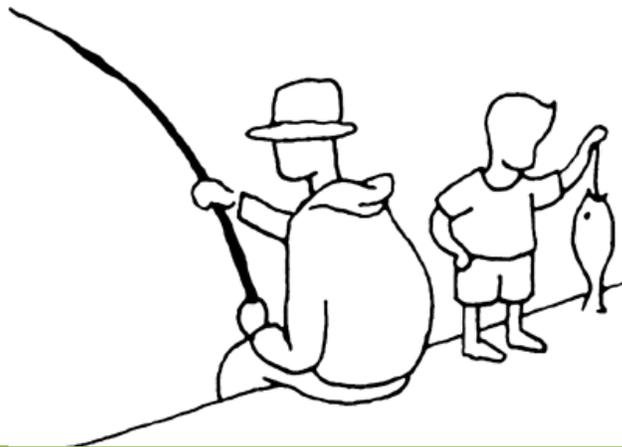
The regulations below are in place for the 2015 fishing season:

- ◆ In 2015 fishing limits remain unchanged from previous years at **2 fish allowed per minor Tribal member** (under 16) and **5 fish allowed per adult Tribal member** as established by the Council at the February 14, 2015 meeting.
- ◆ 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 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 for August and September, 2015. (new)**
- ◆ 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.

The regulations below are in place for the 2015 hunting season:

- ◆ Hunting within the exterior boundaries of the Reservation is permitted provided that hunting is conducted in a safe manner.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ The Tribal Council has set the limit to **harvest sage grouse at ZERO** so that hunting does not interfere with the ongoing population study.

*Hunting and fishing regulations for the Summit Lake Reservation were initially adopted January 31, 1981 by Council Resolution SL-81-2. They were amended and enacted on May 17, 2014 by the Summit Lake Paiute Council. If you would like a copy of these regulations please contact the Natural Resources Department at (775) 827-9670.*



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## NEW AND CONTINUED FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATION STUDIES

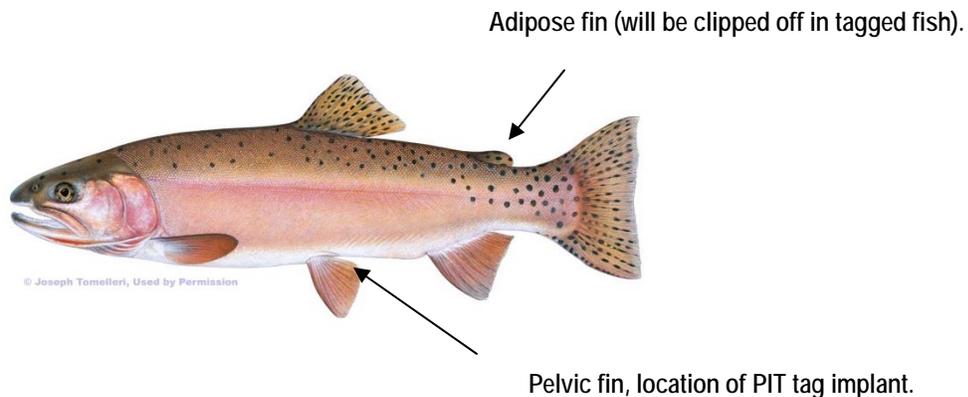
During the 2015 field season, the Natural Resources Department will begin and continue population studies on Lahontan cutthroat trout and Greater sage grouse. Information gathered from these studies is important to understanding the health and size of the population and in making future management decisions.

### **Lahontan cutthroat trout**

One of the most exciting new elements to the Natural Resources Departments Fisheries Program is the kickoff of a three year Population Viability Analysis (PVA) in collaboration with the University of Nevada Reno (UNR). This project is being funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Currently, sparse information exists in regard to Summit Lake Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) population size, production, mortality, and life history in the lake and streams. This study will assist the Tribe in better understanding unknown elements; providing valuable information that will greatly improve management of this precious natural resource. This means that there will be a lot of activity on the lake this year, so if you see employees in boats, they are likely working on this project.

Initiation of this project requires Tribal employees to catch large numbers of fish and insert passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags in fish that are at least 6-inches long. Remote PIT tag scanners installed near lower Mahogany Creek as well as upstream just off the Reservation will read and record tag numbers of individual fish that passes by, allowing employees to track fish movement throughout the system.

PIT 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. Fish with PIT tags will have the adipose fin clipped off, which does not harm the fish but allows for better identification of marked fish (see diagram below). In addition, due to the need to estimate natural mortality and to tag as many fish as possible captured from the stream and lake for this study, recreational and subsistence (i.e., for food) fishing will be closed for August and September 2015.



### **Continuation of Sage Grouse Monitoring**

Tribal employees will continue to track sage grouse wearing radio collars and will attempt to catch additional birds to collar and track throughout 2015. Due to declines of sage grouse observed on the Reservation the past 20 or more years, and the need to gather as much data as possible on this population, your reports of sage grouse sightings or mortalities would be very helpful. In addition and similar to PIT tags for fish, if you recover a sage grouse wearing a collar or metal leg band, please bring the bird to a Tribal employee so that information on the bird can be recorded and the equipment recovered. The equipment can be reused to further the study. Staff can be contacted about this information by stopping at the Tribal Compound, calling the Tribal Administrative Office at (775) 827-9670 or emailing Tribal Fish and Wildlife Biologist Rachael Youmans at [Rachael.Youmans@summitlaketribe.org](mailto:Rachael.Youmans@summitlaketribe.org).

## New Natural Resources Department Employees

In 2014 the Natural Resources Department hired three new full time employees. So you know who they are, brief introductions and photos of them are below. You may see them around the Reservation this year, hard at work!

### **Jessica Saenz, Fish and Wildlife Biologist**

My name is Jessica Sáenz and I am happy to have joined the Tribe as a Fish and Wildlife Biologist. I grew up in Winnemucca Nevada and I enjoy spending time outdoors hiking, fishing and camping. I recently graduated from Oregon State University with a Master of Science degree in Fisheries Science. For my studies I focused on conservation of a small desert fish in western Utah. Prior to my graduate studies, I lived in Reno, Nevada for 9 years and I worked as a wildlife biologist for Otis Bay Ecological Consultants for 5 years. I completed a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Nevada Reno focusing on Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Biology with a minor in Business in 2008. I have experience working outdoors and I am excited to start the field season this year. I look forward to meeting all of you this field season and learning from your experience and knowledge of Summit Lake.



### **Robert Zeyer, Fish and Wildlife Biologist**

My name is Robert Zeyer and I was hired in November of 2014 to fill a Fish and Wildlife Biologist position for the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe. I am originally from south-central Alaska and have worked as a full-time Fish and Wildlife Technician for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for six seasons, where my experience within the department largely focused on assisting biologists with managing the Kenai River's salmon fisheries. As a lead technician on the Kenai River Chinook Stock Assessment Program, I have extensive experience operating boats on rivers and lakes, identifying salmonids, using gill nets for estimating species abundance and collection of biological samples, and conducting radio telemetry surveys for tracking spawning migrations of Chinook salmon and rainbow trout. In 2013, I earned a Master of Science degree in biology from the University of Nevada, Reno where my studies largely focused on ecology, evolution, and wildlife conservation. Living in rural Alaska for over 25 years has given me much appreciation for the outdoors and has developed me into an enthusiastic, hard-working individual. I have resided in the Reno-Sparks area for the past 6 years and have grown to love Nevada's wilderness. Camping, fishing, hunting, and hiking are among some of my favorite hobbies and I strive to take advantage of every opportunity to be outdoors. I look forward to spending much time at the Reservation for the 2015 field season and am excited to be a part of new projects and research. Thank you for this amazing opportunity and hope to meet you all in person.



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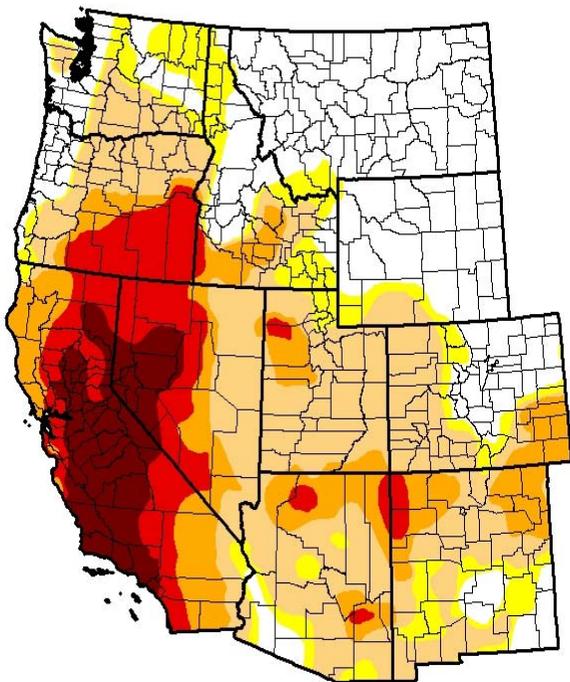
**Emily Gibson, Environmental Specialist**

My name is Emily Gibson and I would like to introduce myself as the new Environmental Specialist with the Tribe's Natural Resources Department. I began working for the Tribe in December 2014. In my new role with the Tribe I will contribute to several programs including Noxious Weed Management, Long-term Transportation Planning, Habitat Restoration, Fish Run activities and Emergency Management. Originally, I was raised in Washington State where I attended Washington State University. I received my B.S. in Environmental Science in the spring of 2013 and subsequently moved to Nevada to teach environmental education for a Reno local non-profit. What was once originally a temporary move has now become my home. While I stand firm on the notion that Nevada could use a few more clouds and a lot more rain, I am amazed everyday by its remarkable beauty. Working for the Tribe is extremely rewarding. I could not ask for a better opportunity to practice natural resource conservation and I am very thankful for the opportunity to do so for the Tribe. I look forward to learning more about the Reservation and meeting more Tribal Members.



**WEATHER UPDATE**

**U.S. Drought Monitor  
West**



**February 24, 2015**  
(Released Thursday, Feb. 26, 2015)  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
<b>Current</b>	30.07	69.93	59.91	31.06	17.38	7.04
<b>Last Week</b> 2/17/2015	31.20	68.80	58.53	30.61	17.23	7.21
<b>3 Months Ago</b> 11/23/2014	34.72	65.28	54.99	33.88	18.75	8.45
<b>Start of Calendar Year</b> 12/02/2014	34.76	65.24	54.48	33.50	18.68	5.40
<b>Start of Water Year</b> 9/08/2014	31.48	68.52	55.57	35.65	19.95	8.90
<b>One Year Ago</b> 2/25/2014	22.41	77.59	59.61	40.34	15.67	4.12

**Intensity:**

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

**Author:**  
Richard Heim  
NCDC/NOAA



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

**Drought Update**

Due to another dry winter, much of the Western U.S., including the area around Summit Lake, is currently in extreme drought. This means that vegetation is extremely dry and ready to ignite, making the possibility of wildfire very high. Please use great caution when camping or operating vehicles in areas where fires could ignite. Make sure your campfires are completely out and carry a fire extinguisher when driving over dry vegetation.

If you see a wildfire on the Reservation, please alert a Tribal employee or follow the directions at the kiosk in front of the Tribal Compound to contact emergency response authorities if no employees are available.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

### **Noxious Weeds**

The Noxious Weed Management Program will again be implemented in 2015 to combat infestation of the Reservation's sensitive riparian areas by invasive weeds. Job announcements will be posted on the Tribal website soon.

### **Reservation Boundary Fence**

The last portions of repairs on the Reservation boundary fence will be completed this year. The South East portion will be the first project to be tackled, funding and time permitting the South West boundary fence will be repaired as well. We are happy to announce that the Tribe will be partnering with Great Basin Institute and their Nevada Conservation Corps to complete this project. As a federally funded AmeriCorps program, all members of the Nevada Conservation Corps working on the Reservation are volunteers. They conduct direct conservation service all across the state of Nevada in the mission of preserving Nevada's natural resources. If you see them around the Reservation feel free to say hi.



### **Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists**

Last year the Tribe was fortunate to receive funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to hire 6 interns, ages 16-25, for three weeks of employment at the Reservation. Interns will be exposed to a variety of natural resources management activities, and will provide crucial, hands-on assistance for some of the Natural Resources Department's summer field projects. Advertisement for interested parties is expected to be published later this spring, for employment during the summer. Watch the Tribal website for more!

### **Capital Improvements**

Capital improvements planned for 2015 include installation of a new metal building over the fish trap facility, installation of a water filtration system for the well in the Tribal Compound, and cleanup of the One Mile Spring area.



## 2014: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

### **Fish Run Management**

As previously mentioned in this newsletter, the Reservation has not escaped the extreme drought currently effecting Nevada. This drought has also impacted the behavior of fish and wildlife in the area. Although the Natural Resources Department managed the annual spawning run of Lahontan cutthroat trout at the Mahogany Creek Fish Trap, only a total of 357 fish were caught at the fish trap and released upstream. Low water flows in Mahogany Creek made it difficult for fish to enter the creek from the lake, and employees manually dug out the channel on several occasions to provide passage for the fish.



In addition to manual counts performed by employees, two electronic fish observation systems were placed in Mahogany Creek- one near the inflow into Summit Lake and one upstream, just outside of the Reservation's northeastern boundary on Bureau of Land Management land. These "Riverwatcher" systems recorded the number of fish passing through those two points, providing the Tribe with information on where fish travel during the spring spawning run. This was the eighth year that the Tribe has used this technology to collect data on spawning LCT. In addition, systems to read PIT (passive integrated transponder) tags placed in fish were located near the Riverwatchers. These systems can pick up the code carried by a PIT tag, which is unique to an individual fish. This provides even more information on fish movement throughout the watershed both during and after the spawning run.

### **Sage Grouse Population Study**

In 2012, the Tribe was awarded a Tribal Wildlife Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to study the population of Greater sage grouse living on and around the Reservation, and to determine the habitats that they are using at various times of the year. Field work was initiated in 2014. To keep track of individual birds, Tribal employees caught sage grouse with nets and put small, necklace-type radio transmitters on them. Since 2014 was the first year to radio track sage grouse several kinks had to be worked out. In the spring of 2014, 7 male sage grouse were fitted with radio collars.



Throughout the rest of the year, Tribal employees used handheld antennas and receivers to relocate the birds and note the type of habitat where they are found. Even though only a few birds were collared, a lot of information was gathered in this first year of the study, including a better understanding of the distance sage grouse travel throughout the year to find food, water, and shelter. Tribal employees are excited to continue this study in 2015.

## Noxious Weed Management

The Natural Resources Department continued with Noxious Weed control efforts during 2014. Herbicide and manual treatments were successfully applied to areas of concern where Hoary Cress, the most invasive noxious weed on the Reservation, was found. These treatments will continue in 2015.

Reminder: the next time you visit Summit Lake check out the recently installed noxious weed informational signs. The signs and kiosk at the Tribal Compound keep both Tribal Members and visitors up-to-date on how to help prevent the spread of invasive weeds. Spread the work, not the weeds! The kiosk also provides information about where and when herbicides will be applied on the Reservation, updates and fire threat levels in the area.



## Capital Improvements

Tribal Maintenance Workers continued improvements to the Tribal Compound throughout 2014. Major projects of 2014 included removal of the Mahogany Creek Fish Trap building and its reconstruction in a different location as an equipment shed and pouring a concrete pad to expand the existing footprint of the fish trap. Concrete pads were also poured at the base of all of the stairs leading to mobile homes, and a roof was put on the porch of one trailer. Construction of a new fish trap building and structural improvements enhancing Tribal accommodations and work capacity will continue in 2015.



## Livestock Water Facilities

An ongoing project of installing two livestock water facilities on the Reservation was completed in 2014. One facility is located on the east side of Summit Lake, and is supplied with water from a well. The second facility is located south of Summit Lake, which is the water supply. Both facilities are operated by solar power and have storage tanks to maintain an adequate level of water in the water troughs. All water troughs are tire troughs, to withstand use by wild horses, which can be very destructive to water troughs made out of other materials.

