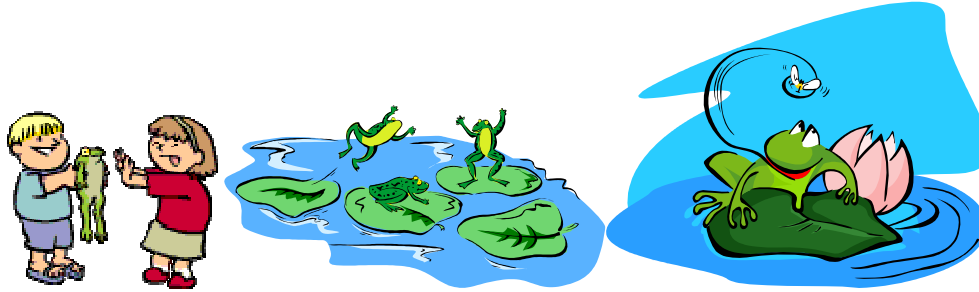


WETLAND NEWS

May 23, 2006



The wetlands here on the reservation are in great shape and the weather has been cooperating for conducting field work.

Amphibian Surveys have been showing progress. The frogs and toads have laid their eggs and tadpoles have emerged and thriving in the oxbows and sloughs along the Milk River. The isolated wetlands above the floodplain have been showing very good progress in amphibian development. A report will be created from this data called, "The Amphibian Health Assessment Report", on the status of amphibians located on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

Another report will be developed this summer from bird data collected out in the field at selected wetland sites. Avian species include but not limited to, migrating waterfowl, shorebird, neo-tropical and song bird species, as well as, other bird species, within the Middle Milk River Watershed.

All monitoring sites within the Milk River Valley will be completed this spring and it will be called, "The Wetland Monitoring Report". This report will help the Fort Belknap Indian Community, in identifying & prioritizing restoration projects to protect vulnerable wetlands on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

I have been invited to give a presentation of my work on wetlands, at the Inter-tribal Nursery Council Meeting to be held in Eugene, Oregon, from June 19-22, 2006. The forest service will pay for the travel and lodging. Among the topics I will present on are, Developing a Native Plant Reference Collection, Development of a Tribal Wetland Monitoring Program, and Collecting Baseline Data on Amphibians.

On September 24-28, there will be another Conference called the "National Forum on Tribal Environmental Science", at the Quinalt Beach Resort & Casino, in Ocean Shores Washington. I want to get involved with the Tribal Science Council and become a chairperson on the board, so being at this Forum is the main reason I am attending. There will also be wetland and water quality related issues that will be presented there, that I wanted to attend.

So far this spring I have been conducting field trips with some of the local schools. The 1st-6th grade students from the Harlem Elementary School were taken to an oxbow along the Milk River, and showed them how we collect wetland field data such as, amphibian surveys, plant inventories and bird observations. The day before the field trips our environmental technician, Francis Cochran and myself, collected amphibians for the field trip. We collected 2 Painted Turtles, 2 Western Plains Garter Snakes, and a dozen or more Northern Leopard Frogs and tadpoles. When the students got to the site, they did not have any clue they were about to be handling snakes, turtles and frogs. When it was time for the students to go, they did not want to leave, but they had to stay on schedule so the next class could return.



The following week I scheduled more field trips on May 24, at the Lodgepole Elementary School. I took the K-3rd grade students to a wetland sites, called Weigand Reservoir. I met with the 4th-6th grade students in Whitehorse Canyon in the Little Rocky Mountains.

At Weigand Reservoir, the young students hiked to the wetlands site from the bus. Upon arriving at the site I explained what I do and how I collect data out in the field. Then I showed them our live specimens of Northern Leopard Frogs, Turtle shells, Fairy Shrimp, and tadpoles. I identified the birds that were there on site, to the students. The kids all had a chance to use the nets to catch aquatic invertebrates, and one student managed to catch his own Boreal Chorus Frog, the only one we seen the whole day.



At the next site in Whitehorse Canyon, I took our live amphibian collection to the 4th-6th grade students who were not going to leave the waterfalls in the canyon. The students were having a barbeque when I arrived and I followed them into the canyon for some pictures. We hiked about 1-1/2 miles into the canyon on Lodgepole Creek. The students enjoyed playing with the Northern Leopard Frogs, even the girls, played with them. It was a hot day and it was nice and cool up there in the canyon. The Lodgepole Elementary School already wants to schedule another field trip with the Wetlands Program, so I told them to be ready next fall!



Well that's all for now, as you can see we will be pretty busy this coming summer.