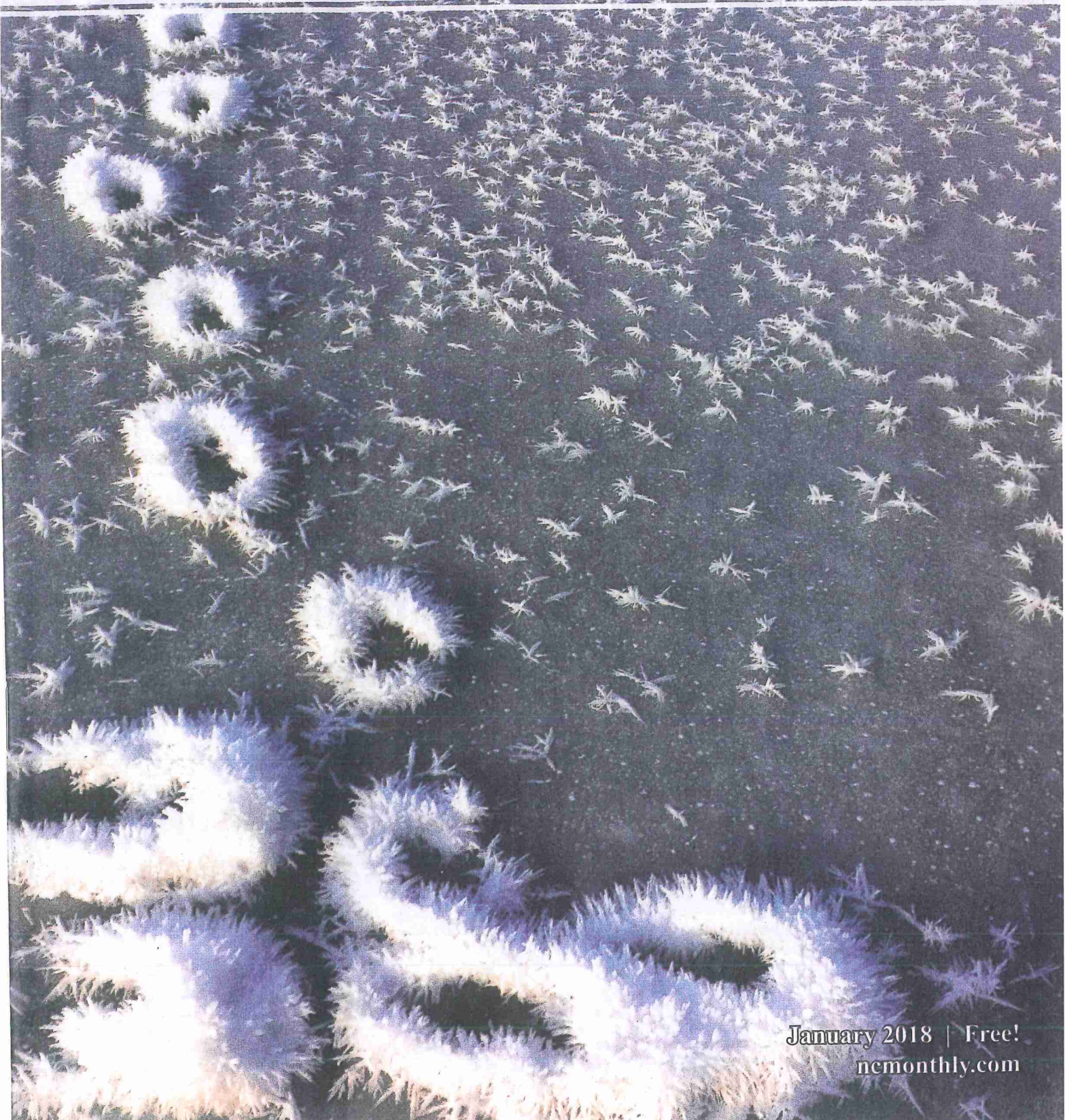




NORTH COLUMBIA MONTHLY

— WHERE AND HOW WE LIVE —



January 2018 | Free!
ncmonthly.com

Feeder Creek

By Jack Nisbet

Hangman Creek, also known as Latah Creek, is a significant stream about 60 miles long that rises near Moses Mountain above the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation in the Idaho Panhandle. The upper creek braids its way across what once were extensive camas-gathering grounds around DeSmet, then crosses the Washington state line to drain the northeast corner of the Palouse Hills. After being joined by Rock Creek, Hangman ducks between wheat fields and basalt scablands exposed by the Ice Age floods, with its last few miles carving the bluffs that back Spokane's South Hill. It meets the Spokane River just downstream from the city's central falls, in a parkland and fishing site that has buzzed with activity since those last great Pleistocene floods receded.

Full of contrasts and surprises, the tributary has provided the setting for some of our region's most contentious news.

It starts with the name itself. The Lewis and Clark expedition never traveled anywhere close

to Hangman Creek, but they did hear about a drainage north of the Palouse River with a name they rendered as "Lau-taw," which might derive from a Nez Perce or Sahaptin word. When Captain John Mullan passed through the area in the 1850s, his "Lah too" Creek may also reflect the thoughts of a Sahaptin translator. Neither term appears to have any connection with the Interior Salish languages spoken by resident Coeur d'Alene or Spokane tribal members. The camas fields on upper Hangman provided the "Camas Prairie Creek" name on the 1854 Pacific Region Railroad Survey map. Another word applied by Salish people appears in documents as *Sin-too-too-olley*, translated as "river of small fish."

All these names became irrelevant in 1858, when U.S. Army Colonel George Wright was dispatched to eastern Washington with orders to subdue angry Plateau tribes. After several skirmishes in Spokane country and an infamous order to slaughter hundreds of captured Indian

horses, Wright's campaign culminated with the hanging of more than a dozen men who had come into his military camp along the creek under a white flag.

Although Latah Creek appeared on some maps and reports over the next century, local usage, especially among tribal members, tended toward Hangman, and the United States Board on Geographic Names officially sanctioned the latter name in 1959.

When the State of Washington tried to reclaim the gentler Latah tag at the turn of the 21st century, Coeur d'Alene tribal member Cliff SiJohn famously stood up and declared: We don't care what you call it. We know what happened there, and will call it Hangman Creek forever so that no one can forget.

Back in 1934, anthropologist Verne Ray went out on Hangman Creek with Spokane elder Thomas Garry, 75 years old at the time, to record some of the traditional tribal uses of the drainage. Garry identified one Upper Spokane

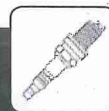
NORM'S AUTO REPAIR SERVICE MENU



CAR CARE SERVICE



BRAKE SYSTEM SERVICE



ENGINE PERFORMANCE



COOL / COMFORT SERVICE



SUSPENSION SERVICE



ENGINE / EXHAUST SERVICE

OIL & FILTER CHANGE

30, 60, 90K MAINTENANCE

TRANSMISSION SERVICE

TIRE ROTATION

BATTERY SERVICE

WIPER & WASHER SERVICE

INSPECTION & DIAGNOSIS

DISC & DRUM SERVICE

ABS DIAGNOSIS & REPAIR

BRAKE FLUID SERVICE

MASTER CYLINDERS

AIR BAG SERVICE

DRIVABILITY DIAGNOSIS

FUEL INJECTION SERVICE

MAINTENANCE TUNE-UP

COMPUTER DIAGNOSIS

STARTING & CHARGING

ELECTRICAL WIRING

LEAK DIAGNOSIS

WATER PUMPS & RADIATORS

BELTS & HOSES SERVICE

COOLING SYSTEM FLUSH

A/C SYSTEM SERVICE

HEATER & THERMOSTAT

SHOCKS & STRUTS

STEERING COMPONENTS

CV BOOT & FRONT AXLES

TRANSMISSION & CLUTCH

RACK & PINION SERVICE

DRIVE SHAFT REPAIRS

OIL LEAK DIAGNOSIS

TIMING BELT REPLACEMENT

SEAL & GASKET SERVICE

ENGINE SERVICES

EXHAUST SERVICE

CATALYTIC CONVERTER

"Our Technicians are Qualified and Trained to Perform Services on Domestic and Most Popular Foreign Cars."

295 W. 1st • Colville, WA
509-685-9653 • 855-877-9653

www.norms-auto.com



24 month/24,000 mile nationwide
warranty on most repairs!

Boundaries

encampment a mile above the present High Bridge over the creek as *qu'yu*, a "place where Oregon grape grows," and described it to Ray as, "a populous permanent settlement valued as a salmon and trout fishing grounds and for the abundant game, including deer, antelope and beaver, which the surrounding territory provided."

About ten miles further upstream, Garry identified another camp known as "place where many woodpeckers are found." This was also a fishing and hunting site that in the winter served as a base for large communal deer drives.

Recently deceased Coeur d'Alene elder Felix Aripa agreed with Thomas Garry's assessment of the richness of the place. Aripa's ancestors told him that in the early 1800s the creek valley supported good bunchgrass, large pine trees, both sharp-tailed and ruffed grouse, and snowshoe hare. Salmon, trout and whitefish ascended the creek and provided people with food for the winter months.

The fish were always a focal point. In 1935, anthropologist W.W. Elmendorf, working with Spokane tribal elders, described a fishing trap at the very mouth of Hangman Creek. According to one source, the volume of chinook salmon during their peak run was so great that for a period of thirty days the Spokanes took about 1,000 fish a day from the trap.

Traditional runs of food fish extended upstream into Coeur d'Alene territory along the Idaho border. Around the time of Elmendorf's work, Herman Seltice said, "My grandmother told me that in the 1870s they went down to Hangman Creek near Tekoa and caught salmon by spearing. Salmon were not the only fish that came up the creek, we also had whitefish and trout."

Donald George recalled the "salmon were reported at Hangman Creek near Tekoa, WA, in 1907, shortly after the reservation was open to settlement." Margaret Stensgar, granddaughter of Joseph Seltice, said that "Grandpa Joseph told me that salmon used to come up Hangman Creek to spawn until they built that Little Falls dam (1908). Cutting all the trees down also affected the creek."

Joseph Seltice's words agree with the writings of plant surveyor John Leiberg, who camped beneath the Hangman Creek Bluffs during the summer of 1893. Leiberg described gardens along the creek there that provided vegetables for the growing population of Spokane. He also noted several abandoned sawmills that testified to the cutting of prime ponderosa pine from the shoreline.

During the time of Leiberg's survey, the major portion of Hangman Creek flowed through open

Palouse Prairie, often in the form of braided streams that crossed wet meadows. Beginning around 1910, several sections of the creek were channelized to facilitate agricultural use. This resulted in increased erosion and turbidity that was hard on the fish, as well as significant loss of habitat and water quality that continued for decades. A 2014 report from the Spokane County Conservation District admitted that "Washington State water quality standards for temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, and fecal coliforms are routinely violated" along the state's portion of Hangman Creek.

With a clear understanding of such problems, these days every tribe, conservation group and government agency in the region is pondering the viability of re-introducing native fish into the upper Columbia system.

Al Scholtz, a retired EWU professor and frequent consultant for any group with a stake in a living stream, has explored Hangman Creek with those ends in mind.

In his thorough report on historic fisheries on the upper Columbia, Scholtz concluded that since the arrival of commercial agriculture there could only have been limited egg production

in Hangman Creek because of its traditionally muddy water.

Today, many miles of its course have been so degraded that re-introduced hatchery fish would be hard-pressed to survive, much less successfully reproduce.

But there is a swelling public interest in restoring little bits of Hangman Creek habitat all along its length, from those former wetlands within the Coeur d'Alene Reservation to shallow gravel bars winding beneath the bluffs. The recent success of salmon in the Elwha, Rogue and Okanagon drainages has provided new insights into the remarkable resilience of the fish. Over the long run, it might not be smart to bet against the regenerative power of Hangman Creek as well.

Thanks to Al Scholtz and associates for compilation of information on salmon and steelhead... in the Upper Columbia River Basin above Grand Coulee Dam. Technical Report No. 2, Upper Columbia United Tribes Fisheries Center, EWU.

Jack Nisbet will speak to the Kinikinnick chapter of the Native Plant Society in Sandpoint on January 27 at 10 a.m. For more details visit www.jacknisbet.com



When it comes to your to-do list, put your future first.

To find out how to get your financial goals on track, contact your Edward Jones financial advisor today.

COLVILLE

Sue Poe, CFP®

126 S Main St.
509-684-6649

COLVILLE

Christopher A
McCartney, AAMS®

298 S Main St. Suite 102
509-684-8414

COLVILLE

Ron Eck

298 S Main St. Suite 102
509-684-8414

DEER PARK

Ryan C Moore

830 S Main St, Suite A
509-276-2974

Call or visit any of our 4 financial advisors

in the greater Stevens County area.

To find an Edward Jones office near you, call
1-800-ED-JONES or visit www.edwardjones.com.

www.edwardjones.com
Member SIPC

Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING