

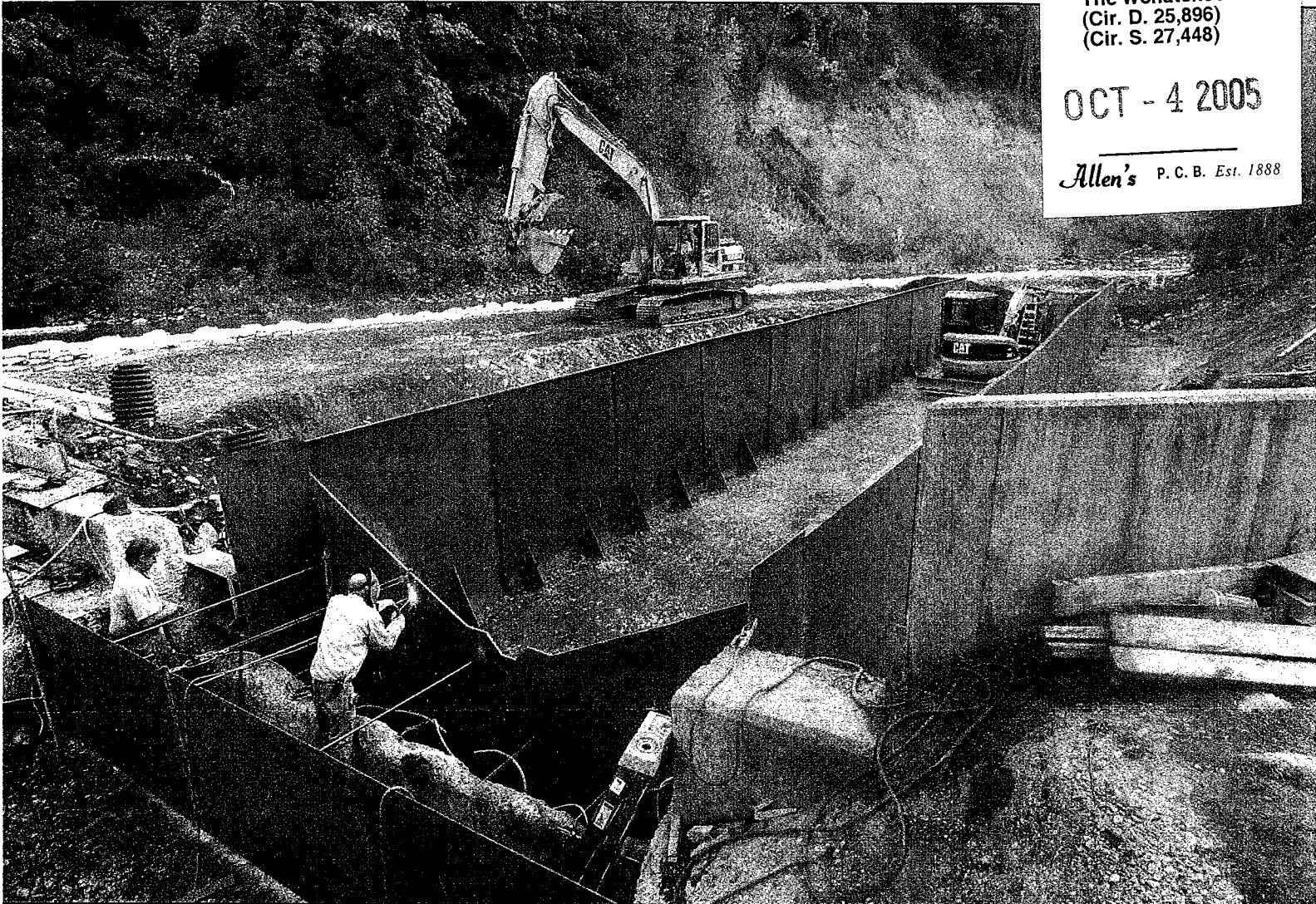
2219

CREEK CREATION

Wenatchee, WA
(Chelan Co.)
The Wenatchee World
(Cir. D. 25,896)
(Cir. S. 27,448)

OCT - 4 2005

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888



World photo/Kelly, Gil

Construction of a fish bypass is under way on the Peshastin Creek diversion dam about one mile upstream from the Big Y intersection. It will serve as a fish ladder for chinook salmon, steelhead and bull trout. On Monday, a Rayfield Brothers Excavating crew worked on the 90-foot-long structure. The project could be completed by mid-October. The steel channel will have a plastic liner and large rocks to allow fish to pass the dam at any water level.

Bypass to give fish a real diversion

BY RICK STEIGMEYER
World staff writer

PESHASTIN — What now looks like a skinny, 15-foot-long bread pan in an outdoor oven of earth and rock will soon aid migratory fish travel up and down Peshastin Creek even as farmers keep their irrigation water on drought years like this one.

At least that's the expected outcome of a fish bypass now being installed at a small diversion

dam about a mile upstream from the Big Y intersection of highways 2 and 97. The diversion dam has long been used to divert water from the creek into a canal owned by the Peshastin Irrigation District.

Chelan County and the irrigation district started looking for ways to install the bypass — essentially a fish ladder — after being threatened with a lawsuit in 2002 by the Washington Environmental Council. The Seattle-based environmental group claimed the diversion dam made it

difficult for federally protected chinook salmon, steelhead and bull trout fish species to get up and down the creek during times where the water level was low.

State and federal grants amounting to \$160,000 were secured by the county to pay for the project, said Mike Kaputa, the county's natural resource director.

The 90-by-16-foot steel box will soon be covered

Please see FISH LADDER, Page A

article continued —

Oct. 4, 2005
The Wenatchee World
article continued -

Fish ladder

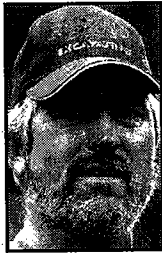
From Page A1

ered with dirt and rocks so it is no longer visible, said Dave Rayfield, co-owner of Rayfield Construction. The Leavenworth company began building the bypass in early September and expects to be finished by Oct. 15, he said.

Kaputa said work is done at this time of year because there are normally fewer fish migrating and the need for irrigation water has passed. But

migration is likely to increase with mountain rain, he said, so the work must be completed as early as possible.

The huge box is essentially a form that will be supported by earth dikes on either side and filled with a plastic liner, dirt and boulders. The rocks will be placed in a natural appearing way that will allow fish to go up and down the stream bed while staying away from the canal diversion, Rayfield said.



Dave Rayfield

The final V-shaped channel will funnel the water that was previously spread over a wide creek bed and allow fish safe passage with only a couple of inches of water, he said. Adjustable weirs will assure there will always be enough water in the channel for fish. The design should also result in more efficient water diversion to the canal, he said.

The project was scheduled to be built last summer but was halted over concerns by a resident who owns a newer house close to the project. Warren Hills wanted to know who would be responsible in the unlikely event that the bypass caused the creek to overflow its banks and flood his home.

Kaputa said the county agreed last month to handle the insurance for the first five years. After that, the district will take over.

Rayfield said the bypass shouldn't increase the chance of flooding. More likely, it will reduce scouring away of Hill's land, he said.

Rick Steigmeyer can be reached at 664-7151 or by e-mail at steigmeyer@wenworld.com

221