



BUFFALO RELEASED ON RESERVATION



In the beginning of October, 33 buffalo were released on the Colville Indian Reservation between Keller Ridge and Buffalo Lake. The buffalo were a gift from the Kalispel Tribe.

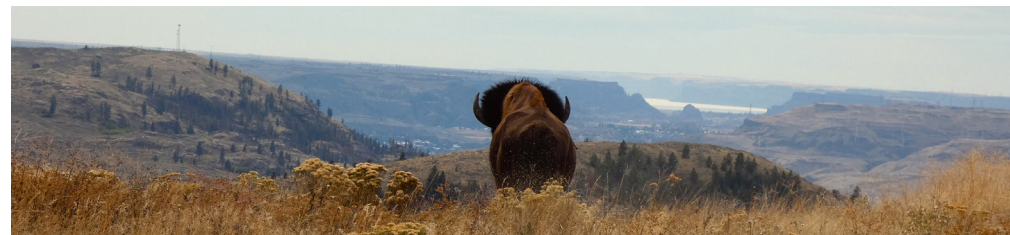
There was a mix of bulls, calves and pregnant cows out of the 33 buffalo that were released.

The Kalispel's buffalo herd is currently managed on 243 acres of reservation

rangeland. Staff supplement their food with hay which provides the herd with nutrition year round.

The tribe started a bison herd in 1972 with 30 animals from Yellowstone. The meat from the herd provides nutrition to its members for ceremonial, traditional, and other uses.

We want to thank the Kalispel Tribe for their gift.



SEED BOMB PROJECT



In mid-October, CTFW staff teamed up with 4-H, Youth Development, and Range, and worked with about 230 kids from Nespelem and Lake Roosevelt Schools to put together seed bombs on one of our mitigation properties that recently suffered a fire. The goal was to have each student make five seed bombs (with seeds of native plants) for a total of 1,150 seed bombs and the students planted them. In 2024, CTFW Mitigation staff will continue this outreach program with 4-H and plan for another event in the fall.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE PROJECT PARTNERS



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MORE CANADA LYNX RELOCATED TO WASHINGTON STATE



Seven Canada lynx were recently trapped in Canada and relocated to the Colville Indian Reservation (CIR) in an effort to help recover the species in Washington state.

A team of biologists, technicians, trappers, vets and other volunteers set up traps east of Kelowna, British Columbia in the beginning of October. Each trap had a game camera to record activity and allowed team members to monitor a lynx when one was captured.

“We are in year three and one of the issues with trapping early in the fall is that the bears have not entered hibernation,” said Rose Piccinini, wildlife biologist for Colville Tribes Fish and Wildlife (CTFW). “Because of this we use scents and visual aids rather than meat or carcasses as bait. Feathers, pieces of deer hide, and other visual attractants are used to bring in curious cats.”

The team trapped four males and three females as of mid-December and the group may be trapping additional Canada lynx in January. They were able to do this by setting up about 72 traps. “The traps were checked daily and re-scented or baited every other day,” said Sam Rushing, wildlife biologist for CTFW. Those involved were the BC trappers who own the trap lines, Conservation Northwest staff, our staff, and several other volunteers.”

“When we get a lynx in a trap we transfer the cat to a kennel and it’s moved to an overnight holding facility,” said Piccinini. “The lynx is isolated in a quiet and calm area to help reduce stress. Once under anesthesia each lynx is weighed, checked for overall health and body condition, sexed, and aged,” she said. “The cat’s vitals are monitored throughout the entire process while they are photographed, receive an ear tag, get fit with a GPS collar and have their DNA collected.”



Lynx are listed as a federally threatened species in Washington state but not in Canada. So in Canada it is legal to trap them. Multiple permits were required to transport the animals across the border.

“It takes approximately two hours from the lynx trapping house to the border and another two hours from the border to the release site,” said Marcus McClung, wildlife biologist for CTFW. “The lynx were given food and water to prepare them for relocation before they leave to cross the border. They are awake because they were trapped and processed the day before.”

The Colville Confederated Tribes partnered with Conservation Northwest, Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT), Okanagan Nation Alliance and others with the goal of relocating at least 50 Canada lynx to the reservation in five years.

“We’re about halfway toward our goal of releasing 50 lynx on Colville lands in the Kettle Range,” said Dave Werntz, Conservation Northwest science and conservation senior director. “Most remain in the Kettles, and from the handful that have traveled north (some south again) we’ve learned a ton about connectivity pathways to other lynx populations.”

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The Kettle Range had significant lynx presence through the 1980s before they were trapped out. National lynx experts have identified the Kettle Range as one of seven priority recovery areas due to habitat connectivity with British Columbia, great snow, and snowshoe hare, a key food staple. “A feasibility study commissioned by Conservation Northwest determined that the Kettle Range could support a small lynx population of 12 to 40 lynx, depending on home range size. The monitoring data collected by the Colville Tribes and the lynx themselves will have the final say,” Werntz said.



REWARD PROGRAM PAYS ANGLERS TO CATCH NORTHERN PIKE



Anglers are catching northern pike in Lake Roosevelt and are getting paid for every northern pike head turned in at a designated location. That’s right, when you participate in the Northern Pike Reward Program, you will get paid \$10 for every pike head you turn in.

So far this year, anglers have turned in 64 heads, bringing the total to 3,560 pike heads turned in since 2017.

“Northern pike are starting to move into the middle sections of the reservoir (Gifford, Hunters and the Spokane River confluence,” said Holly McLellan, fish biologist for Colville Tribes fish and Wildlife (CTFW). “We want to remind anglers to catch and kill these fish and to not release live pike back into the water.”

Northern pike are predator fish with small scales, a long head, and they have a large mouth with lots of teeth. They can eat birds, trout, salmon and steelhead. They can exceed 50 inches in growth and weigh up to 45 pounds. They populate quickly as one adult female northern pike can produce up

to 250,000 eggs. And because they can populate so quickly, Lake Roosevelt co-managers (Colville Tribes, Spokane Tribe of Indians and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife) have been working together to capture as many of these predator fish as possible.

“In 2023, co-managers removed 644 northern pike bringing the total to 19,892 since 2015,” said McLellan. “Each year the catch has been going down, indicating that our methods are working and helping to stop the spread downstream. We just need to keep the pressure on so that we fully collapse the population.”

McLellan wants to remind anglers to continue to remove northern pike when they are captured even while fishing for other fish.

Anglers can drop off their pike heads at Noisy Waters Gas Station, Kettle Falls boat launch, Hunters boat launch, Fort Spokane boat launch, or at the Inchelium Fish and Wildlife office.

Northern Pike Reward Program Rules:

- All anglers must be 17 years of age or older to participate in the program.
- Anglers must completely fill out the tag information at the designated drop off area.
- Fish heads must be placed in a freezer bag with the label and dropped into the freezer or brought to the Inchelium Fish and Wildlife office.
- Fish heads must be in good condition and clearly identifiable. Unidentifiable heads will not be accepted or awarded.
- Fish must be caught in the main stem Columbia River from Wells Dam

upstream to the Canadian border, the Spokane River upstream to Little Falls, the Kettle River, or the Okanogan River.

- There are no size restrictions on northern pike.
- Anglers must adhere to all applicable state/tribal fishing regulations for the area in which you fish. Contact your local state or tribal agency for license requirements and current fishing regulations.
- Please allow 2 to 3 weeks to receive your reward.

For more information on the Northern Pike Rewards Program, go to <https://www.cct-fnw.com/northern-pike>



CHIEF JOSEPH HATCHERY UPDATE



There has been a lot of activity at Chief Joseph Hatchery (CJH) this fall, from spawning fish to caring for fish eggs to transporting thousands of salmon fry to acclimation ponds along the Okanogan River.

CJH staff spawned out hundreds of chinook salmon in October and November. Matt McDaniel, CJH manager, describes how the adult salmon are spawned out at the hatchery.

“The eggs from the females and milt from the males are put in Ziplock bags with oxygen, placed in coolers and transported to the fertilization room,” said McDaniel. “The eggs will be mixed with the milt, and then water added to activate the sperm in the milt to initiate fertilization. The fertilized eggs are left to sit for one minute, then drained in colanders and rinsed lightly,” he said. “Those eggs are then laid down in an iodine solution in an incubation tray to let sit for 45-60 minutes before water is turned on, which completes the spawning process.”

McDaniel said the eggs will stay in the incubation trays until they are eyed up. In 4 to 6 weeks they are shocked, picked and counted.

The carcasses from the spawned out adults are sampled by the CJH monitor and evaluation crew before being taken to the landfill for final disposal.



The fry that were transported to the acclimation ponds will grow to fingerling size and be released in the spring.

“Fish are taken to the acclimation ponds on the Okanogan so that they can imprint on the scent of the Okanogan River, which allows them to home back to the pond they were released from,” said McDaniel. “Essentially, we want those fish to return to the Okanogan River instead of returning directly to the hatchery.”

Adult salmon spawned out:

- Spring Chinook spawned – 252 females, 226 males and 7 jacks
- Segregated Summer Chinook spawned – 242 females, 171 males and 9 jacks
- Integrated Summer Chinook spawned – 291 females and 186 males and 11 jacks

Number of fry transported to each pond:

- Similkameen Pond: 324,142 integrated summer chinook were transported on Oct. 2 and Oct. 3 by Chelan County PUD staff.
- Riverside Pond: 214,490 MetComp spring chinook were transported on Oct. 24 by CJH staff.
- Brooks Tract Pond: 206,305 integrated summer chinook were transported on Oct. 23 by CJH staff.

Number of eggs in incubation:

- CJH Spring Chinook – 591,138 eyed eggs
- MetComp Spring Chinook – 230,223 eyed eggs
- Segregated Summer Chinook – 763,523 eggs
- Integrated Summer Chinook – approximately 900,000 eggs

Staff will continue to care for brood year 2022 fish that are currently on station at CJH and the acclimation ponds as well as complete egg picking for brood year 2023. In January, staff will also start prepping troughs and raceways for fish that are ready to be ponded (transferred from incubation trays to troughs/raceways).

