

# COLVILLE TRIBES FISH & WILDLIFE NEWS



## FISH WEIR PROJECT

A 340-foot fish weir was installed in the Okanogan River, near Malott by CTFW staff in mid-July. Trapping efforts began in late July but were suspended most of August due to high water temperatures and local fires. Trapping resumed again on August 27.

“Our goal this year is to collect 86 natural origin Chinook broodstock for CJH,” said Andrea Pearl, CJH fisheries biologist. “Currently we have 18 brood for the hatchery and we caught 18 hatchery Chinook for distribution to tribal members. We will continue operating the weir until the end of September.”

CTFW staff are working around the clock to collect what is needed for the hatchery. There are anywhere from four to six people working together to collect, measure, and gather data at the weir site.

The fish weir is built with panels made of PVC pipe, and has a large fish trap, cameras in and above the water, and an observation tower with an access area. The weir is used

not only to collect adult Chinook broodstock for the hatchery but it’s also used by fisheries managers to reduce the number of hatchery fish on the spawning grounds which means less competition for wild fish.



Old Weir

### SPECIAL THANKS TO THE PROJECT PARTNERS



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Chief Joseph Hatchery

## CHIEF JOSEPH HATCHERY UPDATE

Chief Joseph Hatchery (CJH) staff began collecting summer Chinook broodstock and opened the fish ladder at the hatchery on July 1. The staff completed spawning activities for spring Chinook eggs and currently have one million salmon eggs in the incubation room. About 1.8 million fingerlings were marked using the hatchery’s automated trailer system that can process up to 60,000 fish within eight hours. The marking trailer has six individual machines that sorts, clips, and tags each fingerling. Tiny coded wire tags were inserted

into the snout of each fish and their adipose fin was removed. Once these fish are marked, they are passed through tubs of water into the raceways and rearing ponds. Throughout the entire marking process the fish remain in water.

“Approximately 635,000 integrated summer and 205,000 spring Chinook will be at the hatchery until November 1, and then transferred to the acclimation ponds,” said Pat Phillips, CJH manager. “The remaining summer and spring Chinook will stay at



Fisheries Tech Brian Stanger feeds tiny fish

the hatchery until April 2016, then released into the Columbia River from the hatchery. About 205,000 spring Chinook will go to the Riverside acclimation pond on November 1, and will be released into the Okanogan River in April as well.”

The selective harvest fishermen collected 1,124 adult summer Chinook for CJH this season and the monitoring and evaluation crew continue to collect broodstock at the fish weir site. This October hatchery staff will begin spawning summer Chinook.



Fisheries Tech Jim Andrews shows students how the automated system works to sort, clip and tag juvenile salmon



# COLVILLE TRIBES' FISH AND WILDLIFE AWARDED BPA CONTRACT FOR RESTORATION WORK IN THE METHOW



Beaver Creek project site after project implementation.

The Colville Tribes' Fish and Wildlife (CTFW) Department was recently awarded a contract for over \$417,000 from Bonneville Power Administration to continue habitat restoration work in the Methow Subbasin. The restoration work will benefit Chinook salmon, summer steelhead, bull trout, and Pacific lamprey.

The new award will allow fish biologists to install fencing to keep livestock out of the Methow River, develop an alternative water source for livestock, install a well, and replace an undersized culvert on Frazer Creek with a bridge to improve fish passage.

"Since there are already substantial existing restoration efforts in the Methow, I see our role

at this point as to coordinate with these efforts, provide support where needed, and implement projects that will have the greatest biological benefit for the cost," said Paul Wagner, fish biologist for CTFW. "Fish passage projects and livestock fencing projects are good examples of project types that have a relatively high biological benefit for a modest cost."

Early efforts began in September 2014 when the department hired Wagner. He immediately focused on Beaver and Frazer Creeks, two tributaries that were severely impacted by the Carlton Complex fire.

"Two undersized road culverts have been replaced by a bridge on Beaver Creek to improve fish passage by allowing full conveyance of increased debris and sediment from the burned watersheds," said Wagner.

Fish biologists from the Colville Tribe are coordinating their efforts with other groups such as the Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Methow Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, U.S. Forest Service, the Yakama Nation, and others.

# TROUT HATCHERY RECEIVES ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

The US Dept. of the Interior - Bureau of Indian Affairs recently awarded the Colville Tribal Fish Hatchery (CTFH) \$69,000 to perform facility maintenance projects.

This current award will be used to: repair a water distribution tower, replace ten dissolved oxygen caps on the oxygen monitoring system, replace six well vault heaters, replace predator netting on raceways, repair freezer and refurbish a 1,250 gallon fish transport tank.

"This additional funding is a huge benefit for the hatchery since it is over 25 years old and requires considerable maintenance and upgrades to maintain operations," said Jill Phillips, hatchery manager. "The repairs will occur before the close of the fiscal year 2015."

## Previous projects that were funded include:

- Well rehabilitation \$56,000, awarded in 2012
- Upgrade alarm and monitoring system

\$85,000, awarded in 2012

- Repaired sedimentation ponds and installed walkways for water sampling \$135,000, awarded in 2013
- Rebuilt six oxygen generators \$2,100, awarded in 2013
- Energy efficient outside lighting \$4,000, awarded in 2013
- Installed two circular tanks \$119,500 (cost share with BPA), awarded in 2013
- Repaired surface asphalt \$51,165(cost share with BPA), awarded in 2013
- Replaced dissolved oxygen sensors \$3,792, awarded in 2014
- Sandblast and paint distribution tower piping \$9,500, awarded in 2014

To date, over \$700,000 has been awarded to the CTFH to perform maintenance projects.

The CTFH, located in Bridgeport, Wash., opened in 1989 and is used to enhance reservation fisheries by producing a minimum of 50,000 pounds of trout annually. These hatchery fish are distributed throughout reservation waters and are used as substitution for the lost anadromous fish that once thrived in the upper Columbia River before construction of Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams.



Circular Tanks



# SELECTIVE HARVEST EFFORTS IN 2015

The Selective Harvest Crew began fishing in the Wells Reservoir with the Dream Catcher on June 23, and continued until August 17. The Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) and Okanogan Nation Alliance (ONA) assisted with fishing operations and each tribe took home totes filled with salmon.

"The UCUT members recognize the years of work put in by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation Fish and Wildlife Department and Okanogan First Nations to restore the salmon runs in the Columbia and Okanogan Rivers," said John Sirois, UCUT committee coordinator. "It truly was an honor bestowed upon the UCUT members to receive the invitation from the Confederated Tribes of the Colville to share in the annual salmon harvest. The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation demonstrated tremendous generosity in the traditions passed down from generations of fisher people to invite other UCUT members to share in the salmon harvest. Those salmon go to the communities in the blocked areas where they no longer have access to salmon. It is rewarding to see those traditional beliefs and values of what it takes to be a trusted steward of the first foods," said Sirois.

**BOAT CREW MEMBERS:** Mike Rayton, CTFW Senior Biologist, Tony Stanczak, CTFW Technician II, Carol Coleman, WDFW, Esteban Cruz-Balbuena, Intern, Pat Roy, CTFW Tech I, Danny Tompkins, CTFW Tech I, Joe Frank, CTFW Tech I, Solomon Brooks, Summer Youth, Navarro Nanpuya, Summer Youth and Andy George, Summer Youth.

By the middle of August, the crew harvested over 23,000 sockeye and 680 hatchery Chinook adults for the membership while more than 3,600 natural-origin Chinook adults were released. As of September 2, this season's surplus activities at the CJH ladder have provided an additional 5,750 adult hatchery Chinook for tribal consumption.

"The harvest successes observed in the recent past, including the 2015 season, is encouraging and reflective of passage, habitat, hatchery and harvest actions by the Colville Tribes, Chelan, Douglas and Grant PUDs, ONA, BPA, USACE, BOR, fisheries co-managers, local governments and local fisheries enhancement groups to rebuild upper Columbia River anadromous fish stocks," said Kirk Truscott, Colville Tribes anadromous program manager.

"The high water temperatures experienced in the upper Columbia this summer led to the formation of a solid thermal barrier at the mouth of the Okanogan River," said Mike Rayton, CTFW senior biologist. "The barrier prevented sockeye from continuing up the Okanogan to their spawning grounds in Canada. Although the high temperatures contributed to a high



CJH Ladder

pre-spawn mortality rate, we had a very successful sockeye harvest."

Salmon was distributed to all districts, two to three times a week, from early July to mid-August. The harvest and distribution schedule was affected by the fires, but distributions will continue using fish surplused from the CJH ladder.

In 2015, the final Columbia River Adult Salmon Return forecast provided by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) estimated 127,000 upriver adult summer Chinook and 511,000 sockeye returned to the Columbia River mouth, with more than 70 percent of the sockeye destined for the Okanogan River. The estimates were greater than the original TAC preseason estimates.

# FISH PROCESSING CREW:

Glen Launer, CTFW Tech I, Rudy Boyd, CTFW Tech I, Bill Timentwa, CTFW Tech I, and Shae Huckins, Summer Youth.

