



## CHIEF JOSEPH HATCHERY UPDATE



Over 2 million salmon smolts were released into the Okanogan and Columbia Rivers this winter and spring, and what an accomplishment it was to release so many fish as a lot of work goes into taking care of them. Not only were Chief Joseph Hatchery staff busy releasing fish, they were also collecting adult spring chinook and marking and caring for fish.



Staff released yearlings from brood year 2020 and sub-yearlings from brood year 2021 and in May, staff began marking fish using an automated system that sorts, clips and tags juvenile salmon. The system can process over 60,000 fish in a day.

“The sub-yearlings were marked and tagged in May and the rest of the fish will be marked and/or tagged from June until the end of July,” said CJH Manager Matt McDaniel. “When the fish get to about four inches in length, they are tagged with a coded wire tag (CWT) and/or adipose fin clipped, depending on the program. Those fish are put through automated machines in our marking trailer that insert the CWT and/or clip the adipose fin. They are then transferred to different ponds and continue to grow until they are moved to the acclimation ponds or released from CJH.”

This type of marking helps fisheries managers and anglers to identify which fish are hatchery fish.

On May 23, staff began collecting spring chinook broodstock at the CJH ladder. The goal is to collect 640 fish by the end of June. However, most of the broodstock this year will be obtained from Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery due to extremely low returns of spring chinook to CJH.

In July, CJH staff will be focusing on collecting summer chinook broodstock, marking and tagging brood year 2021 fish, and caring for fish.

### Total spring chinook broodstock onsite as of June 13:

Females – 266 Males – 250 Jacks – 7

### Released from CJH:

Segregated Spring Chinook BY20 Yearlings – 814,613  
Segregated Summer Chinook BY20 Yearlings – 453,575  
Segregated Summer Chinook BY21 Sub-Yearlings – 134,706

### Released from the ponds in December 2021:

Integrated Summer Chinook BY20 Yearlings from Omak – 207,773  
Integrated Summer Chinook BY20 Yearlings from Similkameen – 386,943  
Spring Chinook (10j) BY20 Yearlings from Riverside – 229,978

**Employees of the Month:** Makayla Andrews – March 2022, Spencer Cleveland – March 2022, Virgil Michel – April 2022



## SPECIAL THANKS TO THE PROJECT PARTNERS



For Additional Information Contact:

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## TRIBES CELEBRATE AT CEREMONY AND DISCUSS PLANS TO IMPROVE SALMON RUNS IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER



On May 26, over a hundred people gathered at Chief Joseph Hatchery (CJH) in Bridgeport, Washington to celebrate the return of the first salmon from their long journey from the ocean.

At 6 a.m., Colville tribal fishermen began fishing for chinook salmon using a dip net. The first two salmon were small and were released, but the third salmon was a nice size and kept for the ceremony. Everyone in attendance shared a piece of the first salmon.

As the salmon fillets were being placed around the fire pit, the Chairman of the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) Andy Joseph Jr. welcomed guests and talked about the importance of salmon to the people and why ceremonies like this are essential.

Several presentations followed the early morning breakfast. Staff from CJH showed a short video of how salmon are spawned out and the hatchery rearing process.

Isaiah Martin, harvest biologist for the CCT, gave a brief update on what the selective harvest crew does for CJH. “Our primary objective is to get broodstock for this hatchery,” said Martin.



“We run a selective fishery and try and grab hatchery fish and keep the number at 30 percent of hatchery fish spawning up the Okanogan, so they don’t influence the spawning grounds.”

Casey Baldwin, senior research scientist for the CCT, D.R. Michel, executive director for Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT), Conor Giorgi, Anadromous Program manager for the Spokane Tribe, and Tom Biladeau, Anadromous Program biologist for the Coeur d’ Alene Tribe discussed **Phase 2, Salmon Reintroduction efforts above and below Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams.**

“We teamed up on this presentation to discuss where we are at, the big pic-

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cal, state and federal representatives.” Giorgi spoke about the history of reintroduction efforts in the upper Columbia, funding through local, state and tribes and the feasibility of reintroducing anadromous species. His presentation described the why:

- Right historic wrongs – recognize the culture and rights of native people
- Restore ecosystem processes
- Bolster industry (fisheries, restoration, recreation)
- Provide climate change resiliency

Giorgi also discussed the different phases:

- Phase 1 was completed in 2019, donor stocks are available, risks are manageable, large quantities of habitat are available, fish passage technology exists, and salmon survival is promising

- Phase 2 is currently underway and involves designs, testing, strategies and pilot projects to release fish and evaluate the feasibility of reintroduction

- Phase 3 is permanent passage facilities

Biladeau stated what a huge undertaking Phase 2 is for everyone involved. “As we gather data, we can use it as we move forward. We are going to continue to learn what the salmon are telling us. There is a clear need to collaborate on this implementation plan.” He said, “The work we are doing is going to provide benefits to the entire region, not just in the blocked area. It’s an undertaking here that’s going to provide eco-



ture, the phased approach, educational releases and do the best we can on this overview.” Baldwin discussed key topics:

- The Problem: Salmon haven’t been passed Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams for many decades

- What UCUT is doing about it – scientific phased approach, Phase 1 is completed and Phase 2, the Implementation Plan

- It’s Working – Cultural and Educational Releases

“It’s a real honor to be here as a citizen of the Colville Tribes and currently the executive director for UCUT,” said Michel. “So my grandparents were some of the last to see fish at Kettle Falls so to be a part of the cultural gatherings at Kettle Falls and some of the other areas and be able to turn those salmon loose for the first time in 80 years, it’s very emotional. It just shows that by working together, we can make this happen.”

“On the news, it mentioned the federal agencies have spent \$2 billion dollars trying to save the salmon and it’s not working.” He said, “We have to get them in their historic habitat, into cooler waters, over the dams and protect and enhance those resources. It’s our responsibility to continue to make that happen for future generations. Talk to your lo-



nomie, cultural and esthetic value for the whole region.”

Baldwin discussed many of the recent successes the tribes have documented with initial releases of both adult and juvenile salmon. The tribes have been doing cultural and educational releases of salmon since 2017. “They have been a big success by providing an opportunity for the tribes to conduct ceremonies, have salmon fisheries, and collect data as a proof of concept for the more detailed Phased approach that will follow,” he said.

William Gale, U.S Fish and Wildlife project leader for Mid-Columbia talked about how he has worked with UCUT to get surplus fish and eggs for the implementation plan. He also mentioned that USFWS supports the efforts of moving fish above Grand Coulee Dam.

Speakers also discussed the cost to implement the plan which could be approximately \$175 million. This would help to pay for more studies, purchase equipment, develop fish rearing facilities and more. The plan could take up to 20 years to complete.

After the presentations, attendees could take a tour of the hatchery, feed the fish and learn how salmon are raised there. Gifts were given out to all attendees and speakers.

## TRIBES RELEASED THOUSANDS OF JUVENILE CHINOOK FOR STUDY



This spring, approximately 6,000 tagged juvenile chinook were released in their historic habitat upstream of Chief Joseph, Grand Coulee and Spokane River dams as part of a study to monitor and track them on their journey to and from the ocean.

Staff from the Colville, Spokane, and Coeur d’ Alene Tribes and the Upper Columbia United Tribes are working with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) on the project.

“The study involves implanting juvenile salmon with acoustic transmitters and releasing them in various locations upstream and downstream of the dams,” said Casey Baldwin, research scientist for the Colville Tribes. “Underwater receivers will track their survival and behavior.”



Releases of tagged salmon began in mid-March in upstream locations such as Kettle Falls, Hangman Creek and the Spokane River. In April and early May, additional tagged salmon were released further downstream near the Sanpoil Arm of Lake Roosevelt and at Grand Coulee Dam and Chief Joseph Dam. Baldwin said release locations were selected to provide information on survival and travel time through reservoir reaches and at each dam.

The project was funded by the Colville Confederated Tribes, Coeur d’ Alene Tribe, Spokane Tribe of Indians (STOI), Upper Columbia United Tribes, United States Geological Survey and the State of Washington. Additional staff time and equipment deployment were provided by the United States Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers.

The salmon eggs were provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and they were reared at the Coeur d’ Alene tribal hatchery in Plummer, Idaho.

“This research is the first study of the Tribes 20-year plan for fish passage and reintroduction of salmon to the upper Columbia and Spokane Rivers,” said Conor Giorgi, Anadromous Program manager for the STOI. “The Phase 2 Implementation Plan, or “P2IP,” involves locally rearing and releasing juvenile salmon to evaluate their downstream behavior and survival through the rivers and dams of the region. Years later when these juveniles return to the Columbia Basin as adults, the Tribes and their partners will study their upstream behavior and survival.”

Giorgi stated, “At the end of these 20 years, the Tribes plan to have upstream and downstream fish passage facilities installed at all five Columbia and Spokane River hydroelectric dams; salmon swimming and spawning in the upper reaches of the Sanpoil, Spokane, and Columbia Rivers.”

