

IMPROVING HABITAT FOR THREATENED AND ENDANGERED FISH SPECIES



Colville Tribes' Fish and Wildlife (CTFW) is continuing its salmon recovery efforts in the Methow River basin with the help of some furry friends. The department is in its fifth year relocating beavers to key parts of the river as part of the Methow Salmon Recovery project to improve habitat for "threatened" Upper Columbia River steelhead and "endangered" spring Chinook, as well as coho, and summer Chinook.

"The work entails collecting and trapping beavers, usually nuisance beavers, and holding them at the Winthrop National Fish Hatchery," said Paul Wagner, fish biologist for CTFW. "We determine the sex, PIT tag and relocate them in breeding pairs to tributary streams along the Methow River. Release sites are inspected for suitable habitat prior to beaver relocation and the sites are monitored post-release to determine if beavers elect to remain at the site and establish dams."

According to Wagner, project goals are to improve fish habitat by: reducing summer water temperatures, increasing late summer stream flows, increasing juvenile salmonid rearing habitat, improving stream habitat complexity, trapping stream sediment, and in some cases reconnecting floodplains.

Relocating beavers to the Methow has been a cooperative effort between the Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Rec-

lamation, Washington Department of Ecology and the Colville Tribes.

"In May, I helped the crew and volunteers prepare beaver lodging at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' Winthrop Fish Hatchery," said Matt Young, fish biologist for CTFW. "We built shelters to temporarily house beavers and I helped train the new crew members on how to safely set and handle beaver traps. Six beavers were recently released into degraded wetlands that are in need of restoration."

"Starting this year, we are assuming a lead role in the assessment of beaver dams and their effects on salmon habitat restoration, primarily cooling summer water temperatures, and providing water storage to augment late season summer flows," said Wagner.

Funding for this project has come from multiple sources, including salmon recovery funding through Bonneville Power Administration, which has provided a portion of the resources for the past four years. Additional funding has come from WDFW, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Washington Department of Ecology.

For more info. go to: <http://methowsalmon.org/beaverproject.html>



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE PROJECT PARTNERS



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FIRST SALMON CEREMONY BRINGS HOPE

The First Salmon Ceremony was held at Chief Joseph Hatchery (CJH) in Bridgeport, Wash. on Friday, May 25, to celebrate the return of spring Chinook. The ceremony began at sunrise with tribal member Jeffrey Condon catching the first salmon. Tribal elders led with a prayer and song.

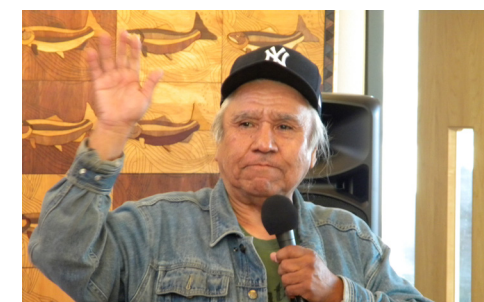
"We want salmon back, our culture back, and we are blessed to have grown up here," said Mike Marchand, Colville tribal chairman. "My parents had tears in their eyes when the salmon were disappearing. Now, people are supportive of us, lots of good things are happening, things are getting better."

Colville Tribes' Natural Resource Director Cody Desautel welcomed guests and discussed the vital work staff are doing. "It's important to recognize all the fisheries work that we do. We had a pretty good run last year for salmon distribution. As we work to get salmon to the Upper Columbia, we are making progress and I

know it's not quick. I think in the very near future we will have salmon above the dams. Each year is a little better, each year we are making progress."

Jobe Cate, CJH fish culturist, gave a presentation on CJH and the various work activities the staff do in order to successfully run the hatchery. The video clips showed staff ponding and feeding fry, caring for salmon eggs, and how they collect adult salmon on the boats for brood.

D.R. Michel, Upper Columbia United Tribes executive director, discussed salmon reintroduction efforts above Chief Joseph and Grand Cou-



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lee dams. "Our organization is made up of five tribes, that's 15,000 members, and we are working together to get salmon above the dams. We are looking at doing a few cultural releases above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee." Michel said, "We are looking at habitat, issues in the U.S., the Columbia River Treaty, technology like the Whooshh system and what's holding us back, it's funding and politics. The Tribes want fish passage and eco-based function. Currently, UCUT has funded habitat and donor stock studies, and life cycle modeling studies."

Approximately 150 people attended the ceremony including students from Lake Roosevelt and Keller School District. Attendees shared in the important process of the ceremony by eating a portion of the first salmon. They also toured the facility, fed the fish, and everyone received a backpack and educational materials.



CHIEF JOSEPH HATCHERY UPDATE

The hatchery crew have been releasing fish from several locations, marking and tagging summer Chinook sub-yearlings, prepping for broodstock collection, as well as caring for fish (juveniles and adults). Spring Chinook broodstock collection was conducted in June.

- A total of 2,081,587 fish were released in April and May:
- Segregated Spring Chinook from CJH – 555,636
 - Segregated Summer Chinook Yearlings from CJH – 464,429
 - Segregated Summer Chinook Subyearlings from CJH – 182,462
 - Integrated (MetComp 10j) Spring Chinook from Riverside Pond – 200,827
 - Integrated Summer Chinook Yearlings from Similkameen Pond – 376,987
 - Integrated Summer Chinook Yearlings from Omak Pond – 301,246

- A total of 1,535,865 fish are on station and staff feed them 5 to 6 days per week, clean the ponds, sample fish for size, monitor behavior and pick loss daily.
- Segregated Spring Chinook – 363,220
 - Segregated Summer Chinook – 379,108
 - Integrated (MetComp 10j) Spring Chinook – 206,965
 - Integrated Summer Chinook – 586,572

Hatchery staff will continue with juvenile care throughout the summer (feeding, cleaning ponds, sampling, etc.). Summer Chinook broodstock collection begins July 9 and runs through the end of August. The first spring Chinook spawn is scheduled for August 15 and every Wednesday thereafter until completed. Tagging and marking of all summer and spring Chinook on station will continue throughout the summer. Staff will also collect Chinook from the fish ladder for harvest/surplus. CJH maintenance staff will be busy



with equipment maintenance, manufacturing new hatchery equipment, grounds keeping and general maintenance.

CJH had many visitors in the past few months. Several schools came for a tour on Earth Day in April. The First Salmon Ceremony was held in May. Additional tours included: Chelan High School, Evergreen College, Reardan Middle School, Lapwai High School, and the University of Washington, University of British Columbia-Okanagan, and the Pacific Northwest Canadian Studies Consortium.

Therilyn Williams, administrative assistant II, recently joined CJH and several employees moved up in the ranks. Jim Andrews was promoted to the assistant manager position. Brian Stanger was promoted to senior fish culturist. Philip Williams and Tyler Marcellay were promoted to fish culturist II.



OKANOGAN HATCHERY SUMMER STEELHEAD PROGRAM

In early spring, if you are near Omak Mission Falls, you might be lucky enough to see CTFW staff collecting adult steelhead using dip nets. This traditional fishing method was used recently to collect fish for the department’s hatchery summer steelhead program in hopes of producing up to 100,000 smolts to be released in the Okanogan.

“Even though dip nets have become lighter and less bulky, the method is still the same and highly effective,” said Wesley Tibbits, fish biologist for CTFW. “Seeing tribal members of the Colville Reservation dip-net steelhead in the very same place their elders dip-netted for subsistence over a hundred years ago is amazing to watch.”

Tibbits said, “Depending on other tributary collections within the basin we dip-net anywhere from 10 to 30 steelhead a year at Mission Falls in Omak Creek. The total number of steelhead needed for the Okanogan

Hatchery Summer Steelhead program is 58 fish, 29 females and 29 males.”

Steelhead are taken to the Wells Fish Hatchery located at the Wells Dam Complex. CTFW employees transport the fish to the facility and work with WDFW and Douglas County PUD staff to spawn and rear the fish until they are smolt size.

The goals of the hatchery program are to: contribute to the recovery of the Okanogan steelhead population, support sustainable fisheries consistent with conservation objectives and implement Grant County PUD’s mitigation obligation for 100,000 smolts to be release in the Okanogan annually.

“At various times and locations, portions of the program function as a reintroduction program to the Okanogan, using locally-adapted broodstock,” said Tibbits. “And at times as a harvest program using hatchery-or-

igin broodstock to provide a fishery.” The Okanogan steelhead program involves:

- Collect approximately 58 Upper Columbia River (UCR) steelhead for broodstock
- Incubate, rear, and transfer juveniles to appropriate locations for acclimation or release. Release UCR steelhead smolts from St. Mary’s acclimation facility and/or release smolts into the Okanogan and its tributaries
- Monitor for hatchery effects and effectiveness (survival estimates, spawner estimates and biological sampling of adult and juvenile fish)
- Adaptive management of hatchery operations and goals based on monitoring results

Funding for the project comes from Grant County Public Utility District. For more information on this project, go to: <https://www.okanoganmonitoring.org/>

