



# The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Colville Business Council  
P.O. Box 150, Nespelem, WA 99155

(509) 634-2200  
FAX: (509) 634-4116



April 2, 2023

Agenda Item E.2.e  
Supplemental Tribal Report 1  
April 2023

Marc Gorelnik, Chair  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Mr. Gorelnik:

The importance of salmon to the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (Colville Tribes) and the Upper Columbia region cannot be overstated. As one of the many tribes who have federally recognized fishing rights for runs managed by PFMC under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Colville Tribes has participated in this forum for the last several years. The Colville Tribes participates in many salmon recovery forums, are actively engaged in salmon restoration actions and have commented in a variety of venues due to the importance of the fisheries, and how salmon occupy a central role in the lives of the Tribal members. The Colville Tribes have been salmon managers on the Columbia River since time immemorial, and we still are today. Salmon fisheries form a key part of regional culture, history, and identity, and provide tremendous social, spiritual and economic benefits.

The Colville Tribes includes 12 tribes and approximately 10,000 enrolled members. The Reservation is located at the terminus of anadromous salmon migration on the Columbia River in north central Washington. Our waters include both healthy runs of summer-fall Chinook and sockeye salmon, as well as ESA-listed stocks of spring Chinook salmon and steelhead trout. The salmon runs that used to support our subsistence and cultural needs were nearly lost and are currently a fraction of what they were, due in part to the construction and operation of the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams. The hatchery operations from Chief Joseph Hatchery produce approximately three million (3,000,000) chinook for the system when at full production. The PFMC ocean fisheries intercept the salmon produced on the Colville Reservation, throughout our traditional territories of the Upper Columbia River and from our hatchery.

We do not have a commercial salmon harvest because the basic ceremony and subsistence needs of our Tribes are not fulfilled by contemporary salmon runs. The Colville Tribes have 10,000 members and the current draft Chinook allocation for 2023 is well under one fish per person, for the entire year! Although the run forecast this year is above the recent average, more work needs to be done to continue this improvement. Therefore, we urge you to be conservative in your approach to setting the salmon seasons for 2023. The Colville Tribes recommends you adopt ocean harvest alternative number three for North of Falcon. We make this recommendation because of the uncertainty involved in salmon forecasts and because you will not know if your forecast is too high until the fish pass Bonneville Dam. If there is an over-harvest in the ocean then the Columbia River fishermen, including the Colville Tribes will have to make all the sacrifices on harvest in order to meet broodstock needs and spawning escapement.

We have been following the unfortunate situation with the stocks in California and empathize with the tribal and non-tribal fisherman who are making sacrifices while those stocks are struggling to meet escapement objectives. It is an important reminder that we all must take care of the land, the water and the animals if we want them to take care of us. The Colville Tribes will continue to meaningfully participate in the PFMC process and look forward to continuing to work together towards our common goals.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our perspective to the PFMC and look forward to continuing to work together with this body to ensure the fisheries for the future.

Sincerely,

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Jarred Michael-Erickson, Chairman  
Colville Business Council

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation Comment Letter to the Pacific Fisheries  
Management Council