



The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Colville Business Council
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February 26, 2023

Agenda Item C.5.e
Supplemental Tribal Report 1
March 2024

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

Re: Pacific Fisheries Management Council Meeting March 2024

Dear Mr. Pettinger

The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation ("Colville Tribes") is a confederacy of twelve (12) tribes whose traditional and aboriginal territory covers much of eastern Washington and extends into Canada. Like most tribes in the Northwest, the Colville Tribes are a salmon people, and the importance of salmon to our way of life cannot be overstated. The Tribes that make up the confederacy all have ceremonies, practices, and language for the salmon, regardless of which of the three language groups the tribe spoke.

The Colville Tribes' reservation is at the terminus of the anadromous salmon migration on the Columbia River in North Central Washington. We enjoy federally recognized and protected rights in fisheries managed by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council ("PFMC") on our reservation, adjacent to our reservation, and off reservation in our traditional, aboriginal, and ceded territories. We rely on the salmon harvest and do not have a commercial fishery because the ceremony and subsistence needs of the Colville Tribes' and its members, are not being met. The Colville Tribes has approximately 9500 members, and the allocation in recent history has been well under one fish per member for the entire year. This year's pre-season salmon run projections are not going to change this. Although the 2024 pre-season run forecast for Upper Columbia Summer Chinook is not below recent average returns, we had a 1,000 year flood event in the early winter of 2021 in the Okanogan. The flood forced our acclimation ponds to release fish early and in bad health, which we expect will have a major effect on brood collection and local fisheries in 2024 and 2025.

Our waters are home to healthy runs of Summer-Fall Chinook and sockeye salmon runs, as well as Endangered Species Act listed 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. The Colville Tribes owns and operates the Chief Joseph Hatchery which produces approximately 3,000,000 Chinook at full production. Because of the importance to salmon, not just to the Colville Tribes' but to the entire region, the Colville Tribes has been working with the Upper Columbia United Tribes, the state of Washington, USGS, PNNL, Douglas PUD and many other stakeholders to study and implement fish passage into the area blocked by the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams. Last year we updated the Salmon Advisory Subpanel and the Habitat Committee regarding this effort. Since these updates, the Colville Tribes, the Spokane Tribe of Indians, and the Couer D'Alene Tribe have entered into an

agreement with the United State Government (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Bonneville Power Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wilfdlife Service) to support and fund the phase two implementation plan ("P2IP").

Given the forecasts and runs over the last several years, as well as the ongoing pressures the fisheries face, we urge you to be cautious when determining what the management alternatives should be this year. Please remember that tribes and sport fishermen in the terminal fishing areas, such as the Upper Columbia, don't have the luxury of fishing on mixed stocks. When local rivers and hatcheries do not get the returns they need for escapement then the future of the fish stocks in those rivers also suffer. We recognize this resource is shared among a variety of stakeholders. The Colville Tribes aren't concerned about only the current stakeholders, but also the future generations who share in this resource.

I appreciate your time and consideration, as well as the opportunity to provide the Colville Tribes' perspective. We look forward to speaking with you and testifying at the March 2024 PFMC meeting.

Sincerely,



Jarred-Michael Erickson, Chairman
Colville Business Council
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation