



## The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Colville Business Council  
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March 8, 2025

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

*Re: Pacific Fisheries Management Council Meeting March 2025, comment for agenda item E.4*

Dear Mr. Pettinger and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council,

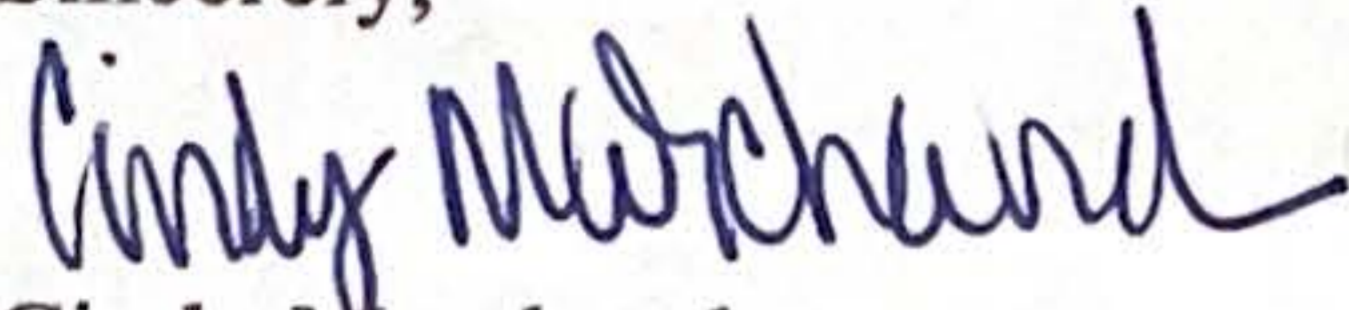
The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation ("Colville Tribes") is a confederacy of twelve (12) tribes whose traditional and aboriginal territory covers much of eastern Washington and extends into Canada. The Colville Tribes' reservation is at the terminus of the anadromous salmon migration on 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.

In 2024 the actual run size for Upper Columbia Summer Chinook was 42,511 fish, approximately 20% below the pre-season forecast and the third smallest return since 2000. The situation was worse for the Okanogan River and our Chief Joseph Hatchery integrated program due to a 1000-year fall flood event in 2020 which scoured salmon redds and choked the acclimation ponds with sediment, forcing an early-winter release of parr. This flood event reduced the survival of outmigrating smolts and subsequent return of 4-year old spawners in 2024. In response to the low escapement situation in 2024, the Colville Tribes and the State of Washington implemented emergency fishing regulations to eliminate summer Chinook harvest in the Okanogan River and the portion of the Columbia River at its confluence with the Okanogan. These local fishing restrictions and sacrifices did help with overall spawning escapement. Unfortunately, the Colville Tribes hatchery brood collection at the mouth of the Okanogan did not meet objectives for natural-origin and integrated hatchery-origin brood. In order to meet brood collection goals, the program had to collect fewer natural-origin fish and collect at alternative locations, thereby decreasing the genetic integrity of the broodstock.

Given this year's forecast of only 38,000 Upper Columbia Summer Chinook, we anticipate even greater challenges in 2025. Any effort to allow escapement of natural-origin Upper Columbia Summer Chinook will have tremendous benefits to our efforts to fully and appropriately supply brood to the Chief Joseph Hatchery program, which can produce up to 2 million summer Chinook smolts. To help achieve higher escapement of Upper Columbia Summer Chinook in 2025 we recommend that non-treaty ocean fishing should reduce impacts in Area 1 during the spring fishing time period. By shifting ocean fishing effort to the summer period you can achieve the same amount of overall harvest with less impact to Upper Columbia Summer Chinook. This shift in ocean harvest will directly result in more natural-origin summer Chinook on the spawning grounds and in the hatchery brood.

We appreciate your time and consideration of our comments. We look forward to continued participation in the PFMC process in 2025 and appreciate the efforts of your staff, committees and subpanels to work with the Colville Tribes for the benefit of the salmon and the people who rely on the salmon.

Sincerely,



Cindy Marchand,

Chairperson of the Colville Business Council's Fisheries and Natural Resources committees  
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation