

Accords: new approach for longtime adversaries

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A total of 13 species of salmon and steelhead that pass over the dams are listed as threatened or endangered.

Through the Columbia River Basin Fish Accords, the tribes and federal agencies will work together as partners "on the ground" to provide tangible survival benefits for salmon recovery - by upgrading passage over federal dams, by restoring river and estuary habitat, and by creative use of hatcheries.

The tribes and federal agencies will immediately move forward with new projects, as well as continuing existing projects throughout the Columbia River basin.

Through the accords, 200 projects over a vast geographic area can now get off the ground.

Antone Minthorn, Umatilla chairman, said the accords allow biologists to monitor improvements through two life cycles of salmon to evaluate their effectiveness and determine a path forward. The goal, he said, is to see 5 million fish return.

"In our experience, we have found the cooperative approach to be most effective and most sustainable," Minthorn said. "In 10 years, I believe we will have made a difference."

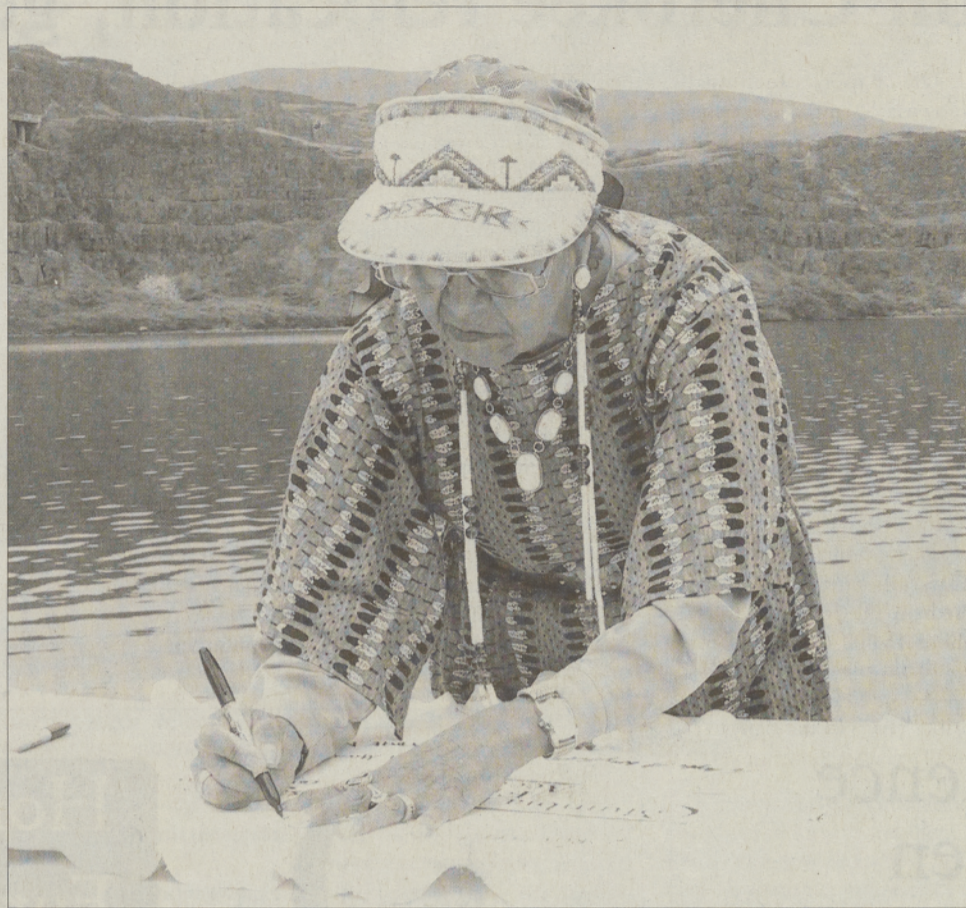
Tsagaglala watching

Tribal and federal officials signed the agreement at Columbia Hills State Park by the Columbia, site of an historical village and fishing site. Carved into the rocks above is *Tsagaglala*, or *She Who Watches*.

"It gives us great pride and hope to be in this special place, with the spirit of *Tsagaglala* watching us - our witness to this day, hearing us say that through these accords we commit to doing more to protect and restore the region's fish populations," said Fidelia Andy, Yakama Nation tribal council member, and chairwoman of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

Shock to status quo

The accords were a shock to the status quo of salmon recovery in the Northwest, given the decades of turmoil surround-



Yakama Councilwoman Fidelia Andy, chair of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, signs the accords parchment during the accords ceremony.



Warm Springs Tribal Councilman Rafael Queahpama addresses the gathering at Horseshief Park.

ing the subject, said Charles Hudson, manager of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission public information office.

"Some people, for 20 or 30 years, have known nothing but conflict on this issue," he said.

Through the accords, "We move the focus away from gavel-to-gavel management and toward gravel-to-gravel management," said Steve Wright, BPA administrator.

Ralph Sampson, chairman of Yakama Nation council, said "Today we set aside litigation and opt for cooperation with our federal partners. We have been in the courts for ten years and have not gained the resources needed to protect these creations.

"Now, working towards recovery, we will focus our efforts and energy on the task of fish recovery instead of continually girding ourselves for litigation. Cooperation will be the nature of our relationship recognizing that both fish and hydroelectric power are important..."



Members of Black Lodge perform at the signing ceremony.

Lamprey benefits

The accords address the needs of salmon and steelhead, and also focus on non-listed species such as Pacific lamprey. Specifically, under these accords, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans to work to implement adult and juvenile passage improvement measures for lamprey.

"Pacific lamprey are immensely important to our region," said Witt Anderson, Corps program director. "Our planned passage improvements for the benefit of lamprey are but one example of the holistic approach to fish recovery being taken by partners to these accords."

New vision

Speaking before signing the agreement, Warm Springs Tribal Council Chairman Suppah commented on the importance of the accords for the future of Columbia basin fisheries. "If I'm disappointed today,"

he said, "it's not because of the contents of the accords, but because the young people are not here to witness this day. As the future leaders, they would have remembered this as a starting point."

Two years ago, he said, the tribes and the federal agencies came to the table "as adversaries and litigators. We came away with a new partnership and a new vision."

(The Associated Press and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission contributed to this article.)

ELDERS LUNCHEON

ON THE MENU: GRILLED FILLET OF SALMON, KAH-NEE-TA'S SEASONAL RICE BLEND, CHEF'S FRESH VEGETABLES

Date: Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Time: 12-noon at Kah-Nee-Ta Wasco + Paiute Rooms

The Warm Springs Oral History Program would like to invite all tribal elders (65 and older) of the Confederated Tribes to a special informative luncheon at Kah-Nee-Ta. The Oral History Program is working on many new projects and your cultural knowledge of these project areas is valuable. We consider our elders as our most important natural resource. Join us to learn about these projects and to sign up for an interview.

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