

Tribes encourage solution to Snake River dams controversy

The following is a statement from leaders of the tribes of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission: Jonathan Smith, chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs; Delano Saluskin, chairman of the Yakama Nation; Kat Brigham, chairwoman of the Board of Trustees of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla; and Samuel Penney, chairman of the Nez Perce Tribe. The article appeared last week in the Seattle Times.

Native peoples in the Northwest have known since time immemorial that the wealth of this region is in our rivers and fish, and the vast ecosystems they support. Their health is the region's wealth.

But while that has been clear forever, that does not mean it will continue forever. Columbia Basin salmon are headed toward extinction—unless we, our elected officials and all stakeholders take immediate, bold action.

Our tribes—the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, and Nez Perce Tribe—are First Foods people. Our food, and especially the salmon, is essential to our culture, health, religion, economy, our stewardship of land and water, our history. And our future.

When our ancestors signed treaties with the United States government in the 1850s, one of our most critical guarantees was the right to fish forever. At that time, the Columbia River basin teemed with more than 17 million fish each year. Now the returns are nearly gone.

Salmon crisis in Snake River

Over the last five years, fewer than 8,000 wild spring chinook salmon have returned to the Snake River on average. Forty-two percent of the spring chinook populations in the Snake River basin, a vast mountainous area with the best habitat remaining in the Columbia Basin, have had fewer than 50 fish on the spawning grounds for four consecutive years, a threshold level of functional extinction. And with climate change, there are even more challenges and fewer fish. As with the salmon, the orca that rely on them for food are also in crisis. There are fewer than 75 southern resident orca left.

This is also the history of a national-level environmental and tribal injustice.

Finding a solution

The Columbia Basin federal dams for 90 years have been built and operated on the homelands, waters and fisheries of Northwest tribes. That is not merely an unjust “past.” It is occurring today and every day.

The system has been to the enormous benefit of the 14 million people who now call the Northwest home but has come at a terrible, disproportionate cost for our people, our cultures and our treaty-reserved resources, including the salmon.

Northwest leaders already have taken steps to aid salmon recovery. Idaho's U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson's Columbia Basin Salmon Recovery Initiative has set the framework for a comprehensive approach: restoring the Lower Snake River corridor, reintroducing salmon in the Upper Columbia and Upper Snake basins, and making a significant new investment in fish and wildlife actions implemented by tribal and state managers, while intensively investing in all sectors that rely on the services of the dams.

Washington's U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell included \$2.8 billion in the infrastructure bill for ecosystem restoration and improved fish passage throughout the region.

We applaud and thank Sen. Cantwell for her leadership in taking those steps. To restore healthy salmon runs, however, we'll need to do more, and other leaders are joining Sen. Cantwell to address the urgent plight of Columbia Basin salmon, steelhead and the orca they support.

Washington's U.S. Sen. Patty Murray and Gov. Jay Inslee have issued a draft report that analyzes the feasibility of replacing the services of the Lower Snake River Dams: keeping power rates affordable and supporting our agricultural, energy and transportation sectors as well local economies.

This is an important departure from the all-or-nothing debate between pro- and anti-dam interests over the past 20 years.

The Murray-Inslee process can create a path that both recovers salmon and enhances our agricultural, transportation, energy and local economies. Tribes are part of those economies too. For example, some of our tribes have tribal farm enterprises that export wheat alongside nontribal farmers.

Our tribes are committed to options that keep our economy whole,



A proposal is to breach the Lower Snake River dam system.

from agriculture to transportation, tourism, recreation and affordable power prices.

With respect to the energy produced by the Lower Snake River Dams, there is now ample and growing evidence that the Northwest can replace that service with other clean energy technologies.

That's important for communities that rely on the energy. They'll also benefit from the jobs that ramping up new energy sources will bring. And because any new sources will be clean, they'll also help our region mitigate the effects of climate change.

It is also clear that trucks and rail can replace barges by transporting grain to the large ocean ports or alternatively to the Tri-Cities area where the product could then be placed on barges, for the remainder of the trip below the Lower Snake River Dams. This action would simultaneously create many good paying jobs in the Tri-Cities.

'The right thing'

As stewards of Northwest land and water, we see a great opportunity before the region. The federal government appears committed to finding a solution. As senior officials for the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and the Departments of the Interior, Energy, Army, and Commerce recently jointly stated:

“We cannot continue doing business as usual. Doing the right thing for salmon, tribal nations, and communities can bring us together. It is time for effective, creative solutions.”

We urge our Northwest elected officials to keep an open mind to the options identified in the Murray-Inslee process and to working with all of the Columbia Basin stakeholders on creative so-

lutions. While breach of the Lower Snake River dams is an essential component, any basin-wide recovery plan must also examine flows, habitat and other issues and must

be comprehensive enough to ensure the salmon survive for those generations yet unborn. The debate over dams has persisted for decades. However, we believe this is a singular opportunity to find lasting solutions that fulfill the treaty obligations while providing benefits for everyone in the region.

This is a moment of historical urgency and importance. The Columbia Basin Tribes, which are recognized fish and wildlife co-managers in the Basin, are prepared to meet with all stakeholders and sectors to ensure a long-term, win-win situation so that abundant salmon are here for the next seven generations.

Jonathan Smith, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs; Delano Saluskin, Yakama Nation; Kat Brigham, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla; Samuel Penney, the Nez Perce.

“We cannot continue doing business as usual.”

Tribal fishery this week

There is a tribal zone 6 gillnet fishery from the present time through 6 p.m. this Friday, July 15. Gear is set- and drift gill nets with no minimum mesh restriction.

Allowable sales: Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes.

Sturgeon may not be sold, but sturgeon from 38 to 54 inches fork length in the Bonneville pool; and sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The Dalles and John Day pools may be kept for subsistence purposes.

Closed areas: River mouth and dam closed areas applicable to gillnets in effect. The Springs Creek hatchery closed area is not in effect in the summer management period.

The zone 6 platform, and hook and line fishery regulations remain unchanged.

If you have any fishing enforcement problems, or need assistance or information, day or night, contact the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Enforcement Office, located in Hood River. Phone 541-386-6363; or toll free 800-487-FISH (3474).

Auditors looking at Chemawa finances

One of only a few boarding schools for Native American students still run directly by the federal government in Oregon is undergoing a close look at the school's finances by the Interior

Department's Office of Inspector General.

The office has confirmed that it had “initiated an audit of the financial management and financial oversight of the Chemawa Indian

School.” The audit came in response to U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, who requested the inquiry after they felt stymied in their own efforts to look into alleged problems at the school.

Choctaw artist featured in ‘Art in the West’ at Bend museum

The High Desert Museum this month will feature artwork by J. Dylan Cavin, member of the Choctaw Nation.

Mr. Cavin has won the High Desert Museum Curator's Choice Award, as part of the *Art in the West* exhibit. The piece that won Cavin the Curator's Choice Award is *A Grand Jury Never Did Us Any Favors*.

Mr. Cavin enlisted in the Army in July 2006 and was honorably discharged after breaking his leg. During this time, he dabbled in photography, tattooing and comic art, and later started creating portraits of friends and pets.

He finally felt that he established an outlet for his artistic expression. “After years of being in



Dylan Cavin with some of his work.

the design field, it really felt good making something with my hands that others could connect to, appreciate, and in return was self-gratifying,” said Cavin.

His work has been shown professionally for more than 10 years and has also been honored in the Red Earth Festival in Oklahoma City and the Indian Market in Santa Fe.

The High Desert Museum will unveil a stellar collection of traditional and contemporary art, including the piece by Cavin, on Saturday, July 23 during the opening of its annual Art in the West exhibition and silent auction.

This year's invitation-only, juried exhibition will feature over 90 works of art by dozens of renowned artists from across the country.

Summer meals for community youth

The Jefferson County School District 509-J is offering the 2022 Summer Food Service Meal program. Kids 18 and under eat at no cost, and there is no registration required.

At the Warm Springs Academy the meal times, Monday through Friday, are: Breakfast 9 to 9:30 a.m.; and lunches from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., and 12:15 to 12:45 p.m.

Meals are served and eaten in the cafeteria. There is no grab and go or parent pick-up.

Pioneer Rock & Monument
201 Crafton Rd - PO Box 348 509-773-4702
GOLDENDALE, WA 98620

Family owned business, making custom HEADSTONES for the people of Warm Springs for 31 years



SPECIALIZING IN NATIVE AMERICAN DESIGN

Something for every budget; payment plans available

Check out our work in the GALLERY at www.pioneerrock.com