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**Landmark agreement on hatchery changes expected to be  
good for fish — and good for fishing**

**Portland, Ore.** - A landmark agreement signed today will reprogram fish production at Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery in Washington and result in a win-win for fish, federal, tribal, states and fishery constituents.

The agreement, signed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA Fisheries and the Bonneville Power Administration, will increase high-value fish for harvest upstream of Bonneville Dam, while maintaining similar numbers of hatchery tule fall chinook.

The agreement calls for moving a portion of Spring Creek's production to other facilities so the hatchery can raise the remaining juvenile salmon until they are larger. These larger fish will be released later and will pass the dam during the spring spill period, thus improving the odds for survival. The action was a high priority for tribes and federal agencies, and the concept was incorporated into the historic Columbia Basin Fish Accords, signed earlier this year.

Since the early 1990s, the region's fishery managers have asked the Corps to provide spill each March at the Corps' Bonneville Dam to pass juvenile tule fall chinook hatchery fish released from the USFWS' Spring Creek Hatchery just upstream of the dam. The hatchery fish were released before the spill began in April for juvenile salmon and steelhead that are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

In the first step of the agreement, hatchery managers today began moving 2.8 million tule fall chinook salmon eggs from Spring Creek to Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Bonneville State Hatchery, 21 miles downstream and immediately below Bonneville Dam. There the tules will be reared and acclimated to natural river conditions before they are released to migrate to the ocean.

Spring Creek will move another 1.7 million tules once they are reared to USFWS' Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery in Washington for acclimation and release after the start of spring spill. In order to make room for the tules, Bonneville Hatchery managers will move 2.5 million upriver bright fall chinook, which migrate to the ocean after the start of spring spill, to Little White Salmon for acclimation and release.

Natural resource agencies raise tule mainly for ocean harvest but the fish are also

important contributors to sport and in-river tribal fisheries. The Spring Creek program helps the federal government meet its responsibilities to conserve fishery resources and mitigate for fish losses caused by inundation of spawning and rearing habitat that occurred when John Day and The Dalles dams were built.

"The restoration of salmon depends on federal, tribal, and state governments working together on cooperative efforts like the Spring Creek Hatchery reprogramming," said N. Kathryn Brigham, chairwoman of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. "By addressing all the parties' concerns, we have a solution that has the same number of fish being produced in the Basin, increases efficiency of production at Spring Creek, and increases the number of high-value upriver brights released above Bonneville Dam — something the tribes have been seeking for decades."

"Trying to maximize survival for Spring Creek releases has been a continuing goal for fishery managers because the Spring Creek stock is one of the largest single stock contributors to the duration and success of ocean and Lower Columbia River chinook fisheries," added Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife official Guy Norman.

BPA estimates that March spill operations for the Spring Creek tules result in a loss of about 40,000 megawatt hours of emissions-free hydropower at a cost to BPA ratepayers of about \$2 million a year.

The total cost increase of the reprogramming will be \$244,000 per year after one-time start-up costs of \$192,000. About \$139,000 of the annual cost will be paid by the Corps from its John Day Dam mitigation program. (About 80 percent of this amount is paid by BPA ratepayers through a direct-funding arrangement with the Corps.) USFWS will fund \$105,000 of the annual costs for the three year agreement.

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