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Unprecedented partnership to build and operate \$43 million hatchery
Recovery of chinook salmon is the shared goal



Conceptual drawing for Chief Joseph Hatchery illustrates the facility location just below Chief Joseph Dam with the office building in foreground, the hatchery building, raceways and rearing ponds.

BRIDGEPORT, Wash. – Chinook salmon will get a boost thanks to a unique partnership among the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Bonneville Power Administration and Grant County Public Utility District.

After years of discussion, the three entities have signed a cost-sharing agreement to build and operate the Chief Joseph Hatchery, an estimated \$43 million construction project on the Columbia River near Bridgeport, Wash. This is part of their overall effort to support the recovery of Columbia River spring chinook salmon.

"This is truly an unprecedented joint effort among the Colville Tribes, BPA and Grant PUD," Colville Business Council Chairman Michael O. Finley said. "We look forward to the day when the Chief Joseph Hatchery will open, and salmon will be restored to our waters. Because of this landmark partnership, we can finally and effectively begin to address the loss of this most important natural and cultural resource."

The hatchery is, in part, a result of a historic agreement, known as The Columbia River Basin Fish Accords, signed in 2008. Under these agreements, the federal agencies and tribes are working together as partners 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 accords ended years of litigation and are delivering results for the region's fish.

"The Chief Joseph Hatchery is a great example of collaboration among tribal, federal and local agencies," said Lorri Bodi, BPA vice president of environment, fish and wildlife. "This project will bring ecological, social and economic benefits to the

Columbia River basin. Our fish and our communities will be better off for generations to come because of the excellent work we are doing together.”

For Grant PUD, this is a major milestone toward implementing one of its hatchery programs to meet license requirements for the Priest Rapids Project. Grant PUD's annual production requirement for the Okanogan Basin is 305,000 summer chinook and 110,000 spring chinook smolts.

“This agreement is a win-win for all involved,” explained Bob Bernd, Grant PUD commission president. “It allows us to meet stewardship obligations in a cost-effective manner while reducing costs for all parties, avoiding the impacts of multiple shoreline facilities, maximizing efficient water use and providing for collaborative implementation of monitoring and evaluation efforts.”

About the hatchery

The main hatchery facility will be located on the north bank of the Columbia River near the base of Chief Joseph Dam, which is owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The complex will include acclimation ponds at several locations on the Okanogan River as well as housing for hatchery workers near the main hatchery site.

When complete, the Chief Joseph Hatchery will annually produce close to two million summer/fall chinook to increase their abundance in the Okanogan and Columbia rivers and nearly one million spring chinook for reintroduction in historic Okanogan habitats. The hatchery is also expected to increase tribal ceremonial and subsistence fisheries and enhance a local recreational sport fishery. Construction began on the houses and acclimation ponds in the summer of 2010. The remaining work on three water supply systems and the hatchery will begin in December 2010, with all components completed in 2013.

The Colville Tribes will manage the hatchery under guidelines recommended by the Hatchery Scientific Review Group, a committee of scientists that recently completed a review of all salmon and steelhead hatcheries in the Columbia Basin at the request of the U.S. Congress.

About chinook salmon

“For thousands of years, our people depended on salmon not simply as a source of nutritious food, but as essential to our culture and traditions,” Finley said. “This magnificent fish is necessary to many of our most important ceremonies, key to both our physical and spiritual strength. Ever since salmon runs were slowed or stopped altogether by dams on the Columbia, tribal leaders have worked to bring the chinook back. Finally, that goal will be realized.”

Adult chinook, commonly known as king salmon because Native Americans considered them chief among all fish, are the largest salmon species in the Columbia River system. Chinook migrate up the Columbia to spawn in different seasons. Hence, those spawning during the spring months are identified as spring chinook, while those spawning in the summer and fall are known as summer/fall chinook. Both are species of concern with federal protection.

Finley said that the chinook once played a major role in the economies of the tribes indigenous to the region. Dried salmon was a staple of intertribal trade and commerce throughout the Northwest.

“When the salmon return in great numbers, they also will help to revitalize the economy of this region,” he said. “Recreational opportunities and tourism will undoubtedly increase here as a result.”

About the funding

Under this cost-sharing agreement, Grant PUD will fund 18.3 percent or approximately \$10 million of the total project planning and construction for the hatchery. The agreement also commits Grant PUD to funding 18.3 percent of the annual operation and maintenance, equipment replacement and monitoring and evaluation costs of the program. BPA is using increased borrowing authority provided by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act to pay for its portion of the project.

Grant County Public Utility District is a Washington state municipal corporation that began electric service in 1942. Owned by the people it serves, Grant PUD generates and sells electricity to Grant County residents and millions of customers throughout Central Washington and the Pacific Northwest. The Priest Rapids Project, comprised of Priest Rapids and Wanapum dams, produces nearly 2,000 megawatts of clean, renewable and reliable electricity – enough to supply a city the size of Seattle. A leader in science based technology; Grant PUD is committed to finding effective measures for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of salmon, steelhead and other natural and cultural resources.

The Bonneville Power Administration, headquartered in Portland, Ore., is a not-for-profit federal electric utility under the Department of Energy that operates a high-voltage transmission grid comprising more than 15,000 miles of lines and associated substations in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. It also markets more than a third of the electricity consumed in the Pacific Northwest. The power is produced at 31 federal dams operated by the Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation and one nuclear plant in the Northwest and is sold to more than 140 Northwest utilities. BPA purchases power from seven wind projects and has more than 3,000 megawatts of wind interconnected to its transmission system.

The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation are a federally recognized Indian Tribe comprised of 12 distinct Indian tribes whose ancestral territory includes the Colville Indian Reservation in north-central Washington and other areas throughout the region. There are approximately 9,500 enrolled Colville Tribal members. The Colville Tribes are the largest employer in north-central Washington.

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