



Jan. 10, 2020

## **Tribes break ground on new Walla Walla River salmon hatchery**

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation kicked off construction of the Walla Walla River Fish Hatchery with a groundbreaking ceremony at the hatchery site Jan. 10.

As part of its Fish and Wildlife Program, the Bonneville Power Administration is funding the project, located 10 miles east of Milton-Freewater, Oregon. Once complete, the hatchery is expected to return thousands of adult spring chinook salmon to tributaries throughout the Walla Walla River Basin each year.

The new facility is also expected to double the amount of young fish released into the South Fork Walla Walla and Touchet rivers from the current 250,000 to about a half-million annually. The majority of the smolts will be released into the South Fork Walla Walla, with approximately 20% going to the nearby Touchet.

“We are really pleased that this project is moving forward,” said Kat Brigham, Chairwoman of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. “We expect the facility to produce more fish for the environment, our people and the region.”

The new hatchery will have egg incubation and full juvenile rearing facilities. Right now eggs are incubated and fish are raised offsite before they are released into the South Fork Walla Walla River. With the new hatchery, the Tribes can use river water to incubate and rear young salmon before releasing them, helping the fish to imprint on their natal streams. The goal is to return approximately 5,000 adult salmon annually to the Walla Walla Basin.

“This Tribal hatchery is included in the Columbia Basin Fish Accords agreement with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and illustrates the progress we



can make for fish when we all work together,” says Scott Armentrout, vice president of BPA’s Environment, Fish and Wildlife Program. “The partnerships derived from the

Accords also ensures BPA gets the highest value for the fish and wildlife investments it makes throughout the Northwest.”

Over the last three decades in the Walla Walla Basin, BPA and its local partners have invested approximately \$40 million in fish habitat projects, including passage improvements, increasing instream water, flood plain restoration and initial artificial propagation actions.

Hatchery construction is expected to be complete by the spring of 2021 with the first adult salmon returns to the basin by 2026.

**Media contacts:** Gary James, CTUIR, 541- 429-7285, [garyjames@ctuir.org](mailto:garyjames@ctuir.org)  
David Wilson, BPA 503-230-5607, [dbwilson@bpa.gov](mailto:dbwilson@bpa.gov)