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KLICKITAT HATCHERY OWNERSHIP TRANSFERRED TO YAKAMA NATION WDFW Transfers Ownership To The Nation; Tribe Continues Modernization Projects

YAKAMA RESERVATION – On December 13th, 2024, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (“WDFW”) officially transferred the Klickitat Hatchery property to the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (“Yakama Nation”). This follows Yakama Nation’s lead in construction projects through a partnership with the Bonneville Power Administration (“BPA”).

“The Yakama Nation and all of us are very proud that our leadership and our ability to do this work for the salmon, for our people. This culminates in us taking back this place on the Reservation that was not ours for an extended period,” said Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation Department of Natural Resources Superintendent. “It’s an honor to be able to be a part of this and have the land returned to our people and we will continue to be driven to support the salmon and people that are working there.”

The Yakama Nation has led and maintained operations at the hatchery since 2006. Operations were held under the Yakama Nation Fisheries’ Yakima Klickitat Fisheries Program in agreement with Washington State and following *US v. Oregon’s* Mitchell Act.

The Klickitat Hatchery Facility hosts population restoration efforts for three species of salmon. Salmon are critical to the regional aquatic ecosystem with observed significance to Native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest – making restoration and protection projects an investment of work for generations.

“With our ownership and past agreements with WDFW, this project goes back to a long time ago when ‘Mel Sampsons’ and our leaders who dedicated their lives to restoring our fish that led us to this accomplishment. It’s something that is just beautiful to see and coming to these milestones that we’re reaching,” Rigdon said. “With this ownership, it also ensures that we can take the next steps to modernize and make the fixes to the facilities and the programs we’re trying to implement that will make sure we have salmon for our people.”

Projects planned in the partnership between the BPA and Yakama Nation include the following: 1.) Indian Ford A Spring Intake and Pipeline; 2.) Surface Water Pump Station; 3.) Distribution Box; 4.) Fishway; 5.) Adult Holding and Spawning Facilities; and 6.) Circular Raceways. Each project upgrades existing facilities or is construction of an addition to the hatchery in efforts to modernize site functions as YKFP looks to [a facility recently celebrated](#) for inspiration – the Cle Elum Fish Passage Facility.

“Because the challenges for the fish are enormous, our work has demonstrated that our people are able to have salmon to catch and that’s the part that [shows] this is for our people, for our fishermen.. for us to continue to live in a part of the land in the manner that we’re taught.”

More information of the partnered project can be found at BPA’s website [here](#).

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