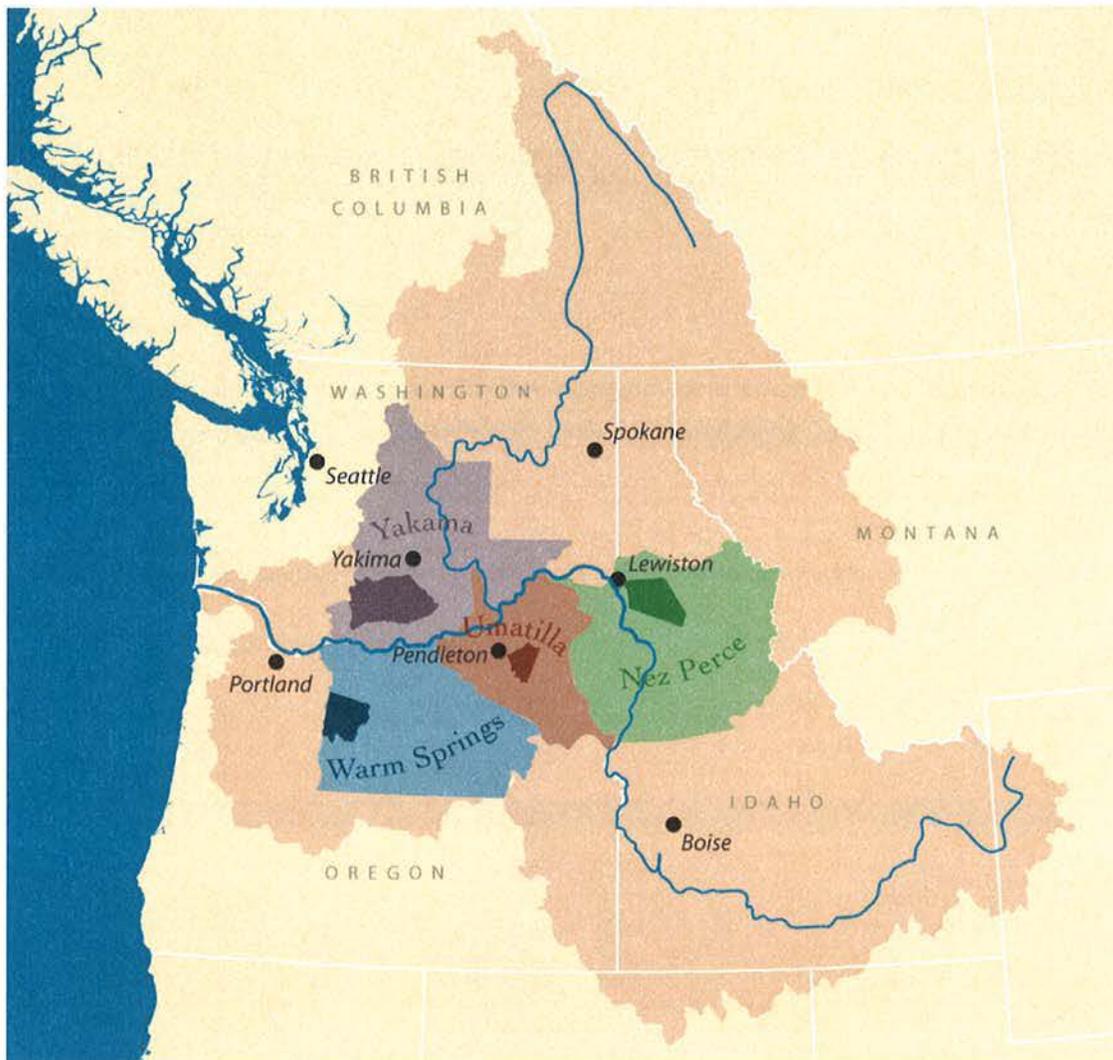




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Member Tribes Overview

YAKAMA ♦ UMATILLA ♦ WARM SPRINGS ♦ NEZ PERCE
The Columbia Plateau is home to four major tribes that share similar languages, cultures, religions, and diets: the **Nez Perce Tribe**, the **Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation**, the **Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon**, and the **Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation**. These four tribes have a long history of interaction, including intermarriage, shared use of common resources like **Celilo Falls**, and extensive trade.



The reservations and ceded lands of the four CRITFC member tribes. The combined area of these four tribes' ceded lands covers 25% of the Columbia Basin.

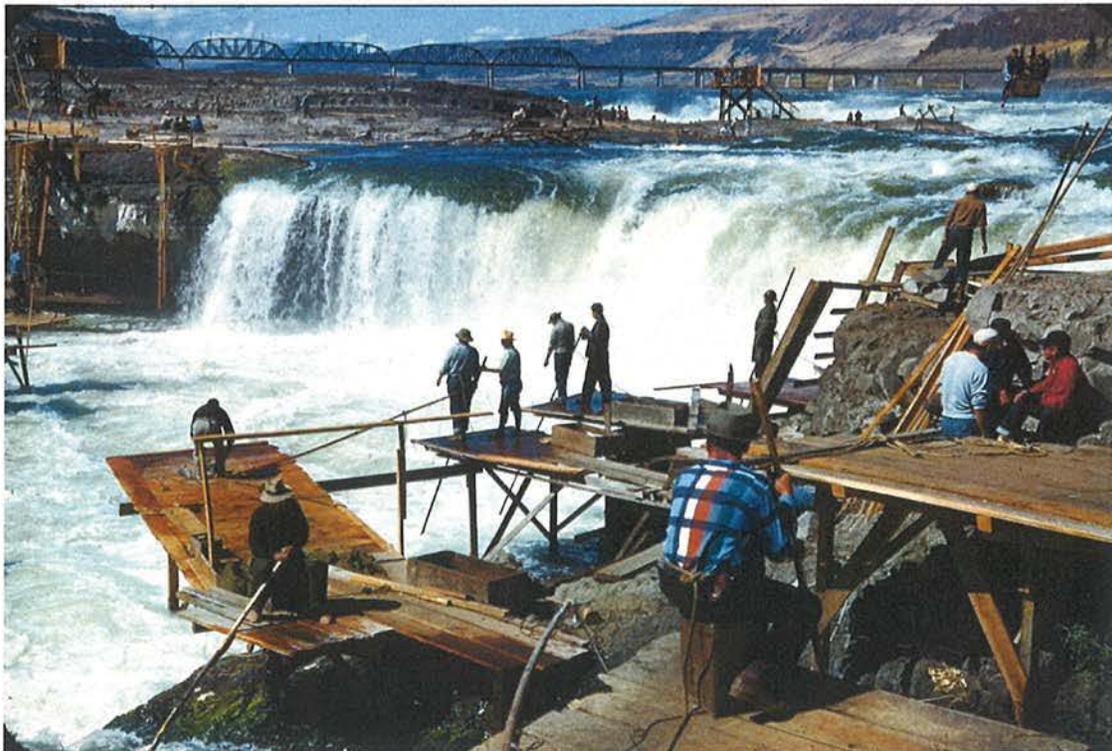
The people of these tribes share a common understanding that their very existence depends on the respectful enjoyment of the Columbia River Basin's vast land and water resources. They believe their very souls and spirits were and are inextricably tied to the natural world and all its inhabitants. Among those inhabitants, none are more important than the millions of salmon that bring sustenance and prosperity to the region's rivers and streams.

Despite some differences in language and cultural practices, the people of these tribes have long shared the foundation of a regional economy based on salmon. To the extent the resource permits, members of these tribes continue to fish for ceremonial, subsistence, and commercial purposes. They still maintain a dietary preference for salmon, consuming sometimes ten times the US average. For these tribes, salmon is important and necessary for their physical health and spiritual well being.

In 1855, the Nez Perce, Umatilla, Warm Springs and Yakama tribes each entered into a treaty with the US government, ceding millions of acres of their lands to the United States in exchange for peace and certain terms. Many of these terms involved the reservation of particular rights that were guaranteed to continue after their treaty was signed – not rights that the treaty granted, but rights the tribes held prior to the treaty that they demanded they continue to have. One was the right to harvest fish in all the tribes' usual and accustomed areas. This included areas both on and off their reservations.



Indian fishers have fished the waters of the Columbia Basin for thousands of years. It was a central part of their cultures, societies, and religions.



Celilo Falls circa 1952. Before it was inundated under the waters behind The Dalles Dam, Celilo Falls drew Indians from throughout the Pacific Northwest to fish, trade, and socialize. It was one of the most significant fisheries of the Columbia River system. Photo: Matheny Collection



Home > Policy & Education > Working Towards Equitable Harvest

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission Working Towards Equitable Harvest

YAKAMA ✦ UMATILLA ✦ WARM SPRINGS ✦ NEZ PERCE

The Hard Work of Achieving Equitable Harvest

In the 1960s and 70s, two landmark court cases reaffirmed the Yakama, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Nez Perce tribes' treaty fishing rights: *U.S. v. Oregon* and *U.S. v. Washington*. *U.S. v. Oregon* interpreted the tribal treaty fishing right to mean the tribes were entitled to a fair and equitable share of the salmon harvest and *U.S. v. Washington* ruled that a fair share meant half of the harvestable fish. These cases were a long, hard-fought, and often vicious battle between tribes and the states. The rulings created a need for the states and the tribes to agree on how many fish could be harvested each year as well as how to monitor their catches to ensure no one caught more than was allowed. Several factors make this job complex, including accurately predicting the run sizes, agreeing on appropriate overall harvest rates and allocations, and minimizing harvest impacts on threatened or endangered fish runs. Currently, mainstem fisheries are managed under a 10-year, *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement that has provided stability for fisheries and improved harvest sharing.

Predicting Runs

It is impossible to exactly predict the size of a salmon run. Biologists have developed ways to forecast estimates, but these aren't perfect. The methods have gotten better over time, but environmental factors both in fresh water and in the ocean can change and affect the survival and returns of adult fish. After approximately half of a run has reached Bonneville Dam, tribal, state, and federal biologists work together to update the actual run sizes. Run sizes are updated regularly throughout the middle and later parts of the run. Harvest rates are based on actual fish counts, not simply

the pre-season forecasts. Larger runs have higher harvest rates, smaller runs have smaller harvest rates—so if a prediction is off, fisheries are adjusted to ensure they stay within the allowed harvest rate. This can result in either fisheries being restricted or in more fishing opportunity.

Fishery Timing

Depending on the time of year, it takes salmon anywhere from a week to a month to travel the 145 miles from the mouth of the Columbia River to Bonneville Dam. A large portion of the non-



Indian fishery is in the lower river (Zones 1-5). Since the fish are in the lower river first, the non-Indian fisheries begin before many fish are caught by the Indian fishery in Zone 6 (the stretch of river between Bonneville and McNary Dams). A long-standing concern of many Indian fishers is the timing and size of non-Indian fisheries before many fish have passed Bonneville Dam. Fisheries managers have made some progress in dealing with this, but there is more work to be done. In spring fisheries, the states must manage for a run size 30 percent less than the pre-season forecast until the first run size update is made. This helps control the early season non-Indian fishing before much tribal fishing has occurred. In the summer season, the states allocate the majority of their share of the summer chinook to fisheries upstream from Zone 6. This means most of the summer chinook pass Zone 6 before they reach areas with significant non-Indian fisheries.

Fishery Coordination

As part of the court ruling, the *U.S. v. Oregon* parties (the United States, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and the four treaty tribes) were required to develop a system to equitably share their fisheries. It took twenty years of legal tests and negotiations to develop the first Columbia River Fish Management Plan in 1988. In 2008, the parties adopted a newer 10-year management agreement that defined hatchery production measures and harvest rates and allocations. The goal is to protect, rebuild, and enhance upper Columbia River fish runs while providing treaty Indian and non-Indian harvest. This agreement provides a framework for the tribal, state, and federal co-managers to conduct responsible, fair, and equitable fisheries. This co-management is evident leading up to and during each fish run. The tribes, states, and federal government are in close coordination monitoring each run as it develops, fine-tuning the models, adjusting the run size estimates, and tracking

harvests. Sometimes coordination is weekly or even daily during the height of a run. Complex monitoring and evaluation programs also monitor the status of key natural-origin (wild) stocks to make sure the overall harvest is within allowed impact limits.

Different Fisheries, Different Priorities

The Indian and non-Indian fisheries have different priorities for determining seasons to harvest their allocations. The tribes prioritize ceremonial and subsistence fisheries, adding in commercial fisheries after these needs are taken care of. Because of different fishing techniques and priorities, the Indian commercial gillnet fishery openings tend to be longer than non-Indian commercial openings to allow fishers enough time to harvest their allocation. The tribes try to keep platform and hook-and-line subsistence fisheries open year round. The non-Indian fishery is separated into two groups: sports fishers and commercial fishers. The sports fishery has many participants, however each fisher usually can harvest no more than a couple salmon per day. Open periods for sport fishing tend to be very long. The lower river non-Indian commercial fishery gets about a quarter or less of the non-Indian allocation. The commercial openings average less than 12 hours. The total hours open for non-Indian commercial fishing is always less than the number of hours open for tribal commercial fishing except in low spring season runs where the tribes will allocate their available fish to ceremonial and subsistence fishing.

Equitable Sharing of the Harvest

The current system to share the Indian and non-Indian harvests is the work of nearly fifty years of trial and error, tribal advocacy and litigation, alterations to how fisheries are set, and improvements to prediction models. It isn't a perfect system and there is always room for improvement. However, the past few years have been quite successful in ensuring that the harvest was shared fairly between the tribes and the states, and at a level that was appropriate to protect the sustainability of the fish. The recent years of equitable harvest has been a long, hard struggle to achieve. It's built on work and effort that stretches back 160 years all the way to the tribal leaders who insisted that the right to fish at all usual and accustomed areas was reserved and protected in the treaties.

Protests



Home > About Us > **Columbia River Zone 6**

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

YAKAMA ♦ UMATILLA ♦ WARM SPRINGS ♦ NEZ PERCE
 All four Columbia River treaty tribes enjoy fishing rights along the Columbia from the Bonneville to McNary dams. This 147-mile stretch of the river is called Zone 6.

For fisheries management purposes, the 292-mile stretch of the Columbia River that creates the border between Washington and Oregon is divided into six zones. Zones 1-5 are between the mouth of the river and Bonneville Dam, a distance of 145 miles. Oregon and Washington manage the commercial fisheries that occur in these zones. Zone 6 is an exclusive treaty Indian commercial fishing area. This exclusion is for commercial fishing only. Non-commercial sports fishers may still fish in this stretch of the river



Indian fishers are legally entitled to half the harvestable surplus of fish in the river.

To meet that requirement, Oregon and Washington must set their fisheries in Zones 1-5 in order to leave enough fish for harvest in Zone 6. Indian fishing is regulated under the ongoing U.S. District Court litigation known as *U.S. v. Oregon*.



The six Columbia River commercial fishing zones between Oregon and Washington

The **CRITFC Enforcement** operations consist of land and water patrols on this stretch of the Columbia River. CRITFC also operates and maintains **31 fishing access sites** set aside for the exclusive use of fishers from the four member tribes.

CRITFC Enforcement



Home > Fishing Services >> **In-lieu/Treaty Fishing Access Sites**

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission Access Sites

YAKAMA ✦ UMATILLA ✦ WARM SPRINGS ✦ NEZ PERCE

Zone 6 Fishing Access Sites

If you use any of these sites, please remove your personal and titled property to help speed the work and prevent any unexpected losses. While a site is closed for the maintenance, all other access sites, including the five in-lieu sites, will remain open for use and will be maintained on a normal weekly schedule. If you have any questions, please contact **Michael Broncheau** at (503) 238-0667.

CRITFC operates and maintains 31 fishing sites along **Zone 6** of the Columbia River that are for the exclusive use of Indian fishers from the four CRITFC member tribes. (Three sites do have shared-use facilities with the public.) These sites were set aside by Congress to provide fishing locations to Indian fishers whose traditional fishing grounds were inundated behind dams.

The sites offer a wide range of amenities for the fishers including access roads and parking areas, boat ramps and docks, fish cleaning tables, net racks, drying sheds, restrooms, mechanical buildings, and shelters. There are two types of sites: there are five "in-lieu sites" and 26 "treaty fishing access sites." Separate laws created each type of site.

CRITFC is committed to providing ongoing maintenance, law enforcement services, and repair and rehabilitation at the sites. CRITFC provides the operations and maintenance of these sites through a BIA Self-Determination Act contract. A BIA Special Law Enforcement Commission to **CRITFC Enforcement officers** gives them the jurisdiction to maintain law and order at the sites.

Columbia River In-lieu/Treaty Fishing Access Sites and Amenities

- In-lieu Site
- Treaty Fishing Access Site
- Shared-use site (Treaty fishing and public access)
- Unimproved site (No services)
- | River mile (Approx.)
- ★ Community
- Boat ramp
- Boat dock
- Toilet facilities
- Water
- Water (hand pump)
- No water
- Fish cleaning table
- Camping facilities
- Shower
- Shared-use amenity



Download a PDF version of the In-lieu/Treaty Fishing Access Sites and Amenities map »

Access to the Columbia



The Pasture Point Treaty Fishing Access Site on the Washington shore of the Columbia River at river mile 227.



Contact

If you have questions about the fishing access sites or would like to report a maintenance or facility issue, please call: (541) 296-6010





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