



COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION  
729 NE Oregon, Suite 200, Portland, Oregon 97232 503 238 0667

**Babtist Paul Lumley, Executive Director  
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission  
Testimony on Fiscal Year 2012 Budget  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
March 11, 2011**

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) is pleased to share our views on the Department of Commerce NOAA Fisheries' FY2012 budget and has identified the following funding needs:

- **\$26.6 million for the Columbia River Mitchell Act hatchery program to implement reforms of which \$6.7 million (or 25% of the enacted amount) is directed to the tribes to enhance supplementation (natural stock recovery) programs;**
- **\$11,603,000 for the Pacific Salmon Treaty Program, of which \$9,759,000 is for the implementation of the 2009-2018 Agreement, and previous base programs, and \$1,844,000 is for the Chinook Salmon Agreement Implementation;**
- **\$110 million for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund to support on-the-ground salmon restoration activities**

**BACKGROUND:** The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) was founded in 1977 by the four Columbia River treaty tribes: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, and Nez Perce Tribe. CRITFC provides coordination and technical assistance to the tribes in regional, national and international efforts to protect and restore the fisheries and fish habitat.

In 1855, the United States entered into treaties with the four tribes<sup>1</sup>. The tribes' ceded millions of acres of our homelands to the U.S. and the U.S. pledged to honor our ancestral rights, including the right to fish. Unfortunately, a long history of hydroelectric development, habitat destruction and over-fishing by non-Indians brought the salmon resource to the edge of extinction with 12 salmon and steelhead trout populations in the Columbia River basin listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Today, the CRITFC tribes' are among the most successful fishery managers in the country leading restoration efforts and working with state, federal and private entities. CRITFC has, and is currently updating, a plan that outlines principles and objectives designed to halt the decline of

---

<sup>1</sup> Treaty with the Yakama Tribe, June 9, 1855, 12 Stat. 951; Treaty with the Tribes of Middle Oregon, June 25, 1855, 12 Stat. 963; Treaty with the Umatilla Tribe, June 9, 1855, 12 Stat. 945; Treaty with the Nez Perce Tribe, June 11, 1855, 12 Stat. 957.

**Testimony of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission  
FY 2012 Budget – Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies**

salmon, lamprey and sturgeon populations and rebuild the fisheries to levels that support tribal ceremonial, subsistence and commercial harvests. To achieve these objectives, the plan emphasizes strategies that rely on natural production, healthy rivers and collaborative efforts.

Several key regional agreements were completed in 2008. The Columbia Basin Fish Accords set out parameters for management of the Federal Columbia River Power System for fish passage. New agreements in *U.S. v. Oregon* and the Pacific Salmon Commission established fishery management criteria for fisheries ranging from the Columbia River to Southeast Alaska. The *U.S. v. Oregon* agreement also contains provisions for hatchery management in the Columbia River Basin. The terms of all three agreements run through 2017. We have successfully secured other funds to support our efforts to implement these agreements, including funds from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), the Department of Interior, and the Southern Fund of the Pacific Salmon Treaty, to name just few. Continued federal funding support is needed to accomplish the management objectives embodied in the agreements.

**Columbia River (Mitchell Act) Hatchery Program:** Restoring Pacific salmon and providing for sustainable fisheries requires using the Columbia River Mitchell Act hatchery program to supplement naturally spawning stocks and populations. To accomplish this goal, \$26.6 million is requested for the tribal and state co-managers to jointly reform the Mitchell Act hatchery program. Of this amount, \$6.7 million, or 25% of enacted funding, will be made available to the Columbia River Treaty Tribes for supplementation (natural stock recovery) programs. . The Mitchell Act program provides regional economic benefits. NOAA – Fisheries estimates that the program generates about \$38 million in income and supports 870 jobs.

Since 1982, CRITFC has called for hatchery reform to meet recovery needs and meet mitigation obligations. In 1991 this subcommittee directed that “Mitchell Act hatcheries be operated in a manner so as to implement a program to release fish in the upper Columbia River basin above the Bonneville Dam to assist in the rebuilding of upriver naturally-spawning salmon runs.” Since 1991, we have made progress in increasing the upstream releases of salmon including Mitchell Act fish that have assisted the rebuilding and restoration of naturally-spawning of upriver runs of chinook and coho. These efforts need to continue.

We now face the challenges of managing for salmon populations listed for protection under the ESA, while also meeting mitigation obligations. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for operation of Columbia Rive basin hatcheries released by NOAA in 2010 illustrates the conundrum we face. While the DEIS, which assumes level funding for Mitchell Act hatcheries, points out the need for hatchery reform, the implementation scenarios for the proposed alternatives to the status quo all call for substantial reductions in hatchery releases. From the tribal perspective the proposed alternatives will not result in the delisting of salmon populations or meet mitigation obligations. Under the proposed alternatives the future is increased regulation under the ESA, resulting in more constrained fisheries along the West Coast. The funding for the Mitchell Act program should be increased along with natural stock recovery program reform (supplementation) so that we can make progress towards ESA delisting. This would transition the Mitchell Act program to a much more effective mitigation program.

**Testimony of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission  
FY 2012 Budget – Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies**

We support hatchery reform to aid in salmon recovery, while meeting mitigation obligations. The CRITFC tribes are leaders in designing and managing hatchery facilities to aid in salmon restoration and believe similar practices need to be implemented throughout the basin to reform current hatchery production efforts. Additional funding is necessary to reform Mitchell Act hatcheries to accomplish conservation and mitigation objectives. The Administration's proposed FY 2012 funding level continues years of inadequate funding. The result is deteriorating facilities that do not serve our objectives.

**Evidence to Support Tribal Salmon Restoration Programs under the Mitchell Act:** The tribes' approach to salmon recovery is to put fish back in to the rivers and protect the watersheds where fish live. Scientific documentation of tribal supplementation success is available upon request. The evidence is seen by the increasing returns of salmon in the Columbia River Basin. Wild spring chinook salmon are returning in large numbers in the Umatilla, Yakima and Klickitat tributaries. Coho in the Clearwater River are now abundant after Snake River coho were declared extinct. Fish are returning to the Columbia River Basin and it is built on more than thirty years of tribal projects.

Once considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act where only 20,000 fall chinook returned to the Hanford Reach on the Columbia River in the early 1980's. This salmon run has been rebuilt through the implementation of the Vernita Bar agreement of mid 1980s combined with a hatchery program that incorporated biologically appropriate salmon that spawn naturally upon their return to the spawning beds. Today, the Hanford Reach fall chinook run is one of the healthiest runs in the basin. Supporting fisheries in Alaska, Canada, and the mainstem Columbia River, over 200,000 Fall Chinook destined for the Hanford Reach returned to the mouth of the Columbia River 2010.

In the Snake River Basin, fall chinook has been brought back from the brink of extinction. Listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, the estimated return of naturally-spawning Snake River fall chinook averaged 328 adults from 1986-1992. In 1994, fewer than 2,000 Snake River fall chinook returned to the Columbia River Basin. Thanks to the Nez Perce Tribe's modern supplementation program fall chinook are rebounding. Snake River fall chinook are well on their way to recovery and ESA delisting. Over 40,000 fall chinook made it past Lower Granite Dam in 2010. Over 10,000 of those fish were wild, nearly twice the previous record return since the dam was constructed in 1975.

**Pacific Salmon Treaty Program:** CRITFC supports the U.S. Section recommendation of \$11,603,000 for Pacific Salmon Treaty implementation. Of this amount, \$9,759,000 is for the Pacific Salmon Treaty base program with Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, Washington, and NOAA to share as described in the U.S. Section of the Pacific Salmon Commission's Budget Justification for FY 2012. In addition, we support \$1,884,000 as first provided in 1997 to carry out necessary research and management activities to implement the abundance based management approach of the Chinook Chapter to the Treaty. The recommended amount represents an increase of about \$4,100,000 for the Pacific Salmon Treaty program for the states to implement the provisions and management and technical changes adopted by the U.S. and Canada in 1999 and continuing in

**Testimony of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission  
FY 2012 Budget – Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies**

the 2009-2018 Agreement. These funds are subjected annually to a strict technical review process.

**Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Program (PCSRF) / Watershed Restoration:** Beginning in 1996, additional funding has been sought by the State of Alaska, the Pacific Northwest states, and the treaty tribes to serve critical unmet needs for the conservation and restoration of salmon stocks shared in these tribal, state, and international fisheries. The PCSRF program provides a significant role in accomplishing the goals of this shared effort. We recommend restoring the PCSRF FY2012 funding level to the FY2002 appropriated level of \$110 million. Long-term economic benefits can be achieved by making PCSRF investments on the ground to rebuild sustainable, harvestable salmon populations into the future.

The state and tribal co-managers have responded to concerns raised by Congress regarding accountability and performance standards to evaluate and monitor the success of this coast wide program. The co-managers have developed an extensive matrix of performance standards to address these concerns which includes the use of monitoring protocols to systematically track current and future projects basin-wide. Tribally sponsored watershed projects are based on the best science, are competently implemented and adequately monitored, and address the limiting factors affecting salmon restoration. Projects undertaken by the tribes are consistent with CRITFC's salmon restoration plan and the programmatic areas identified by Congress.

**Department of Justice:** The Justice Department maintains Tribal government-specific grant programs administered by the Office of Justice Programs, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and the Office on Violence Against Women. These programs are critically important to the Commission's member tribes. The importance of these programs was underscored by passage of the Tribal Law and Order Act, signed into law on July 29, 2010. Preserving the FY 2010 enacted budget for these programs is vital to maintaining law enforcement programs of the Commission and its member tribes. We also support the Yakama Nation request for a DOJ needs assessment grant in FY 2012.

**In summary,** the CRITFC and its four member tribes have developed the capacity and infrastructure to lead in restoring and rebuilding salmon populations of the Columbia Basin. Our collective efforts protect our treaty reserved fishing rights and we also partner with the non-Indian community to provide healthy, harvestable salmon populations for all citizens to enjoy. This is a time when increased effort and participation are demanded of all of us and we ask for your continued support of a coordinated, comprehensive effort to restore the shared salmon resource of the Columbia and Snake River Basins. We will be pleased to provide any additional information that this subcommittee may require.

CRITFC contact: Charles Hudson, (503) 731-1257, [hudc@critfc.org](mailto:hudc@critfc.org)