



THE COLUMBIA BASIN RESTORATION INITIATIVE

THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN

- Largest salmon-producing river in the lower 48 states.
- Free-flowing, cool rivers once brought ~10-18 million salmon and steelhead back to the Columbia Basin each year.
- Today, we see only ~1-2 million total, with only ~250,000 natural origin spawners.
- The NPCC assessed that hydroelectric dams reduce our salmon and steelhead runs by 5-11 million each year.



COLUMBIA BASIN TREATY FISHING TRIBES

- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Nez Perce Tribe



TRIBAL TREATY FISHING RIGHTS IN THE COLUMBIA BASIN



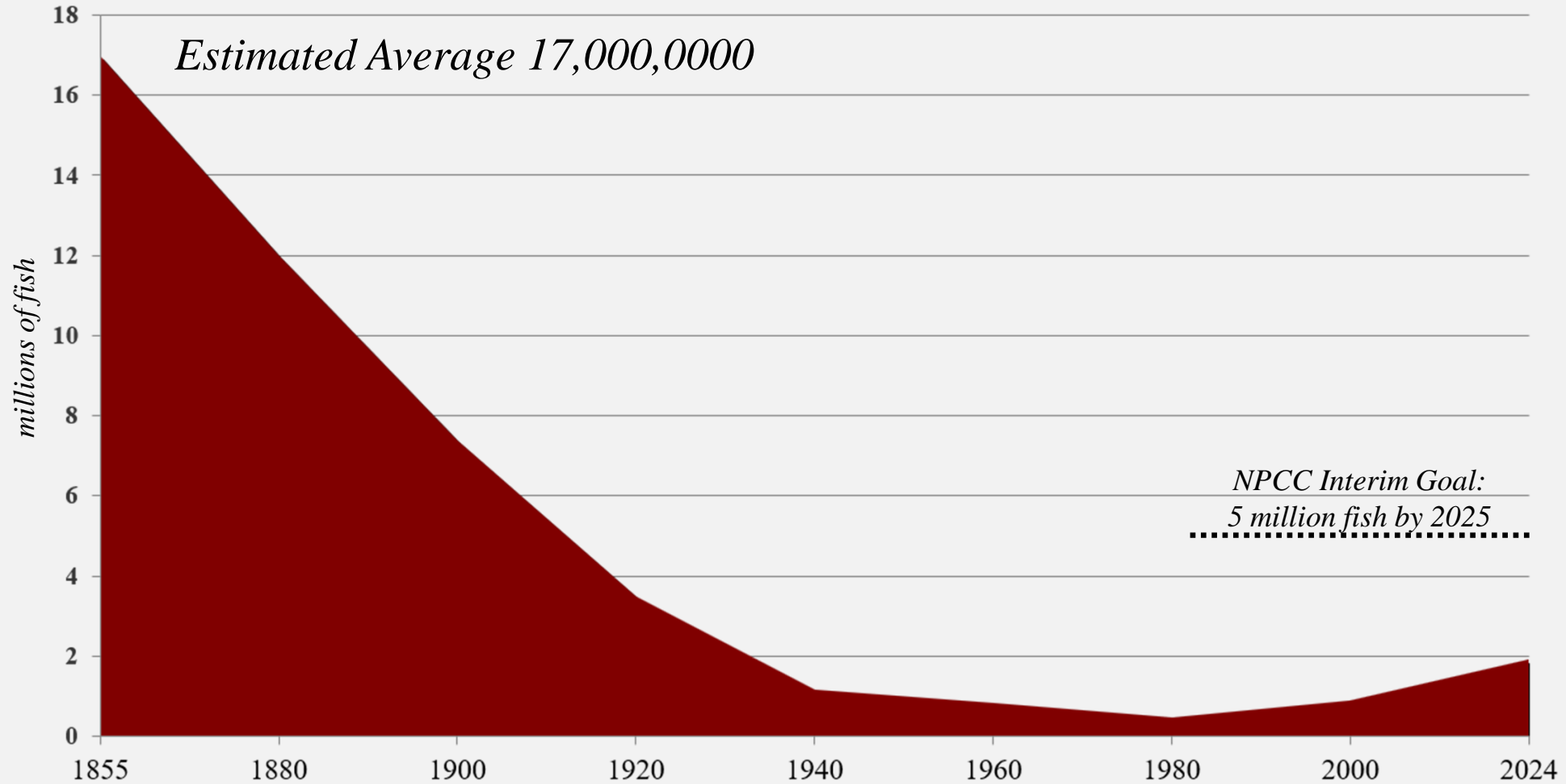
The 1855 treaties negotiated between the U.S. and the Native American groups that now comprise the Yakama, Umatilla, Nez Perce, and Warm Springs tribes contained a substantially identical provision securing to those tribes **"the right of taking fish at all usual and accustomed places in common with citizens of the Territory,"** including on the Columbia River and its tributaries.

See, Treaty of June 9, 1855, with the Yakima Tribe (12 Stat. 951); Treaty of June 25, 1855, with the Tribes of Middle Oregon (12 Stat. 963); Treaty of June 9, 1855, with the Umatilla Tribe (12 Stat. 945); Treaty of June 11, 1855, with the Nez Perce Tribe (12 Stat. 957).

Celilo Falls fishing. Photo by Ray Atkinson

SALMON DECLINE

Returning Columbia River salmon (chinook, steelhead, sockeye, coho)



Source: CRITFC. 1855 Data from NPCC historical run estimates; 1880-1920 data points extrapolated from Columbia River cannery output; 1940-present: dam counts & river mouth estimates

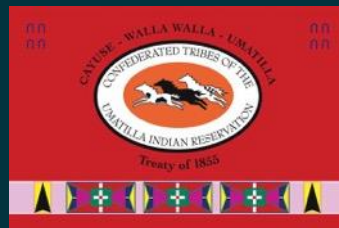
SNAKE RIVER SALMON IN CRISIS

- The Snake River is the largest tributary of the Columbia.
- It contains the largest accessible amount of pristine, protected habitat remaining in the Columbia Basin, yet wild salmon and steelhead from the Snake River Basin are in dire straits.
- As of 2021, 42% of Snake River spring/summer Chinook populations have natural origin spawner abundances at or below the Quasi-Extinction Threshold (QET) of less than 50 returning spawners per year; and
- 19% of Snake River steelhead are at or below QET.



THE COLUMBIA BASIN RESTORATION INITIATIVE

A comprehensive vision for Columbia Basin salmon restoration and community resilience.



MAKING A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO A JUST AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE

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4

Urgent Action

Our fish are in crisis. Economic, energy and climate conditions in the Pacific Northwest are changing rapidly.

Leadership and urgent action are needed to respond to inevitable changes while meeting regional needs.

Unified Approach

We must act now and implement necessary federal investments and commitments across the whole of government to be successful.

Obligations to Tribes

The United States has a Treaty and trust obligation to restore Columbia Basin salmon and native fish.

Tribes and their resources were left behind in the Columbia Basin's previous wave of development.

Let's get it right this time.

Community Resilience

We need to invest in socially just clean energy.

We need to modernize our transportation and agricultural infrastructure.

We can and must do this in a way that supports fish restoration and climate resilience.



SECURING USG COMMITMENTS TO HELP POSITION THE COLUMBIA BASIN FOR SUCCESS

Advance “... a durable long-term strategy to restore salmon and other native fish populations to healthy and abundant levels, honoring Federal commitments to Tribal Nations, delivering affordable and reliable clean power, and meeting the many resilience needs of stakeholders across the region.”

CBRI OBJECTIVES # 1-3



1. Restore salmon and steelhead to healthy and abundant levels

Develop and advance an urgent, comprehensive strategy to: restore salmon and steelhead to “healthy and abundant levels” consistent with NOAA’s Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBP) and Rebuilding reports; and complete the actions and investments necessary to secure continuity of services associated with Lower Snake River (LSR) restoration prior to LSR dam breaching.



2. Ensure ecosystem health

Ensure that all species, regardless of ESA-listing status, are considered in the comprehensive strategy in a way that improves ecosystem function in the Columbia River and its tributaries.



3. Halt the decline

Ensure interim fish measures [including, but not limited to hydro operations] minimize additional generational decline of fish populations.

CBRI OBJECTIVES # 4-6



4. Quick and just clean energy transition

Invest in and support communities and economic sectors in a manner that is consistent with meeting decarbonization goals and mandates and integration of renewables; delivers affordable and clean power; improves resiliency and adaptability to climate change and supports the many resilience needs of stakeholders across the region; and honors commitments to Tribal Nations.



5. Urgent and comprehensive action

Secure necessary regulatory compliance, authorizations, and appropriations for implementation of the entire strategy with an urgency reflecting the needs of the fish.



6. Honor treaty and trust obligations

Ensure that the comprehensive strategy and associated federal actions “honor Federal commitments to Tribal Nations” and address past and ongoing inequities related to Columbia Basin development to reflect and uphold federal Treaty and trust responsibilities to Columbia Basin tribes.



RECOMMENDED APPROACH

- Empower tribal & state fisheries co-managers
- Significantly increase funding for restoration
- Fully fund fisheries infrastructure needs
- Lower Snake restoration and continuity of services
- Identify a feasible approach to UC reintroduction
- Ensure accountability to fisheries recovery goals
- Use a transparent 'whole-of-government' approach
- Advance key elements concurrently and immediately

INITIAL FEDERAL COMMITMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE CBRI



In December 2023, the USG signed an historic 10-year Memorandum of Understanding (the “RCBA”) with the Six Sovereigns and the NGO plaintiffs in the *NWF v NMFS* litigation.



The RCBA includes a package of initial federal actions (“USG Commitments”) in support of the CBRI and in partnership with the Six Sovereigns.



While the USG implements its USG Commitments and the MOU remains effective, the Parties will support the stay of the *NWF v NMFS* litigation and refrain from similar litigation.

QUESTIONS ?

