



September 18, 2017

Way,

Re: Support for Columbia Salmon Reintroduction Workplan

Salmon re-introduction to the Transboundary Reach of the Columbia River, and beyond, is of great importance to the Okanagan Nation, therefore the ONA is actively developing a workplan in support of these efforts. Our interests and plans support ongoing efforts by our member Nation to the south, the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT). The CCT are currently implementing Phases I and Phases II of the Joint Fish Passage Paper. You can access this paper here:

https://ucut.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Fish_Passage_and_Reintroduction_into_the_US_And_Canadian_Upper_Columbia_River4-1.pdf

The ONA is taking the next steps in anticipation of experimental re-introductions of Chinook and Sockeye beyond Grand Coulee Dam by the CCT and other Upper Columbia United Tribes. These salmon releases will have access to the Transboundary Reach of the Columbia River and may migrate towards the next, upstream migration limits, namely Hugh Keenleyside Dam, Brilliant Dam and Waneta Dam.

From our draft workplan, some key elements and questions that need to be addressed include:

- 1) Current spawning and rearing habitat in the Transboundary Reach of the mainstem Columbia and upstream reaches and tributaries?
- 2) Which stocks or strains of Chinook and Sockeye are best suited for the upper Columbia River (upstream of 49th parallel)?
- 3) Are there any disease or competition risks from salmon re-introduction?
- 4) Support of tracking movement of re-introduced salmon above Grand Coulee Dam?
- 5) Feasibility of passing salmon and other native fishes over current Canadian barriers?

We have been discussing this initiative over the last few years with support and acknowledgement being positive to date. We are at the next step and seeking letters of support from your group. We are currently in the annual period where potential funders and collaborators are accepting proposals and plan to submit portions of our workplan in search of funding.

The ONA's mandate is the conservation, protection, restoration, and enhancement of indigenous fisheries (anadromous and resident) and aquatic resources which we have been very actively working on within our territory. We are excited to move forward on this project and there is tremendous value in hearing from Community groups like yours to support this work.

L1-1444 Columbia Avenue
Castlegar, BC
V1N 3K3

101-3535 Old Okanagan Highway
Westbank, BC
V4T 3L7



We look forward to discussing our plans with you and would appreciate your consideration in supporting this important initiative. You can find out more of what we do, here: <https://www.syilx.org/fisheries/>

With thanks and best regards,

OKANAGAN NATION ALLIANCE

Michael Zimmer, M.Sc., R.P.Bio.
Columbia Region Fisheries Biologist
Phone: 250-304-7341
Email: mzimmer@syilx.org

L1-1444 Columbia Avenue
Castlegar, BC
V1N 3K3

101-3535 Old Okanagan Highway
Westbank, BC
V4T 3L7