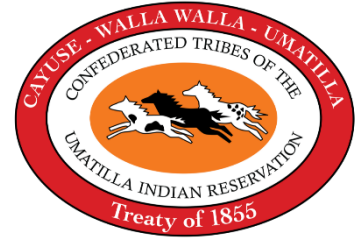


Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

PRESS RELEASE



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April 13, 2026

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CTUIR Awarded \$6.91M for Fish Hatchery, Collection Activities

MISSION – The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) has been awarded \$6.91 million from the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for fish hatchery and collection activities.

Jerimiah Bonifer, Fisheries Program manager with CTUIR's Department of Natural Resources (DNR), said the CTUIR in March received notice of the BIA funding appropriated in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

"The funds are directly applied to the hatchery facility modernization and maintenance needs, which are necessary to continue to support treaty harvest rights throughout the CTUIR's usual and accustomed areas," Bonifer said. "While hatchery infrastructure is just one of the tools used by the Fisheries Program, it has been one of the strongest means by which salmon and steelhead have been reintroduced or supplemented in CTUIR's traditional use areas."

DNR applied for the funding in 2025 for three hatcheries: the Nursery Bridge Adult Collection Facility near Milton-Freewater, the Umatilla Hatchery Satellite Facility near Irrigon and the 'Imtwaha Fish Hatchery near Walla Walla, Washington.

"At Nursery Bridge, the funds will pay for construction of an improved collection and handling area, which is currently in the design phase," Bonifer said. "At 'Imtwaha, the funds will support improved internet connectivity, allowing for better connection to the Nixyáawii Governance Center, and improved emergency response with the advanced alarm system installed when the facility was completed."

He said the Umatilla Hatchery Satellite Facility is the oldest and includes the Immeques (em-meck-eez) Acclimation site near Gibbon, Thornhollow Acclimation site near Cayuse and Three Mile Dam Adult Collection site near Umatilla.

"These sites are all budgeted to receive internet upgrades. They, along with the Pendleton Acclimation site, are also slated to receive intake cleaning system upgrades or replacements, water control valve

replacements or rebuilds and intake flow meters,” Bonifer said. “The updates will improve water usage reporting, better alarm system connectivity and improve the ability to maintain our intakes in inclement weather, ultimately allowing us to more securely hold fish.”

Although the CTUIR has yet to receive the funds, work should begin when the money is transferred. Some projects such as internet upgrades should be completed within a year of their start dates, Bonifer said, while others may require longer timelines to ensure usability when needed.

For example, work at Nursery Bridge is not expected to start until 2027 or 2028 because of the unfinished redesign and time needed to use the facility for its purpose and in finding a contractor for the project.

“Valve replacements and flow meter installations are again constrained by the funding arrival and bid process, but also the facilities need to be vacant for the work to happen,” Bonifer said. “Intake cleaning system replacements will need to happen during the summer months, likely in 2027.”

Despite lengthy times estimated for some projects, Bonifer said the CTUIR is thankful for the BIA funds because hatchery facilities are subject to high levels of wear and tear.

“Water is constantly working to destroy the concrete of which many the facilities are made, their technology and mechanical parts,” he said. “Since we are also working with live animals, it is important to ensure that our facilities are able to safely hold and maintain the fish. Sometimes the only thing that prioritizes a repair is a catastrophic failure. This funding allows us to address areas where we haven’t yet had a failure, but if we keep delaying maintenance activities, we may. Ultimately it provides us with peace of mind and security for the over 4 million fish the artificial production program releases each year.”

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla Tribes, and formed under the Treaty of 1855 at the Walla Walla Valley, 12 Stat. 945. In 1949, the Tribes adopted a constitutional form of government to protect, preserve and enhance the reserved treaty rights guaranteed under federal law.

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Caption1: An employee holds a salmon at the ?lmtwaha Fish Hatchery near Walla Walla, Washington. The hatchery is one that will receive modernization and maintenance needs as part of \$6.91 million in federal funds appropriated to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. CTUIR

Caption2: Employees at the ?lmtwaha Fish Hatchery near Walla Walla, Washington, sort salmon. The hatchery is one of several Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) hatcheries that will receive modernization and maintenance needs thanks to \$6.91 million in federal funds going to the CTUIR. CTUIR