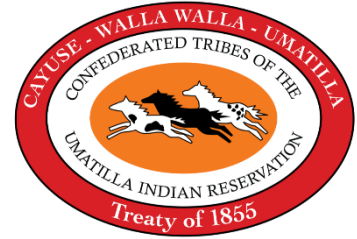


Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

PRESS RELEASE



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CTUIR Honors First Salmon of 2025 with Ceremony

MISSION – The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) held a First Fish Ceremony Monday, April 21 on the Nixyáawii Governance Center's (NGC) front lawn to celebrate the return of the first spring Chinook salmon of 2025.

The CTUIR annually celebrates the fish's return to the reservation with songs and prayers as part of the tribes' covenant to protect and enhance their First Foods.

"I want to say thank you to everyone who participated in bringing in our salmon," CTUIR Chairman Gary I. Burke said. "I'm glad for this ceremony...Take time to give thanks. Take time to give thanks for our own lives, our children's lives and the children coming...We'll do it next year, and the next year and the next."

The CTUIR's Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC) and Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Program (Fisheries) hosted the ceremony after being advised April 16 by fishers at Cascade Locks on the Columbia River to anticipate the first fish April 21.

At this year's ceremony, attendees got to sample spring Chinook taken during the 2024 season as the FWC donated eight fish for the event. The CTUIR Department of Children and Family Services' Building Our Life Skills Training and Employment Readiness (BOLSTER) Program prepared the meal at the Mission Longhouse.

"The Fish & Wildlife Commission has so much gratitude for all our staff throughout the CTUIR organization. Our leadership and staff work tirelessly every day to protect, preserve and enhance our First Foods, way of life and tribal sovereignty," Corinne Sams, CTUIR Board of Trustees Member at Large and FWC chair, said. "Sharing our foods with the staff and community will strengthen our connection with one another and strengthen our commitment to continuing to protect our water, land and everything that resides on it."

Sams said holding the ceremony at the NGC allowed CTUIR employees as well as tribal and community members to attend.

“It’s important for us to continue to live the way of life that we’ve lived since time immemorial,” she said. “It’s important for all our tribal membership and community to celebrate in the return of our foods. We’ve made a lifelong covenant to speak on behalf of our foods. We celebrate the return of our foods and pray for the health of our foods and the health of our waterways, and land. The return of the salmon in the spring is the lifeblood of who we are as a people. We are the Wykanish-Pum, the Salmon People.”

Following the ceremony, the fish was to be cleaned, packaged and frozen as CTUIR officials must ensure there are enough fish for ceremonial purposes throughout the year. With the 2025 spring Chinook run estimated at only 122,500, the CTUIR’s portion is approximately 1,500 after sharing the allowable harvest with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Nez Perce Tribe.

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: Weptas Brockie, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Senior Youth Leadership Council chairman, carries a spring Chinook salmon at the CTUIR’s First Fish ceremony on April 21 at the Nixyáawii Governance Center in Mission, Oregon. The CTUIR annually celebrates the return of the first spring Chinook to the reservation with songs and prayers as part of the CTUIR’s covenant to protect and enhance their First Foods. CTUIR

Caption2: Corinne Sams, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Board of Trustees Member at Large, and Executive Director J.D. Tovey serve salmon to attendees of the CTUIR’s First Fish ceremony on April 21 at the Nixyáawii Governance Center in Mission, Oregon. CTUIR