

A Special Publication

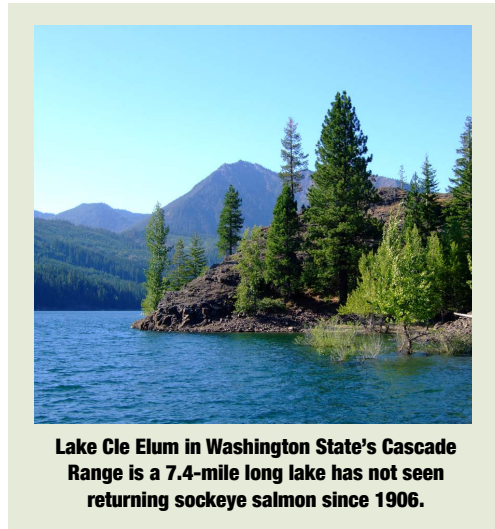
Summer 2009

For millennia, the majestic sockeye salmon journeyed up the Yakima River to their ancestral spawning beds at Lake Cle Elum. Along the way, Yakama fishers caught some of these prized fish for ceremonies and sustenance. The stories of fishing for the sockeye or 'blue back' salmon there were passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. In 1906, however, new stories of fishing for sockeye on the Yakima ceased when the headwaters of the Yakima River at Lake Cle Elum was dammed, blocking all fish passage. Without access to the lake where countless generations of fry prepared for their journey to the sea and later returned to spawn, the Yakima River sockeye run faded out of existence, but not out of memory.

The sockeye's return lives only in the stories from generations past. There is not a single Yakama alive today who saw sockeye return to the river flowing through the heart of their reservation. Since that loss, it has been a dream of the Yakama people to restore sockeye to the river that runs through their homeland. And now, after an absence of more than a century, they are pleased to announce that the sockeye are poised to once again swim the waters of the Yakima and Cle Elum rivers. On July 7, 2009, the Yakama Nation's sockeye salmon reintroduction project will release sockeye into Lake Cle Elum. The fish will be collected at Priest Rapids Dam and

transported almost 100 miles to the lake. There they will be greeted by tribal members and given a welcome dance and a blessing before they enter the waters of Lake Cle Elum. Afterward, the gathered guests will honor the progenitors of the new Yakima sockeye run with a traditional feast.

represents 10-20% of the total upper Columbia River run) and Okanogan sockeye stocks. The number of fish transplanted will depend on availability after escapement goals have been reached and the broodstock needs of the Skaha Lake project have been met.



Lake Cle Elum in Washington State's Cascade Range is a 7.4-mile long lake has not seen returning sockeye salmon since 1906.

The sockeye fry that will eventually begin their migration to the Pacific Ocean will not be trapped in Lake Cle Elum. Existing temporary juvenile passage on Cle Elum Dam will allow them downriver through the dam's spillways. Returning sockeye will depend on an adult trap and haul facility to reach Lake Cle Elum. Both migrations depend on human intervention, which is only a short-term fix. As a long-term solution, the Yakama Nation will urge the Bureau of Reclamation to construct permanent passage on its Cle Elum Dam and eventually on all of their dams within the Yakima Basin.

Soon the era of a Yakima River without sockeye will come to its end. The Yakama people will be able to share new stories of the sockeye that tell of fishers catching the beautiful sockeye salmon from the Yakima River once again and the blue waters of Lake Cle Elum turning red with spawning sockeye.

Over the next 18 years, the Yakama Nation will collect up to 500 pairs of sockeye adults from Priest Rapids Dam each year for transplant into Lake Cle Elum. This restored run of Yakima River sockeye will be a mixture of Wenatchee (which typically

