

For Immediate Release—July 15, 2021

Link to totem pole photos at Snake River below.



Nez Perce Tribe calls on Biden to protect Snake River sacred salmon

Tribe says salmon extinction creates crisis and requires action

Clarkston, WA—Members of the Nez Perce Tribe today called on President Biden to take immediate action to protect Snake River salmon.

In an event held as part of the Red Road to DC, a cross-country tour highlighting Indigenous sacred sites at risk, tribal members urged the Biden administration to immediately address the threats to sacred salmon that are posed by the lower Snake River dams. Organizers of the Red Road tour stopped by the Snake River to display a totem pole by Lummi Nation carvers to highlight sacred sites at risk due to development and infrastructure projects.

“Time is running out to protect our sacred salmon,” said Shannon Wheeler, vice chairman of the Nez Perce Tribe. “This is a crisis that threatens our way of life, and it is a violation of our treaty rights. The federal government is failing to uphold the promises made to our ancestors when we ceded our lands.”

Tribes and Native organizations have long called for the removal of the lower Snake River dams and a comprehensive plan to restore salmon populations.

“Salmon in the Snake River are on the brink of extinction,” said Julian Matthews, a Nez Perce tribal member and board member of Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment. “The salmon are our food, ceremony, and medicine. So what would we be as Nez Perce people if they’re gone? I don’t want to find out.”

By some estimates, Snake River salmon face extinction in 20 years if no action is taken.

“When we talk about protecting sacred sites, it’s not just a place or a thing,” said Wheeler. “It’s about safeguarding the only way of life we have known as Native people and that includes salmon and our ability to harvest this sacred resource. The treaties demand the protection of our salmon and our fishing rights. President Biden must take immediate action to uphold the promises made to our ancestors.”

For additional information and full list of tour stops, visit redroadtodd.org.

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To download photos of the totem pole visit to Snake River, [click here](#).

About Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment

Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment is a nonprofit organization committed to protect Tribal Treaty rights within the Nez Perce Tribe’s original ceded area and usual and accustomed places. <https://www.nimiipuuprotecting.org/about-us>