



PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

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Buffalo Released on the Colville Reservation

(Nespelem, WA) — On October 2, 2023, 23 buffalo were released to live in the wild on the Colville Reservation. They were released on range unit 25 between Keller Ridge and Buffalo Lake. Another 7 buffalo are expected to be released tomorrow.

29 of the buffalo are cows and one is a bull. They are pure buffalo, not “beefalo” (buffalo crossbred with cattle). They are all vaccinated. The buffalo are a gift from the Kalispel Tribe, which had a surplus to use in stocking their own Reservation.

Buffalo are considered a keystone species because their presence has a ripple effect on every other species that lives in the same ecosystem. Their grazing can provide nesting grounds for birds, while their wallows (depressions they create by rolling in the soil) can fill with water, which in turn other species may use for drinking or breeding pools.

The Department of the Interior announced on September 7, 2023 a \$5 million dollar initiative to support tribally-led efforts to strengthen bison conservation and expansion, improve management of existing herds, and restore native grassland habitats. Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland said, “Through historic funding from the Biden-Harris administration, we can support tribes in maintaining herds of buffalo. These herds are central to tribes’ cultural, spiritual and nutritional traditions, and they also preserve the ecosystems that sustain both bison and tribal communities.”

The Chairman of the Colville Confederated Tribes, Jarred-Michael Erickson, said, “Today, q^wisp (buffalo) return to part of their historic range. We are always happy and proud when we can take a step toward restoring our lands to their natural condition. The Colville Tribes wishes to thank the Kalispel Tribe, who gifted us these magnificent animals. We also thank the Biden-Harris administration for their financial support of our ecosystem and the buffalo.”

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About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,237 descendants of 12 aboriginal tribes of Indians are enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of the Colville. The twelve tribes which compose the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation include: ščəlámxəx^w (deep water) or Chelan; walwáma (Wallowa people) or Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce; sǰ^wyʔilp (sharp pointed trees) or Colville; šntiyátk^wəx^w (grass in the water) or Entiat; snǰáyckst (speckled fish) or Lakes; mət^wx^wu (blunt hills around a valley) or Methow; škwáxčənəx^w (people living on the bank) or Moses-Columbia; nspilm (prairie) or Nespelam; uknaqin (seeing over the top) or Okanogan; palúšpam (people from Palouse) or Palus; sənǰ^wilx (grey mist as far as one can see) or San Poil, and šnpəšq^wáwsəx^w (people in between) or Wenatchi.