



Pend Oreille County Public Utility District

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Pend Oreille PUD Holds a Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for its Box Canyon Fish Passage Facility

October 21, 2021

The PUD held a Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for its Box Canyon Dam Upstream Fish Passage Facility which is now fully operational. The event held on October 21st was a celebration of the completion of the facility which had been under construction over the last five years. PUD leaders, along with representatives from the Kalispel Tribe of Indians and the federal and state agencies that oversee the PUD's license for Box Canyon Dam, took a tour of the new facility and heard some of the background surrounding the multi-year project, which was required as part of the PUD's 50-year federal relicensing of Box Canyon Dam.

The purpose of the Fish Passage Facility is to provide and monitor safe and timely fish migration upstream of the Box Canyon Hydroelectric facility. The three target fish species – Mountain Whitefish, Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout – will be manually transported above the dam, while other native species will be passed through pipes into the forebay above the dam. Non-native species will be returned below the dam. PUD Biologist and Natural Resources Manager, Scott Jungblom, anticipates that they will initially be trucking approximately fifty target-species fish per year around the dam after they have been trapped by the facility, which is a “Trap and Haul” style fish ladder. Before trucking the fish above the dam, sensors are inserted into each fish so that their movements can be tracked and to monitor the effectiveness of the fish passage process.

The project was no easy task and it had its hurdles, but the result is something to be proud of. Kalispel Tribe Vice Chairman Curt Holmes joined PUD Commissioner Curt Knapp in cutting the celebratory ribbon and expressed his excitement and approval of the project explaining the strong partnership that the Tribe has with the PUD. The PUD hopes to start offering public tours of the facility in 2022 to share more broadly in this momentous accomplishment and historic milestone.

[Pictures Follow]

