



kʷikwə́ləm
Kwikwetlem First Nation

PRESS RELEASE

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kʷikwə́ləm First Nation announce new Sockeye Hatchery to be built next to the Coquitlam Dam, a historic step towards restoring Salmon back to our Ancestral Territory

COQUITLAM, BC., November 10, 2022 - kʷikwə́ləm (Kwikwetlem) First Nation announced today at a special cultural blessing and ground-breaking ceremony that a new Sockeye Hatchery is being built nearby the Coquitlam Dam in the heart of the Nation's traditional, ancestral and unceded territory known as the *skʷələma:t ʔacaʔ* (Coquitlam Lake) Watershed.

The kʷikwə́ləm Sockeye Hatchery is a crucial next step in the Nation's long-term goal of restoring the run of Coquitlam Sockeye that once flourished in the Nation's territory, and that sustained our people for thousands of years for food and culture, before the Coquitlam Dam opened in 1913 and virtually eliminated this species.

"The Nation, along with our Elders, past and present, as well as countless allies have worked tirelessly to restore this run of sockeye back to our ancestral lands and waters for decades. Today, we acknowledge a new beginning, by ways of UNDRIP Articles and Reconciliation, with our partners during this ceremony held for the kʷikwə́ləm Sockeye Hatchery that we hope will give us a better chance of bringing the sockeye back home," said kʷikwə́ləm Chief Ed Hall.

"The construction of the Coquitlam Dam is one of the most significant colonial harms done to kʷikwə́ləm First Nation and our People as it took away the salmon from our rivers and food away from our cupboards," said kʷikwə́ləm Councillor George Chaffee. "We have been fighting to restore our Indigenous rights to fish in our territory ever since former Chief Johnnie Williams wrote to the federal government back in 1899 urging them not to dam the Coquitlam River. The destiny of kʷikwə́ləm First Nation is tied to the future of this fish whose name we proudly carry. Just like the fish, we didn't die, and we are proud to be back as stewards and guardians of our territory with the new kʷikwə́ləm Sockeye Hatchery."

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The kwikwəłəm Sockeye Hatchery is being led by kwikwəłəm First Nation in partnership with BC Hydro, Metro Vancouver and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. kwikwəłəm First Nation is responsible for operating the hatchery once completed, which is expected to be by early 2023. The kwikwəłəm Sockeye Hatchery will also highlight the Nation's culture and history through cultural design elements as well as interpretive display areas around the hatchery.

"The kwikwəłəm Sockeye Hatchery is an important part of the Nation's overall Indigenous Guardianship Program. Members have told us how important the fish are to them, and we are excited about the opportunities to train our members to learn about fish conservation so that they can take on important jobs working in the hatchery," said kwikwəłəm Councillor John Peters.

BC Hydro has committed funding to a 10-year program to design, build and operate the hatchery. The details of this funding agreement are being worked out by multiple entities. The agreement will also include hatchery technical work experience to train kwikwəłəm members to assume hatchery jobs.

"We recognize the historic significance of salmon to the kwikwəłəm First Nation and acknowledge the impacts of the Coquitlam Dam on salmon in the area," says Chris O'Riley, President and CEO of BC Hydro. "We are committed to supporting Coquitlam sockeye restoration and this hatchery is only a start. We look forward to supporting salmon stock regrowth for future generations to come."

Metro Vancouver is providing the land and water supply for the hatchery as well as land for the nearby cultural use area.

"In keeping with Metro Vancouver's commitment to reconciliation, we are pleased to take part in actions that revitalize kwikwəłəm First Nation's ability to honour its culture and reconnect with the land and water in its territory," said Sav Dhaliwal, chair of the Metro Vancouver Board of Directors. "We are proud to offer resources to assist in the development and operation of this hatchery, and kwikwəłəm First Nation's commitment to restoring sockeye salmon populations is an inspiring story of guardianship."

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is providing technical support for the hatchery including review and technical guidance from DFO hatchery technicians, biologists and veterinarians.

"We are pleased to work in partnership with kwikwəłəm First Nation, BC Hydro and Metro Vancouver on the restoration and rebuilding of Coquitlam sockeye. We are happy to provide Salmonid Enhancement Program support and expertise to help build capacity towards this important goal with the kwikwəłəm Nation," said Brigid Payne, Director of Salmon Enhancement, Fisheries and Oceans.

The kwikwəłəm people have lived in our traditional territory, known as the Coquitlam Watershed, and the surrounding areas, since before remembered time. kwikwəłəm draw their hənqəmiñəh name "Red Fish Up the River" from a run of spring sockeye salmon that once flourished in the territory before the Coquitlam Dam was built. Elders talk of these sockeyes running so thick that it was difficult to navigate canoes. Our name reflects the strong connection our people have always had to our lands, and the river and lake at the heart of our traditional, unceded and ancestral territory.

Backgrounder - kwikwəłəm Sockeye Hatchery

kwikwəłəm Sockeye Hatchery is an important next step in the Nation's long-term goal of building a sustainable run of sockeye salmon back to the Coquitlam River and Coquitlam Lake Watershed. Since 2003, the Nation has been working to restore the sockeye salmon through the kwikwəłəm Salmon Restoration Program which has included conducting studies to inform the BC Hydro Fish Passage Decision Framework and rebuilding fish habitat restoration areas. We work in collaboration with many other organizations including First Nations, Governments, Community Groups, NGOs, and Universities. For information on kwikwəłəm First Nation stewardship initiatives, please visit our website <https://www.kwikwetlem.com/stewardship.htm>

Sockeye Hatchery Quick Facts

- This small-scale, conservation hatchery will hold broodstock, incubate eggs and rear juvenile sockeye to the smolt stage before they are released to the lower river where they can go out to the ocean, grow up to be adults and return back to the Coquitlam River to spawn in the Coquitlam Watershed. By raising sockeye in the hatchery environment, we hope to give the population a boost as we can generally get higher survival rates in this environment than in the wild.
- Unlike other species of salmon, juvenile sockeye require access to a lake for their initial growth in freshwater – this is critical to their life history. When the Coquitlam Dam was built, adults could not return back to the lake to spawn; juvenile sockeye were trapped in the lake and could not migrate to the ocean to feed and grow up.
- We are targeting the capture of 30,000 eggs for annual incubation. The first priority is to raise 15,000 fish to release at the smolt stage after spending 18 months in the hatchery. Any surplus will be released at the younger, parr stage, to rear in Coquitlam Lake.
- We don't expect many Coquitlam sockeye adults to return in the initial years. As a result, we will also be using residualized sockeye from Coquitlam Lake (these are salmon that were trapped in the lake after the dam was built in 1913) as initial broodstock to help restart the population.

Primary Partners:

- **kwikwəłəm First Nation** is responsible for operating the hatchery once completed. The kwikwəłəm Sockeye Hatchery will also showcase the Nation's culture and history through cultural design elements as well as interpretive display areas around the hatchery.
- **BC Hydro** is providing funding for a 10-year program to design, build and operate the hatchery and will also provide funding to enable hatchery technical work experience to train kwikwəłəm members so that they can assume hatchery jobs.
- **Metro Vancouver** is providing the land and water supply for the hatchery as well as land for the nearby cultural use area (which is provided under lease to Metro Vancouver from the Province of BC).
- **Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)** is providing technical support for the hatchery including review and technical guidance from DFO hatchery technicians, biologists and veterinarians.

Supporting Partners:

- **Kwikwetlem Salmon Restoration Program** is a consortium of different members which includes the primary partners as well as community organizations who work together to guide salmon recovery in the Coquitlam Watershed with the principal focus being sockeye.
- **Grist Goesen Memorial Hatchery, North Fraser Salmon Assistance Project Watershed and Watershed Watch Salmon Society.**