

Kah-miltpah Band of the Mid-Columbia River and Walaluks Creek Name Change

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Abstract:

Prior to the designation of the Columbia River, it was known as the N'chi Wana 'Big River' to the local tribes of the region. The Kah-miltpah Band is from the Rock Creek subbasin located in Klickitat County and are one of the many tribes and bands of the N'chi Wana. The Kah-miltpah inhabited the subbasin since time immemorial and are one of the bands that comprise the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. The Rock Creek subbasin is a very resourceful location for the Kah-miltpah to live with an abundance of fish, game, root, and berry resources.

The Kah-miltpah are closely tied to the N'chi Wana and today there are still Kah-miltpah living in their ancestral usual and accustomed gathering grounds. Prior to the construction of the John Day Dam, many of the Kah-miltpah were removed from the Rock Creek canyon with threat of inundation to their homes. The Kah-miltpah return to the longhouse for various ceremonial gatherings throughout the year. The annual spring salmon and root feast is one of the largest gatherings held at the longhouse annually.

Walaluks Creek is one of the main tributary streams of Rock Creek and both pre-historically and historically there were Kah-miltpah family home sites within Walaluks canyon. The early settlers of the area referred to the creek as 'Squaw Creek' for many years and the United States Geologic Survey maps documented the name of the creek as Squaw Creek. The Kah-miltpah elders requested that the name of the creek be changed with the support of the Yakama Nation Tribal Council. In July 28, 2016, the Yakama Nation submitted a name change application to the Washington State Board on Geographic Names to change the name from Squaw Creek to Walaluks Creek. In May 16, 2017, the Board approved the application to change the name to Walaluks Creek.