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Lake Roosevelt Forum

NEWSletter

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2022 Lake Roosevelt Fishery Highlights



Year after year, Lake Roosevelt continues to provide extraordinary and diverse angling opportunities that attract enthusiasts from near and far. Thousands of hours of angling time are happily spent catching up to 200,000 fish annually.

Rainbow Trout, White Sturgeon, Walleye and Smallmouth Bass are the most targeted species. And the fight to suppress Northern Pike, a voracious predator that devastates other fish populations, provides additional angling opportunities.

At the May LRF Recreational Fishery webinar, co-managers from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW),

the Spokane Tribe of Indians, and Colville Confederated Tribes summarized highlights for 2022. Annually, they invest over \$8 million dollars to develop and maintain the fishery.

Visit www.lrf.org/webinar for May 2022 webinar with co-managers providing more detailed PowerPoint presentations about the fishery.

Rainbow Trout and Net Pens

Over 561,000 rainbow trout were released into Lake Roosevelt in 2022. They are from 7 to 13 inches in length and 1 to 7 to the pound when released in May and will grow to about

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Lake Roosevelt Updates

National Park Service



With over 1.3 million visitors frequenting the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area annually, peak season for summer enjoyment is now in full swing.

Visit www.lrf.org/recreation/lake-guide for the Forum's Lake Roosevelt recreational map and guide, providing information on fishing, camping, concessions, regulations, lake levels and more.

To stay abreast of NPS alerts that could affect your stay, visit www.bit.ly/3o6Gy61

NPS Updates for a Safe, Fun Visit

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

To protect against quagga/zebra mussels, boats must be clean, drained and dry. Visit www.bit.ly/3Ruc63j for required self-certification form that must be placed in the windshield of your launch vehicle where it can be easily seen. At the Kettle Falls boat ramp, a clean, drain and dry boat cleaning station has been installed.

FISH CLEANING STATIONS CLOSED

All stations are closed until further notice due to accumulated oil from fish clogging septic systems. Learn more at www.bit.ly/3PkTlgS

TEMPORARY BOAT-IN CAMPGROUND CLOSURES

The following boat-in campgrounds will be temporarily closed to replace pit toilets with vault toilet facilities.

Goldsmith Campground, closed July 11 – July 21; Penix Campground, closed July 18 – July 28, 2022; and Ponderosa Campground, closed August 15, - August 25. The schedule is subject to change. Learn more at www.bit.ly/3o0nJBF

FIRE RESTRICTIONS

On July 22, all fires at Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area were prohibited until further notice. Visit the NPS alerts page (www.bit.ly/3P6oepl) for updates.

MOBILE VISITOR CENTERS

Two trailers are going to public events, campgrounds, and other locations with interpretive and logistical information to keep visitors informed and engaged. 🌐

Bureau of Reclamation

SUMMER LAKE LEVELS

For the Fourth of July weekend, the lake level elevation was at 1285 feet above sea level. This elevation allowed Reclamation to hold Lake Roosevelt at 5 feet below full pool to support visitors enjoying beach areas. Warmer and dryer conditions are forecasted through the summer. Lake levels will be managed to target a drawdown of 1278–1280 feet by the end of August. Visit www.lrf.org/recreation/boat-launch-lake-levels to check daily lake levels and the availability of boat launches.



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

CAYUSE COVE STABILIZATION

Phase two of the Cayuse Cove Slope Stabilization project was completed in May 2022. Located approximately 8 miles upstream of Porcupine Bay Campground on the Lincoln County side, the work stabilized about 300 feet of shoreline to halt bank erosion to prevent inadvertent exposure and loss of sensitive resources. The final phase will begin after Labor Day to provide about 250 feet of additional shoreline stabilization. As with phase two, the Porcupine Bay boat launch will be used as a staging area to barge materials and equipment to the site. The entire project will stabilize over 900 feet of shoreline and will be completed by mid-May 2023. For more



Cayuse Cove stabilization

information, go to www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/ea/wash/cayuse/index.html

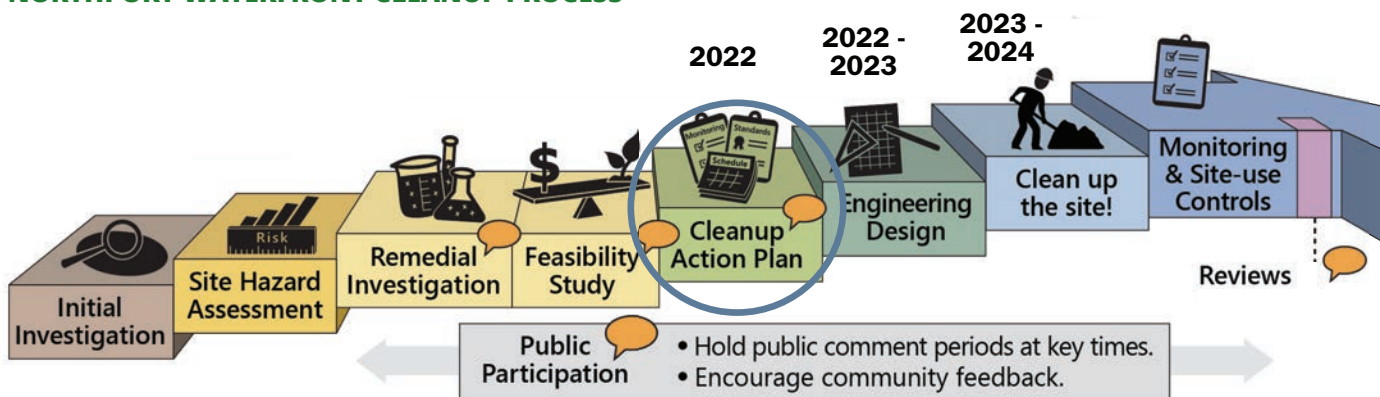
OPTIMIZATION STUDY FOR GRAND COULEE DAM

As reported last January, a major overhaul of generating units G22–G24 inside the Nathaniel “Nat” Washington Power Plant at Grand Coulee Dam was completed. Reclamation is working with BPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop an optimization study for an overall hydro-related modernization of future operations at Grand Coulee. The study also will determine the scope of work for overhauling generating units G19–G21. The final design and subsequent procurement of units G19–G21 is projected for 2026. For more information, go to www.usbr.gov/pn/grandcoulee/tpp/overhaul.html 🌐

Public Comments on Ecology Northport Waterfront Cleanup Plan

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) took public comments on their Northport Waterfront Cleanup Action Plan from May 2 through June 1, 2022. Visit the Ecology website at www.bit.ly/3yvSPFW for background information and details, including slides from a May 17 public meeting.

NORTHPORT WATERFRONT CLEANUP PROCESS



The cleanup site is in Northport's town park and boat launch waterfront area. Sampling for the Remedial Investigation Report showed arsenic, copper, lead and zinc at elevated levels in soil and sediment, posing a risk to human health and the environment. Ecology identified the source of contamination as associated with legacy metals from the Le Roi Smelter and the Teck Metals Ltd. Smelter in Trail, British Columbia.

Development of this cleanup plan is another milestone in a multi-year process. The engineering design is expected to be complete by March 2023 with construction beginning in September 2023. The estimated cleanup cost is projected to be \$4.9 to \$5.4 million.

As shown in Figure A, the site is separated into five cleanup areas: Seasonal Beach, Hillside, Jetty, Bay and Bayshore.

FIGURE A: PROPOSED NORTHPORT WATERFRONT CLEANUP AREAS



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2022 Lake Roosevelt Fishery Highlights CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

18 inches by September. The long-term goal is to release up to 750,000 annually.

All rainbows released are triploids, meaning they are sterile and will not interbreed with wild trout. In addition, their adipose fin is clipped. Wild fish with an intact adipose fin should be released.

The goal is for a 5% annual return to creel, the estimated amount caught by anglers based on survey data collected by co-managers.

Supporting this effort is the WDFW Sherman Creek and Ford Hatcheries, the Spokane Tribal Hatchery, and 63 net pens located between Keller Ferry and Kettle Falls. Over 40 volunteers support maintenance of net pens and feeding needs from October through their release in May.

Spokane Arm Rainbow Trout Supplemental Release

In 2019 the Spokane Tribal Hatchery acquired Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funding to supplement the traditional net pen releases of rainbow trout. This has resulted in an additional 40,000 rainbow trout being released into the Spokane Arm of Lake Roosevelt each year.

The fish are released between February and June and are larger in size than those released from net pens, varying from one to two pounds. This was made possible by the tribe recommissioning an abandoned fish acclimation facility to support five raceways. Combining the Spokane Tribal Hatchery rearing abilities with utilizing the raceways enables the rainbows to finish their growth and acclimate to river conditions.



4 Rainbow trout

Walleye

Since 2002, WDFW (in cooperation with the Colville and Spokane tribes) has conducted Fall Walleye Index Netting (FWIN) to monitor walleye. Monitoring enables managers to track the abundance, age, growth, condition, sex ratio, and age at maturity.

WDFW reports that the walleye fishery has remained stable and resilient over time. One consistent trend is that walleye grow more slowly in Lake Roosevelt due largely to less food availability. Another trend is that about 80% of walleye are age 3 years and younger, commonly measuring 12 to 16 inches.

Some year classes (when the walleye spawn and hatch), however, are much stronger than others. The last very strong year class was 2018. As a result, current abundance (and therefore availability) of walleye has taken a dip. However, larger walleye (16 inches to 22 inches) are currently more available because of the strong 2018 and previous year classes that are still in the system. If past is prologue, another strong year class will likely occur soon.



Walleye

White Sturgeon

Since 2017, a white sturgeon fishery has been open thanks to surplus fish from U.S. and Canadian hatchery programs put in place in the early 2000s to help stem a decades-long population decline. Fishery managers believe the decline is due to on-going recruitment failure at the larval stage, the time from hatching to developing into juveniles.

Since hatchery programs began 20 years ago, over 160,000 sturgeon have been released. They are currently collected above the China Bend boat ramp at the larval stage before recruitment failure and transferred to the Sherman Creek hatchery. Here, they are raised for about one year and released in late winter/early spring.

Visit www.bit.ly/3caEqrk for fishing regulations that include no catch and release after the daily limit of one sturgeon per day has been achieved; and no sturgeon fishing from China Bend to the Canadian border will be allowed this year.

Clock Ticking on Salmon Litigation Affecting Upper Columbia

The clock is ticking on an end of July deadline to reach a stay extension on litigation challenging the Columbia River System Operations 2020 Environmental Impact Statement and Biological Opinion for salmon and steelhead.

While Snake River salmon runs garner most of the media's attention, the Spokane Tribe of Indians and Coeur d'Alene Tribe are also parties to the litigation. They joined the case in 2021 with a focus on Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams cutting off access to salmon, steelhead and lamprey in the upper Columbia River. By blocking this access, 40% of the previously occupied anadromous habitat in the Columbia River Basin was lost.

Therefore, contends the Spokane Tribe, "... the salmon restoration effort within the Columbia River Basin will only succeed when there are healthy and harvestable populations of anadromous fish above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams." To date, federal agencies have declined to fund tribal efforts to reintroduce salmon above Chief Joe and Grand Coulee.



Salmon fishing, Kettle Falls

In June, a federal mediator indicated an extension of the deadline is being sought while plaintiffs and defendants can continue to negotiate in good faith. Whether the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene tribes will be supportive of an extension is not known. Stay tuned. 🌐

Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers Supporting Phase 2 Upper Columbia Salmon Reintroduction



As part of the Community Project process developed by Congress in 2021, Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers identified 15 projects to be considered for funding by the House Appropriations Committee for Fiscal Year 2023, which starts October 1.

One project would provide the Upper Columbia United Tribes \$5 million to support implementation of their 21-year Phase 2 Implementation Plan (P2IP) to reintroduce salmon above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams. Funding would support design and planning of upstream fish collection facilities at

Chief Joseph Dam and evaluating juvenile Sockeye salmon behavior and survival. Results of juvenile studies will inform the future development of downstream passage facilities.

This will build on momentum from an outmigration research study that began earlier this spring. At sites in Lake Roosevelt, the Spokane River, Hangman Creek and below Chief Joe Dam, over 3,900 juveniles were fitted with PIT tags, and over 700 with acoustic tags. Tag information will allow researchers to evaluate their behavior and survival as they migrate downstream and, for a lucky few, upstream 2-3 years later. The research team includes the U.S. Geological Survey, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, the Coeur d'Alene, Spokane and Colville tribes, and the Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUTs).

"2023 will be the 82nd anniversary of salmon being blocked from moving past Grand Coulee Dam," said Forum Executive Director Andy Dunau. "The Congresswoman is adding her voice and influence to the growing number of sovereigns and interests committed to reintroducing salmon while also protecting affordable power generation." 🌐

Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Enhancement North of the Border



Work crew at Dove Hill, Castlegar

Wildlife species don't know geopolitical borders, but our human perceptions do.

The Columbia River is a good example. The Forum follows the American tradition of calling the Columbia River south of the U.S./Canada border the "Upper Columbia," with Lake Roosevelt being the reservoir behind Grand Coulee Dam. Our Canadian friends, however, call the Columbia River flowing downstream to the U.S. border the "Lower Columbia." It's confusing but makes sense based on where you were raised and the perceptions that come with it.

So please don't be confused when the Forum tips our hat to a British Columbia, Canada collaboration entitled the Lower Columbia Rare Species Ecosystem Enhancement Program (LCRSEEP). LCRSEEP partners and funders include: the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA), the Trail Wildlife Association (TWA), BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development (FLNRORD), the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) and the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP).

The LCRSEEP mission is "to foster endangered species and ecosystems, and to enhance local conservation networks through collaborative ecosystem enhancement projects."

This multi-year collaborative initiative is designed to:

- support rare and threatened ecosystems and wildlife species in the lower Columbia River valley by enhancing or protecting rare habitats in the Lower Columbia River area, and
- develop strategic partnerships to help establish a network for collaboration and coordination of future stewardship activities and projects in the area.

LCRSEEP aims to complete 12 different conservation projects over five years. This includes species at risk inventories, habitat restoration initiatives, and community outreach and engagement. A quick look at some of their projects gives a sense of the diversity of their efforts.

Riparian Ecological Restoration: This project assessed the impacts of unregulated public use and beaver activity on Lower Columbia River sites with mature and recruiting Cottonwood trees. Restoration of these sites is done by armoring trees to protect against beaver, ungulate, and rodent damage; planting native species absent from the site; and engaging in discussion with local recreational users about the project.

Brushland and Grassland Ecological Restoration: Low-elevation brushland ecosystems are some of the most at-risk ecosystems in BC. These are fire-maintained ecosystems that are very sensitive to human disturbance.

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Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Enhancement CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Two priority areas are Fort Shephard Conservancy near Trail, and Dove Hill near Castlegar. Restoration practices include invasive species hand-removal, closing spur trails, prescribed burns, and introducing a custom native seed mixture.

Bat Habitat Enhancement:

This project assessed artificial bark roosting structures to determine their effectiveness as year-round habitat compensation in the event of mature trees lost to logging.

Lewis's Woodpecker (LEWO) Surveys:

Conducted in July 2021, a total of 14 active nests were located throughout the West Kootenays, which is an increase from 9 in the 2020.



Preparing bat roosting tree

Yellow Breasted Chat Surveys:

Conducted in the Pend d'Oreille River Valley burn site, restoration activities such as brushing are planned for fall 2022.

Western Screech Owl Surveys:

A threatened species inventory conducted in the spring of 2021 will help inform high priority sites for Riparian Ecological Restoration projects.

Thank you to our Canadian friends for taking steps to protect wildlife species and habitat. 🌍

Public Comments on Northport Waterfront Cleanup Plan CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Figure B summarizes the combination of cleanup actions planned for each area. More specifics are shared in Ecology's public presentation slides at www.bit.ly/3o0QEW8 and the draft cleanup action plan at www.bit.ly/3RyLMVE

Questions clarified at the public meeting included:

- Construction will take place over the course of a year when water levels are low and in-water work is not required. Funding has been secured as part of Washington State's capital budget.
- For the seasonal beach and other areas, fill and cap materials will be the same type of cobble/soil that was excavated. A public beach is not being created.

- If existing road and related infrastructure is harmed, funding can be used to fix damage.
- The public dock area will improve boat access via excavation that will increase water depth by about 2.5 feet. It does not include any infrastructure improvements to the dock.
- The boat launch will only be closed when construction in that area is occurring.
- The hillside area will provide new and enhanced recreational opportunities while also protecting sensitive riparian areas.

To review public comments received during the comment period and Ecology's responses, visit www.bit.ly/3c54PGV 🌍

FIGURE B: PLANNED NORTHPORT WATERFRONT CLEANUP AREA ACTIONS

	Excavate & Replace Contaminated Material	Fill & Cap Contaminated Material	Regrade Portions of Area	Armoring Toe & Sides with 12" Rip Rap	Add Bench Seating, Picnic Shelter, Fencing & Riparian Planting
Seasonal Beach	✗	✗	✗		
Bay & Public Dock	✗	✗			
Jetty		✗		✗	
Bayshore		✗			
Hillside	✗				✗
Estimated Volume of Excavation: 13,521 cubic yards					
Estimated Volume of Fill and Cap: 28,540 cubic yards					



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2022 Lake Roosevelt Fishery Highlights

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To support long term genetic diversity and other conservation goals, additional harvest changes are expected in 2023. The fishery harvest is expected to move to the fall as well as be shorter, and the slot limit will be tighter. Managers stress they are committed to annual stocking and maintaining a harvest. They are very pleased with the success of conservation efforts and what has become a very popular recreational fishery.

Northern Pike

This non-native invasive species is a voracious predator that devastates other fish populations. Northern pike can prey on fish that are 75% of their body weight and reproduce quickly. Managers, for instance, have caught females that are up to 26 lbs., each carrying about 127,000 eggs. Over the course of suppression efforts, 8,800 females have been removed with an estimated 442 million eggs.

In addition to threatening trout and other Lake Roosevelt fisheries, they can potentially move down the Columbia River and to other waterbodies like Banks Lake, thus threatening salmon, steelhead and other fisheries.

Suppression efforts, which include multiple strategies from gillnetting to offering rewards for their capture, are

currently showing promising results. The number of fish caught per net is down from 4.37 in 2017 to 0.46 in 2021. In addition, nine eDNA monitoring sites changed from positive pike detections to negative 2021. The primary pike location is concentrated in the northern section of the lake, e.g.—from Gifford to the Canadian border.

Visit www.bit.ly/3Ru85Mh to learn more about the northern pike reward program. 🌐

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