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Lake Roosevelt Forum

NEWSletter

FALL 2002

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EPA Releases Draft Site Investigation Report

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) RELEASED A DRAFT SITE INVESTIGATION REPORT of the upper Columbia River (Lake Roosevelt) in mid-November. The site investigation will be used to help determine if Lake Roosevelt is appropriate for inclusion on EPA's National Priorities List (NPL), commonly called the "Superfund" list.

The final line of the report, which was prepared for EPA by a consulting firm, states: "Based on an evaluation of hazardous substances found in sediment samples collected from the upper Columbia River, and a review of prior studies conducted documenting elevated levels of metals, dioxins and furans in sediment at several locations from the U.S.-Canada border leading into Lake Roosevelt, further investigation of the upper Columbia River under CERCLA is recommended." The draft site investigation report can be downloaded from EPA's Region 10 web site at: www.epa.gov/r10earth/ . Click on "Index A-Z," then "U," and then "Upper Columbia River."

EPA scheduled public meetings on December 3rd in Kettle Falls, and December 4th in Colville and Northport to review the report. EPA will also present the report on December 19th at 7:00 pm to the Stevens County Federal Lands Advisory Committee. This meeting is open to the public and will be held in the Commissioner's Room at the Steven's County Court House. EPA is also considering hosting a public meeting in Davenport, WA.

PUBLIC COMMENT

In September, the Forum invited EPA to discuss their site investigation at a public meeting held in Colville, WA. The meeting was attended by over 100 people. EPA announced at the meeting that for the first time in the region's history, a draft site investigation report would be released to the general public and interested federal, state, tribal, and local agencies. Comments are due back to EPA by December 31, 2002.

At the meeting, EPA said the study focuses on gathering information about contamination in river sediments. Sediments are fragmented material such as soil, sand, silt and clay



*EPA is holding public meetings
to review the draft report.*

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GETTING TO KNOW DEBBIE BIRD

Several years ago a young woman studied literature because it spoke to her soul. When Henry Thoreau wrote “I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself,” the young woman thought “Yeah, me too.”

Since then, the woman has stayed close to both nature and literature. Her name is Debbie Bird. On November 18th, 2002 she became the new Park Superintendent for the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area.

In her mid-twenties Debbie was a concession employee for the National Park Service (NPS). As Debbie relates the story, “I was infected with a severe case of NPS ideals. I saw not only the value in preserving our Parks, but how important the Parks are to preserving our national heritage.”

For the past nine years, Debbie was the Chief Ranger at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in California. During that time, she also spent fourteen months as the Acting Superintendent for newly formed Manzanar National Historic Site. She is as devoted as ever to the ideals and mission of the National Park Service. That includes preserving scenic, natural and cultural resources; providing a quality visitor experience; and being a good steward for this and future generations.

What her varied experiences have taught her is that it takes an entire community to protect a National Park or Recreation Area. She assumes that people of different cultures, backgrounds and interests view nature and its preservation differently. Debbie embraces the diversity of viewpoints, seeing herself as a facilitator and advocate for “creating a shared vision. Parks absolutely require community support.”

“From my perspective,” notes Debbie, “human beings are part of the natural landscape. At NPS sites like Lake Roosevelt, we can celebrate the uniqueness of the lands and water that attract over a million visitors a year. At the same time, we need to work with the community to educate people on what it takes to maintain, as well as respect, these areas as scenic, natural and cultural treasures.”

Although she’s been with NPS for twenty five years,



Debbie Bird is the new Park Superintendent for Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area

Debbie considers herself to be in the vanguard of employees who see working closely with the community as vital to how NPS will evolve nationally. “Unless it’s a park like Yellowstone or the Grand Canyon,” says Debbie, “we need to expect that our parks are a direct part of many people’s daily lives.

NPS can’t just walk in with the management attitude of ‘do it how we think best’ and go from there.” Her hope is that NPS, along with the other managing partners with responsibilities for Lake Roosevelt, can be as flexible as possible in pursuit of a shared community vision.

Debbie wants to start “by letting people know I want to be part of this community.” Among other things, that means she’s anxiously waiting for her husband Paul to arrive from California with their three quarter horses, two dogs and two cats. “Between horseback riding and horseback packing, I’ve ridden a lot of miles. But I’ve walked a lot more miles than I’ve ever ridden. People will see me walking through the towns and along the trails around the entire lake.”

And when she’s not walking the area, Debbie will be leading the National Recreation Area staff. Currently, this includes 49 permanent employees and 55 seasonal employees. Their duties include interpretation, education and public outreach; resource and visitor protection; facility management; and general administration.

For someone who got her degree in English literature from the University of California Santa Barbara, Debbie’s taste in writers has evolved along with her perspectives of nature. One of her current favorites is the poet Maya Angelou. When you pass her on a trail, she may be remembering a refrain from one of Angelou’s poems. Like this verse from *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*:

*The caged bird sings with a fearful trill
of things unknown but longed for still
and his tune is heard on the distant hill
for the caged bird sings of freedom.*

✱

Environmental Analysis to Determine Future of Personal Watercraft at Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area

AS OF NOVEMBER 7, 2002 PERSONAL WATERCRAFT CAN NOT BE OPERATED within Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. This prohibition will remain in place until at least late spring 2003. By this time the National Park Service (NPS) hopes to complete an environmental analysis determining the long term future of personal watercraft on the lake.



Personal Watercraft frequent Lake Roosevelt

The ban on personal watercraft stems from a national court case and settlement between NPS and the Bluewater Network, a coalition of more than 70 conservation groups representing more than four million people. Under terms of the settlement, personal watercraft are banned from Lake Roosevelt and other NPS areas until an environmental analysis is conducted that meets criteria established in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Completing the environmental analysis is time consuming. It requires collection and assessment of several data sources, including public comment. For Lake Roosevelt, NPS has

hired and is actively working with a contractor to complete the Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA is targeted for completion this winter, at which time it will be disseminated for public review and comment.

This spring, the Superintendent for the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area will make a recommendation regarding the future of personal watercraft. If the recommendation is a "Finding of No Significant Impact," a final ruling permitting personal watercraft use may be complete by late spring.

Dan Mason, Chief Ranger for the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, comments, "We're committed to trying to get a ruling before the 2003 recreation season begins in earnest. But there are a lot of protocols that must be followed to the letter, so we can't guarantee when we'll be finished."

NPS will keep the media and concessionaires fully informed so people will know when, and if, the ban is lifted. If there are particular issues you would like to see addressed in the EA, contact Dan Mason at (509) 633-9441 X123. *

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Yes, I'd like to donate!

Local support for the continuation of the Lake Roosevelt Forum is critical. Donations are used to support the newsletter and school activities. Please support the Forum with your contribution. The amounts below are suggestions. Whether or not you choose to donate, you will still continue to receive the Lake Roosevelt Forum Newsletter.

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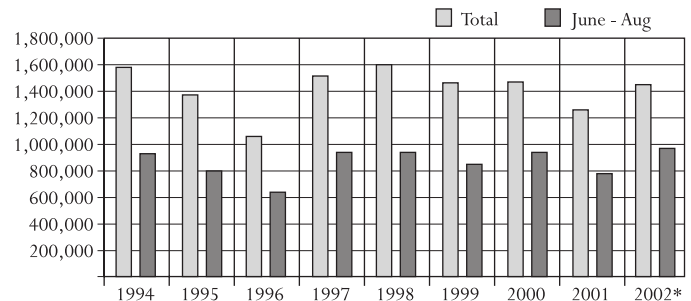
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Visitations Set Record High for 2002 Recreation Season

Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area Visits



*2002 is estimated based on year to date totals and projections for November and December

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE reports that for the period June – August, visitations to Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area set a record. Says Lynne Brougher, Chief of Resource Education, "Visitations were up by twenty five percent compared to last year, which was an off year."

That's good news for local area merchants. According to the 1994 NPS General Management Plan, five to eleven percent of employment in counties surrounding Lake Roosevelt stems from tourism. *

Fish Tag Prize Winners Announced



Colby Peone catches a Kokanee

MANAGING THE FISHERIES OF LAKE ROOSEVELT is no simple task. Currently, there are over 30 species of fish in the lake. Annually, over 500,000 rainbow

trout and 500,000 kokanee are stocked in the lake through the use of hatcheries and net pens.

The Lake Roosevelt Fisheries Evaluation Program, which includes representatives from the Spokane Tribe of Indians, the Colville Confederated Tribes, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Eastern Washington University monitors and evaluates the needs of this diverse fishery. The program is funded through the Northwest Power Planning Council Fish and Wildlife Program with Bonneville Power Administration.

Says Deanne Pavlik, Program Manager for the Spokane Tribe of Indians, "We try to find out what things can be done to help the fish. Collecting fish tags is a really important part of helping us do our job." Floy tags, for instance, help fishery managers determine growth rates, numbers being harvested by anglers, movement, and

assist with evaluation of artificial production programs.

Thanks to the drawing, the evaluation program was able to increase floy tag returns by more than 100%.

Funds were donated by the Lake Roosevelt Fisheries Evaluation Program and the Sportsman's Warehouse in Spokane, WA.

The next drawing, which will focus exclusively on floy tag returns from rainbow trout, will be in April, 2003. Floy tags can be submitted by:

- Returning them to boxes located near many boat launches
- Mailing them to Eastern Washington University, Fisheries Research Lab, 258 Science Building, Cheney, WA 99004
- Calling 509-359-7498, or e-mailing ascholz@ewu.edu .

The Forum hopes all anglers help The Lake Roosevelt Fisheries Evaluation Program by returning tags.

PRIZE WINNERS

\$100.00

John Sultiff of Walla Walla
David and Melanie Bell of Cheney
Leah Jordan of Spokane

\$50.00

Bob Dorsey of Wenatchee
Authur Drake of Cheney
Randi Wooddell of Deer Park
Jennifer Pelsang of Deer Park
Steve Nelson of Colville

\$20.00

Bernie Chinguard of Spokane
Geno Lawerance of Kettle Falls
Don Fox of Seven Bays
Bill Burnet of Spokane
Vicki Phillips
Roy Allen of Rice
Bob Richards of Spokane
Rick Sawyer of Ritzville
Jim Sorenson of Nine Mile Falls
Rodger Philpott of Colville

EPA Draft Site Investigation Report

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that are deposited on the river bottom banks. As documented in the site investigation report, data shows elevated levels of heavy metals such as arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury and zinc. These results are consistent with previous studies conducted by the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) and the Washington State Department of Ecology in the 1990s.

To the frustration of many at the September meeting, the study does not help determine if the sediment contamination poses an environmental or human health risk. Says Deral Bolenus, a Lincoln County Commissioner, "I think everyone is in favor of cleaning up places that pose a risk. But this study doesn't tell us if critters, fish or people are at risk, or where to cleanup."

Dave Croxton, an EPA Superfund Program Manager, agrees. He notes that the additional studies to make that type of determination typically occur after a site has been

put on the Superfund list. Says Croxton, "Once there's an NPL listing, EPA conducts a Remedial Investigation to determine the extent of contamination and the associated health and environmental risks. Without a NPL listing, EPA needs an alternative site management option to make the same determination."

DECISION MAKING

In the Spring of 2003, EPA's Region 10 Management Review Team will consider the report's findings and the written comments. The team will then recommend appropriate next steps, which may include a Superfund listing or other site management options.

If a Superfund listing is recommended, the EPA Region 10 Administrator, John Iani, will review the recommendation and either a) support the recommendation and assist with preparation of a letter seeking the Governor's

Forum Hosts Educational Tour of Lake

“TALKING ABOUT THE NEEDS OF THE LAKE IS ONE THING,” comments Andy Dunau, Executive Director of the Forum, “but being on the lake when you’re talking about those needs brings everything home.”

In the past the Forum has sponsored bus tours to help agency and community representatives get a better feel for the diverse and interwoven interests of Lake Roosevelt. This September, the Forum took these educational tours one step further. With a grant from the Department of Ecology, and assistance from the Colville Tribal Enterprises Corporation and the National Park Service, five houseboats took over 60 people on a day long tour of the upper portion of the lake.

From just south of Colville to Summer Island, the houseboats stopped in five different locations. At each location, community and/or agency representatives provided an overview of an important issue. Representatives from Stevens County, for instance, were able to discuss initiatives undertaken by their conservation district and watershed group. Other presentations discussed critical fishery and water quality issues.

In between presentations, people were able to informally network with each other. Says Roy Fox, Federal Hydro Projects Manager for BPA, “The Forum had a great idea in changing the mix of folks on each boat from stop to stop. By the end of the day I had the chance to talk with and learn from many different people representing a wide range of interests and roles around the reservoir.”



Five Houseboats take over 60 people on tour of lake

The Forum designed the tour to help people interactively build a picture of the dynamics and people managing lake area resources. Mary Lou Soscia, EPA’s Columbia River Coordinator, described the results this way, “It was a great opportunity to update people on our work, but also hear from others about what they’re doing. Sometimes we get pretty caught up in our own world of activity and issues. This

helped me take a step back in a way that was also a lot of fun.”

Linda Kiefer, the WIRA 59 Watershed Coordinator, felt the community benefits were equally important. “We don’t have enough time or budget to network with others the way we’d like to. The Forum helped give people from my group that opportunity. For those of us who were able to participate, we can bring what we learned and contacts with new people back to the larger group.”

The Forum will continue making networking and informational opportunities available. This spring, the Forum will host a three-day conference in Spokane. The conference is scheduled for April 21—23 at the downtown DoubleTree. Says Dunau, “It’s in Spokane because we needed a central location where people could easily spend the night. But to make sure we maximize community participation, we’ve raised funds to assist those who need it with overnight accommodations. Also, we’re going to organize the program so people that can only spend one or two days at the conference can come to the parts they are most interested in.”

The Forum also has a grant pending to do a second houseboat tour that will focus on the southern part of the lake next fall.

EPA Draft Site Investigation Report

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support of a listing, or b) not confirm the management review recommendation and suggest what other course of action is appropriate.

DRAFT REPORT FINDINGS

From Inchelium north to the Canadian border, 58 sediment samples were taken. Six metals (arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury and zinc) were detected at significant concentrations in multiple locations. The concentrations of copper, lead and zinc generally

increase with upstream proximity to the Canadian border. The highest concentrations of copper and zinc, which were twice the magnitude of those found downstream near

Inchelium, were found near the U.S.—Canada border. Cadmium, lead and mercury concentrations tend to be at their highest near the mining

To send written comments on the draft report, or receive a hard copy of the report, contact:

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EPA DRAFT SITE INVESTIGATION REPORT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

district located in upper Stevens County. Sediment samples were not taken south of Inchelium because of EPA funding constraints.

The report identifies the Cominco smelter in Trail, B.C. as "... a primary source of contamination in the upper Columbia River." These operations annually discharged up to 145,000 metric tons of slag, which is a black sand-size material containing glassy particulate matter and metals, since operations began in 1896. Cominco ceased these discharges in mid-1995 after the plant was extensively renovated.

In addition to Cominco, there are mining, milling, smelting, pulp and other industries that are potential sources of contaminants. The former Le Roi/Northport Smelter in Northport, WA and the Celgar Pulp Mill in Castlegar, B.C. are among other industries cited.

NEXT STEPS

No further investigations are planned by EPA until after their management review team recommendation is made this Spring and the Regional Administrator considers appropriate next steps. To receive general information from

EPA, contact either Judy Smith, Community Involvement Coordinator, at (503) 326-6994/smith.judy@epa.gov or Dave Croxton, Superfund and Brownsfield Program Manager, at (206) 553-6694/croxton.dave@epa.gov. *

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