

Committed to the
environmental and
economic well being
of our community

Lake Roosevelt Forum

NEWS

letter

FALL 2003

INside

Guest Column

Tom Eaton 2

Invitation to Our
Premier Website:

www.lrf.org 3, 4

Subbasin Planning
for Lake

Roosevelt 5, 6

SPONSORS

Bonneville Power
Administration

Bureau of
Reclamation

Colville Tribal
Enterprise
Corporation

Confederated Tribes
of the Colville Indian
Reservation

Lincoln County

National Park Service

Spokane Tribe of
Indians

Stevens County

Washington
Department of
Ecology

National Park Service Will Seek Public Comment for Proposed Personal Watercraft Regulations

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT HAS BEEN BANNED in the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area (LRNA) since November, 2002. This ban resulted from a national court case between the National Park Service (NPS) and a coalition of environmental organizations called the Bluewater Network.

To determine the future of personal watercraft use in Lake Roosevelt, LRNA conducted an environmental assessment and reviewed three alternatives. One alternative is to ban use; a second alternative is to allow use in all areas; and the third alternative is to allow use with some restrictions.

This summer the park superintendent recommended to the NPS Regional Director that Alternative B, calling for the reinstatement of personal watercraft use under a special regulation with two additional restrictions, be adopted. The additional restrictions call for increasing the no wake zones at least two hundred feet around developed areas, e.g.—campgrounds, boat launches and marinas, and prohibiting the use of personal watercraft in the Kettle River.

The decision to permit the use of personal watercraft on Lake Roosevelt requires NPS to draft a special regulation that is expected to appear in the Federal Register by the beginning of January. The public will then be given sixty days to comment. All comments (be they in favor, opposing or suggesting changes to the ruling) are critical. To assure you have the opportunity to comment, contact LRNA. Staff will make sure you receive the draft ruling and know where to send your comments.

In a best case scenario, the special regulation will be finalized before the beginning of summer. Says Dan Mason, Chief Ranger for LRNA, "We understand people want this done before the recreation season starts, and we're working hard toward that end."

Congressman Nethercutt's office, however, wants to avoid a repeat of last year's ban. Notes Cathy LeBret, an aide to congressman Nethercutt, "We think a one year process became a two year process. We don't want to hope for the best and find out it's a three year process."

As a result, congressman Nethercutt introduced H.R 3621. This legislation would extend personal watercraft use until December. To find out more about this legislation and its prospects for passage, contact Cathy LeBret at cathy.lebret@mail.house.gov, or call (509) 684-3481.

**Contact LRNA Office of Superintendent
to receive Personal Watercraft Draft
Rule and public comment
information.**

Write to:

Lake Roosevelt
National Recreation Area
Office of Superintendent
Attention: Personal Watercraft Ruling
1008 Crest Drive
Coulee Dam, WA 99185

E-Mail by visiting this website:

<http://www.nps.gov/laro/pphtml/contact.html>



GUEST COLUMN TOM EATON

Director EPA Washington Operations Office

WHOEVER SAID, “THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY REMAIN THE SAME,” must have been a member of the Lake Roosevelt Forum!

While some issues get resolved and others emerge, the Lake Roosevelt Forum remains a constant – grappling with and educating people about issues such as forestry, drawdown, and invasive species. The EPA appreciates greatly the Forum’s important role as a communication vehicle where interested people can learn about issues and happenings in the watershed.

It’s no secret that contamination from Teck Cominco, Ltd.’s smelter in Trail, B.C., is one of the issues that we’re involved with, so we thought it would be a good idea to provide an update on where things stand in our efforts to get the company to do the right thing about its pollution.

Much to our disappointment, in late November, after nearly 100 years of discharging enormous amounts of heavy metals-laden waste into the Columbia River, Teck Cominco announced that it refused to meet the standards that other U.S. companies must adhere to when they assess the environmental damage their operations have caused.

This is disappointing not only to us at the EPA, but to the Colville and Spokane tribes and others around the lake who rely on Lake Roosevelt for tourism and business enterprises and fishery resources; to the thousands of people who want to ensure that the lake and its shores are clean; and to taxpayers across the country who are concerned that they, not the polluter, may now have to pay for studies and possible clean-up of Teck Cominco’s millions of tons of waste.

The company has made much of its offer of \$10 million (sometimes they say it’s \$13 million) to conduct studies of their pollution. They put a good – and misleading – spin on it. They say we rejected their offer based on process not substance, implying that EPA is taking a very bureaucratic and unreasonable position. I would like to tell you “the rest of the story” here.

At Lake Roosevelt, the federal Comprehensive

Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA or “Superfund”) is the only federal law that applies to the health and environmental assessments – and potential clean-up – that need to be done. The process that Presidents Carter and Reagan established in CERCLA require all responsible parties (as well as the U.S. government) to meet very clear, very substantive, and well-analyzed scientific standards for conducting health and environmental studies.

As any high school science student can attest, it is the process, or scientific method, that provides the substance – the data is only as good as the process followed. If you don’t follow, step-by-step, the process laid out, your data is worthless.

We sincerely hope that Teck Cominco reconsiders and will agree to conduct studies of the Upper Columbia River in the same manner that every other company in the U.S. would be required to do them.

In other words, without the rigorous, well-proven, science-based and open public process in CERCLA, the substance of \$13 million of “studies” would be useless and

indefensible in court. The CERCLA process is rigorous, it is tough, but it is proven to deliver sound decisions, and because of EPA’s oversight, those decisions time and time again withstand technical and legal challenges.

This process which is inherent in CERCLA is required whether a site is listed on the “Superfund” List or is dealt with under the Superfund Alternative Sites approach, an approach that we have been vigorously pursuing outside of a Superfund listing. Listed or not, though, the same standards apply. There is just no way around this – nor should there be. The end goal is the same; to protect human health and the environment. Teck Cominco simply would not agree to these standards.

We sincerely hope that Teck Cominco reconsiders and will agree to conduct studies of the Upper Columbia River in the same manner that every other company in the U.S. would be required to do them. In the meantime, the EPA plans to get the work done – with the participation of the state, the tribes, local communities and other interested parties. And, unless Teck Cominco steps up to the plate, that will mean U.S. taxpayers will foot the bill for the studies. In turn, the EPA will pursue Teck Cominco for repayment of taxpayer dollars spent on the investigation. This is not our desired option but something Teck Cominco has forced us to do.

I expect we will rely heavily on the Lake Roosevelt Forum over the next few years for the invaluable outreach opportunities it offers as our efforts to do the right thing for the Upper Columbia River continue. ✱

Subbasin Planning for Lake Roosevelt

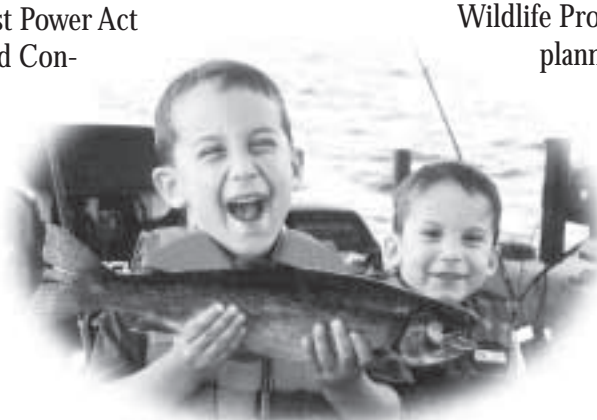
Since the passage of the Northwest Power Act of 1980, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council has developed five year Fish and Wildlife plans. The plan is a compilation of programs, projects and criteria to mitigate the effects of the construction and operation of the federal hydropower system. The Council's plan provides guidance and makes recommendations on how the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) should allocate millions of dollars for fish and wildlife mitigation each year.

Lake Roosevelt has been a major beneficiary of this program. For the past twenty years millions of dollars has directly resulted in the Spokane Tribe, Colville Tribe and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife developing robust fishery and wildlife programs. For instance, these programs support up to 1 million kokanee yearlings, 1.4 million kokanee fry/fingerlings, and 500,000 rainbow trout yearlings being stocked in Lake Roosevelt and Banks Lake annually.

The result has been a win/win situation. There is mitigation for the loss of historic fisheries that resulted from building Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams. At the same time, the fishery attracts millions of anglers who enjoy the area and help fuel the local economy.

SUBBASIN PLANNING

For those who deeply value the myriad of benefits the Fish and



Wildlife Program has brought the area, subbasin planning is a quiet, yet critically important planning process that is currently underway. Specifically, in 2000 the Council launched subbasin planning as a new review and selection process for its fish and wildlife program.

The Council divided the Columbia Basin into 11 ecological provinces. Each province has a number of subbasins (62 total) representing distinct geographic/watershed areas. Planning teams, each with representation from local constituencies, were funded to "identify specific actions needed for fish and wildlife in that subbasin." What is submitted for review should represent a blueprint for protection, mitigation, and enhancement activities. As importantly, these plans will guide the review, selection and funding of future projects.

Lake Roosevelt (called the Upper Columbia subbasin) is in the Intermountain Province (IMP). IMP subbasins include Lake Rufus Woods, San Poil, Upper Columbia, Spokane, Coeur d' Alene, and Pend Oreille. Beginning with a retreat in March 2003, technical and planning teams have been meeting with consultants to develop subbasin plans.

When sifting through data and considering alternatives, IMP planners developed the following questions to help set priorities:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

TO COMMENT ON THE SECOND DRAFT IMP SUBBASIN PLAN:

1. Download the plan from www.intermountainprovince.org (or call Gigi Gable at 503-697-1478 to request a copy on CD)
2. Edit in Word with the "track changes" feature (choose Tools, Track Changes, Highlight Changes). Also add comments using the Insert Comment feature.
3. Email the edited documents to ggillin@geiconsultants.com

OR MAIL COMMENTS TO:

Ginger Gillin
GEI Consultants, Inc.
127 East Front Street, Suite 216
Missoula, MT 59802

The third draft document will be posted on the web site February 23, 2004 with comments due March 26, 2004.

All Subbasin Work Team and Technical Coordination meetings are open to the public if you wish to attend check the project website for date and location of the next meeting or call or email Alison Squier, Intermountain Province Coordinator at for more information. Phone (509)747-5804, email alison@softridge.net.



Lake Roosevelt Forum

2206 S. Sherman St.
Spokane, WA 99203
1-800-279-6375
email: info@lrf.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORTED STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
SPOKANE, WA
PERMIT #4

SUBBASIN PLANNING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

- Does it move BPA toward mitigation?
- Does it benefit fish and wildlife?
- Does it fix a problem that will benefit fish and wildlife?
- Is it incentive driven?
- Does it benefit people?

On December 5th, the public was invited to attend an open house to review progress on the Upper Columbia (Lake Roosevelt) subbasin plan. As many people are unable to attend such meetings, progress and documentation are also available at: www.intermountainprovince.org

WHAT'S NEXT

Subbasin plans will be submitted to the Council by May 28, 2004. Ultimately, the Council plans to formally adopt approved Subbasin Plans into the Fish and Wildlife Program they recommend to BPA. As part of this process, the Council is asking the Independent Science Review Panel (ISRP) to review the subbasin plans. The ISRP review is currently scheduled to take place between June 1 and

August 12, 2004. The Council also expects to request public comment on plans from June through September, 2004. *

Feedback

1-800-279-6375 OR EMAIL: info@lrf.org
Please share your questions and comments with us. Let us know what you'd like more information about or would like to see featured in future issues. We will provide you with a response or additional information.

Get On The List

The Lake Roosevelt Forum Newsletter is a free publication. If you'd like to be added to our quarterly mailing list, please call us toll-free at 1-800-279-6375 or write us at the address listed above. Be sure to spell out your name and street address. Don't forget to include your zip code.