

Committed to the environmental and economic well being of our community

# Lake Roosevelt Forum NEWSletter

FALL 2006

## INSide

Getting to Know ..... 2

EPA Reports on Sediment and Fish Tissue Sampling....3

Teck Cominco Selects Project Manager and Contractor for RI/FS ..... 3

Forum Hosts Educational Houseboat Tour... 5

## SPONSORS

Bonneville Power Administration

Bureau of Reclamation

Ferry County

Lincoln County

National Park Service

Spokane Tribe of Indians

Stevens County

Washington Department of Ecology

## Lake Roosevelt a Focal Point for Columbia River Water Management Program

LAKE ROOSEVELT IS A FOCAL POINT FOR THE State of Washington's very ambitious Columbia River Water Management Program (CRWMP).

With the passage of House Bill 2860, the legislature directed the Washington Department of Ecology to "aggressively pursue water supplies to benefit both instream and out-of-stream uses." The context for this \$200 million dollar effort is a short supply of water rights and water flow for farmers, municipalities, fish and other stakeholders. Adding to the uncertainty is the effect of global climate change.

With this in mind, the legislation authorizes funding a combination of conservation projects and building additional storage facilities. Together, an expanded pie of water resources is seen as the best means to balance and meet the needs of humans and the environment.

"This program raises the bar and provides an opportunity for the environment to win as the economy wins," said Ecology director Jay Manning. "It sets a standard for allowing new out-of-stream water uses and shores-up instream flows at the most critical times of the year."

Specifically, the legislation directs Ecology to set aside one-third of new storage supplies for fish and make two-thirds of new water available for new water rights. In addition, the



Hawk Creek is one of four 1 million acre plus storage projects being evaluated by Ecology

legislation specifically protects water supplies during July and August.

This fall, Ecology prepared a report to the legislature, released a draft "Columbia River Water Supply Inventory and Long-Term Water Supply and Demand Forecast," and released a "Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Columbia River Water Management Program."

Additionally, the Columbia River Policy Advisory Group was formed to provide a multi-party framework for discussion. Stevens County commissioner Merrill Ott and a representative from the Spokane Tribe and Colville Tribes are part of this group.

The short and long term implications for Lake Roosevelt are very significant.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

# GETTING TO KNOW

## ERIC WEATHERMAN

Ever see log booms holding 10 acres of wood floating down Lake Roosevelt?

Imagine tug boats gently moving over 2000 tons of wood like a herd of cattle downstream. Wonder whose piloting the tug boat? Think he better have a calm hand and know what he's doing? And how'd he get that job anyway?

For Lake Roosevelt, the man behind the wheel is Eric Weatherman. Born and raised in Kettle Falls, he joined his father's company, Columbia Navigation, when he graduated high school in 1981.

Says Eric, "My dad got his start towing saw logs for local mills along the lake. We'd take timber from the southern part of the Colville Reservation and tow it upstream to the mills."

"Then we got contracts with the Bureau of Reclamation to remove and burn wood debris coming down from Canada and the Kettle River. Ecology wasn't happy about the burning, so in the late '80s we needed to come up with a cost effective, clean way of getting rid of the debris."

Their ingenuity resulted in developing a fully portable system of tug boats, wood grinding machines, grapple loaders and support equipment. With four to ten people in the operation, they float the wood down to a port just above Kettle Falls Marina. There, they grind the debris into wood chips and take it to Avista's wood fire generator, where the chips become fuel for generating electricity.

Because it's all portable, they began getting contracts to do the same thing lower in the Columbia by McNary, John Day and Lower Granite dams. In 1993, their ingenuity resulted in them being selected as the Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year for federal agencies.

"I was like John Boy Walton rubbing shoulders with engineers for defense contractors," comments Eric. "I can't tell you what an honor it was to receive the award for my family and meet the President of the United States."

For Eric, the values of the people in Kettle Falls haven't changed much. "It's still a place where if you have a flat tire, someone will help. We may be opinionated and don't always agree, but we're old fashioned about caring about people and taking care of each other. That's why I say that when people leave, they'll always be back. Friends who live in Seattle, they all ask me to find them an acre of property to buy."



*Eric Weatherman operates Columbia Navigation*

Eric sees the secret of Lake Roosevelt as the lack of development because the shoreline is owned by the federal government and tribes. "Imagine how unique and rare it is to have a body of water this big surrounded by mountains and streams. I love it."

But some things have changed. "I remember during draw downs racing motorcycles up and down the beaches with friends. And when spring came, we'd drive out on a mud flat near Marcus, put a bell on our fishing rods and stay up all night. When the bell rang, you might have a ten or eleven foot sturgeon dragging you around."

Today, protecting cultural resources means the motorcycle days are gone, and you can't fish for white sturgeon because the few that are left are protected.

Eric says he's also seen the rainbow fishery improve dramatically and the walleye fishery decline some. But what he's really noticing now is erosion and weeds.

"In the low bank areas, you can lose 10 to 20 feet of shoreline when the lake elevation is full combined with high winds. That causes more debris, which is starting to pile up in places and will eventually need to be taken care of. Long term, I think the feds are going to need to do some shoreline stabilization work."

"And there are algae blooms and weeds that are getting so thick you can't swim or boat in certain areas. The weeds aren't milfoil, but they get all balled up and end up on the beaches when the drawdown comes. You can find it all the way up to China Bend, thick enough to clog up your prop."

Besides business, Eric's focus is family. Currently, they live in Reardan and have a cabin on the Lake on the opposite shore of Kettle Falls Marina. In the fall of 2002, a lightning strike burnt down the original cabin. "I waited twenty years to find one of the rare places by the water. We had just spent six months remodeling the interior. It took us two years to rebuild after the fire. Thankfully, no one got hurt and we love our new cabin."

Notes Eric, "We're short timers now with boys seventeen and sixteen years old. Our time with them is really precious. Right now it's all about football. But depending on the season, you'll see us out there fishing, hunting, skiing, or snowmobiling."

The man from Kettle Falls has taken a way of life on the water and extended it out another generation. Showing us all that the more things change, the more we can count on him, his family and community staying true. ✨

# EPA Reports on Sediment and Fish Tissue Sampling

REPRESENTATIVE FROM EPA PROVIDED UPDATES on sediment contamination and preliminary fish tissue sampling studies to over 60 citizens who participated in a Lake Roosevelt Forum public meeting. Held in Colville on September 19th, the Washington State Department of Health and Teck Cominco also made presentations and responded to questions.

EPA initiated a Remedial Investigation Feasibility Study (RI/FS) in 2004. Field work began in 2005 with broad based sediment and fish tissue sampling. Contamination stems from elevated levels of metals and dioxins, furans and PCBs that are largely the legacy of upstream smelting and pulp operations. Such sampling is needed to assess both human health and ecological risks posed by contamination.



EPA's Kevin Rochlin gives sediment sampling presentation

whitefish, largescale sucker and burbot were collected at representative locations. Fish were then tested to determine concentrations of metals, dioxins/furans, PCBs, percent lipids (fat), and percent moisture. This data is now being evaluated by EPA, the WA Department of Health, the WA Department of Ecology, the Colville Confederated Tribes and Spokane Tribe of Indians.

Using sample information from the studies, Sally Thomas, an EPA Project Manager, described how sampling will help assess concentrations of contaminants by species, compare concentrations between species and determine if concentrations are higher in certain reaches of the lake. For instance:

- How do contaminant concentrations compare to federal, state or tribal standards for fish consumption?
- Do walleye show higher concentrations of one or more contaminants than rainbow trout?

## FISH TISSUE SAMPLING

With the assistance of area tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, walleye, rainbow trout, lake

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

# Teck Cominco Selects Project Manager and Contractor for RI/FS

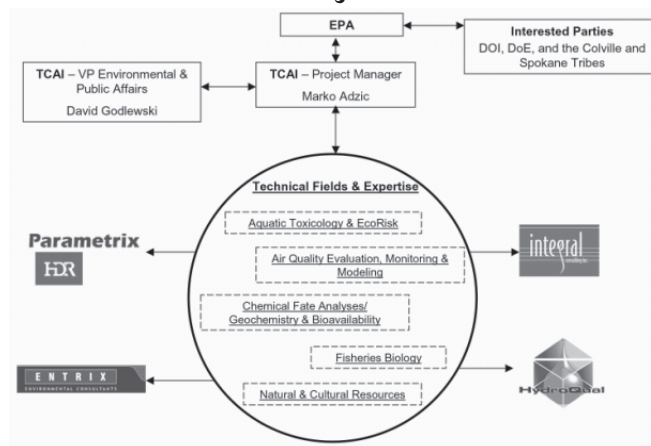
TECK COMINCO IS OFF TO A QUICK START in meeting their obligations to conduct a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) of contaminants in Lake Roosevelt.

Teck Cominco hired Marko Adzic to serve as project manager. He will be based out of Teck Cominco's office in Spokane. Marko was born in Calgary, Alberta and has an extensive background in environmental engineering. Previous to this position, he worked for CDM in Denver, Colorado.

Says Adzic, "I'm excited about the opportunity to do this work. The amount of local natural resource manager expertise is extraordinary. Combining that with world re-known specialists working on this project means we can collect and analyze the best information possible."

While Teck Cominco is responsible for the RI/FS, EPA supervises all activities. This includes approving all scopes of work, validating the integrity of data collected, and interpreting data. Completion of the RI/FS is expected to take four to seven years. At the end of this process, it is EPA's

## RI/FS PROJECT TEAM



responsibility to issue a record of decision. The record of decision will determine what human health and ecological risks may be present, and what cleanup strategies (if any) are needed.

The figure above shows many of the stakeholders and contractors Teck Cominco expects to work with to carry out the studies required. ✱

# Lake Roosevelt a Focal Point

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## LAKE ROOSEVELT DRAWDOWN

The Columbia River Water Management Program has three early actions, one of which is to make available water now stored in Lake Roosevelt. The state would acquire the right to draw the lake down by 1 to 1.5 feet during the summer and early fall to support flows in the Columbia and offset proposed new water withdrawals downstream.

Combined with drawdown requirements specified in the current Biological Opinion, Lake Roosevelt would be reduced to an elevation of 1276.5' above sea level in a drought year. Historically, Reclamation has tried to maintain an elevation of 1280' or above to meet the desires of recreational interests during the summer. With proposed lake level changes, four to seven of the National Park Service's 22 boat ramps may not be useable during parts of the summer.

This early action could also make returning to an elevation of 1283' or above in October to support spawning kokanee more risky. Other variables associated with such a drawdown include: exposure of cultural resources during the tourism season, additional exposure of beaches currently being evaluated by EPA for health effects of sediment contamination, and changes to water quality and retention time that could affect habitat and aquatic life.

The purpose of the proposed drawdown is to provide additional water supply to downstream municipal/industrial users, irrigation water to the Odessa Subarea and increased flows for fish. In a drought year, additional water would be used to support the needs of farmers with interruptible water rights and other downstream needs.

The draft legislative report states that "...the Bureau of Reclamation will file two water right applications with Ecology to divert a total of 132,500 acre-feet from Lake Roosevelt. The water is proposed to be diverted from the Bureau of Reclamation's existing 6.4 million acre-foot storage right for water behind Grand Coulee Dam."

The release of this water is within the normal operational parameters of Lake Roosevelt and Reclamation will have to complete National Environmental Policy Act compliance on any resulting contract actions such as Municipal & Industrial, Drought, or the Odessa component. In addition, any water placed in the States trust water program would also require NEPA compliance.

The state's draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) notes that in late fall 2006 the Colville Tribe will complete an ongoing resident fish study in the lake to help assess the effects of reservoir levels. Further, the State has

an Agreement in Principle with the Colville Tribes to:

- "Provide for investigation of potential impacts of the Lake Roosevelt drawdown and compensation of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation for impacts;
- Create an economic development capital fund for the Tribe; and
- Create a fisheries enhancement capital fund and provides for joint work on fisheries management."

Further, in the state's memorandum of understanding with Reclamation, it states that "The State will consult with the Colville Confederated Tribes and the Spokane Tribe of Indians regarding the CRI and will secure the concurrence of these tribal governments." The draft EIS and report to the legislature do not provide an update on the status of consultations and concurrence with the Spokane Tribe. And while the report notes additional flow augmentation to support downstream fisheries, it is not clear how these actions will support the Columbia River Biological Opinion that is subject to approval by Judge Redden.

These reports also do not indicate how fishery assessments and enhancements with the Colville Tribe are, or will be, coordinated with the Lake Roosevelt Fisheries Evaluation Program. This BPA funded program is a multi-agency collaborative to provide oversight and coordination of Lake Roosevelt fishery programs. For the 2007—2009 fiscal years, BPA is expected to provide over seventeen million dollars to Lake Roosevelt fishery programs. Direct participants in the fisheries evaluation program include the Spokane Tribe of Indians, Colville Confederated Tribes, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Eastern Washington University and the Volunteer Net Pen Project.

Although referred to as an "early action," a schedule for implementation of the proposed drawdown is not currently available.

## STORAGE PROJECTS

The state is also studying potential off-channel storage in the Upper Columbia Basin. In late September, Ecology announced four potential sites for such a project. They include Hawk Creek, a tributary to Lake Roosevelt in Lincoln County. The others are Foster Creek in Douglas County, and in Grant County Sand Hollow and Crab Creek.

Each has storage capacity of over one million acre feet and would cost between one and three billion dollars. In a 2004 study by Washington State University, an additional one million acre feet of water was projected as necessary

# Forum Hosts Educational Houseboat Tour

ON SEPTEMBER 20TH, COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES from federal, state, local and tribal agencies took a house boat tour of the northern reaches of Lake Roosevelt. Over 60 people on five house boats toured an area from Kettle Falls marina to above Evans campground.



*Houseboat tour participants listen to resource experts*

House boats stopped at different locations.

At stopping points, agency and/or community representatives provided an overview of important issues and asked questions. Says Andy Dunau, the Forum's Executive Director, "It's about people who don't normally get to

interact building knowledge together that's of interest to all. Folks are able to link fishery, water quality, lake operations and community issues together to develop a broader understanding."

Toni Delgado, a Stevens County commissioner, commented that "I got to talk with people who gave me valuable information and perspectives. By the same token, I got to share my views with a few people I ordinarily wouldn't have a chance to talk to. And how often does a community member get to talk informally with a risk assessment specialist from EPA about fish tissue sampling? The tours give us a way to learn and talk that we can't otherwise get. It was fun."



A Public Participation Grant provided by the Washington Department of Ecology was instrumental in allowing the Forum to provide the house boat tour and public meeting the previous night. \*

## EPA Reports CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

- Are concentrations of contaminants higher in northern reaches of the lake than southern reaches?
- How do concentrations in fish compare to concentrations in sediment?

EPA and agencies are expected to individually and collaboratively assess results.

Len O'Garro with the WA Department of Health explained the processes they use to address public health concerns. Between November and February, the department expects to provide public information about safely consuming fish in Lake Roosevelt.

Department of Health information may include recommendations for safely consuming or preparing fish, numbers of fish that can be safely consumed per week or month, or an update to their fish advisory. The current fish consumption advisory is for mercury in walleye and bass for Lake Roosevelt. The bass fish advisory for mercury is statewide.

Estimates are that 300,000 anglers frequent Lake Roosevelt annually, catching about 900,000 fish and harvesting about 500,000 fish. Although there are thirty fish species in Lake Roosevelt, the most popular sport fishing is for rainbow trout, kokanee and walleye.

## SEDIMENT SAMPLING

EPA affirmed that sediment sampling of fifteen beaches showed them safe for recreational use. Three of the beaches sampled (Black Sand, Northport and Dalles) had elevated levels slightly above standards. These beaches are in the northern reaches of the lake, which is consistent with previous findings of where contaminated sediment concentrations are highest.

EPA defines recreational use as "... exposure limited to ingesting sediment while camping (with young children) along the shoreline for 14 days per year, returning for thirty years ..." EPA notes that with these standards, "These beaches present cancer risks on the order of 1 in a million."

Based on tribal, agency and public input, expectations are that Bradberry Beach and Colville Flats will also be tested to assure they meet recreational use standards. Additionally, further study work of beaches tribal and community members use more frequently than recreational standards will be undertaken.

Kevin Rochlin, an EPA project manager, described the broad base of sediment sampling that occurred throughout the Lake. This sampling is critical to developing the broader picture of:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

# Lake Roosevelt Forum

2206 S. Sherman St.  
Spokane, WA 99203  
1-509-535-7084  
email: [info@lrf.org](mailto:info@lrf.org)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORTED STANDARD

US POSTAGE

**PAID**

SPOKANE, WA

PERMIT #4

## LAKE ROOSEVELT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

to meet future demand. The vision is for Reclamation to develop a project that would be integrated into their Columbia Basin Project.

A more detailed analysis of the “four finalists” strengths and weaknesses is expected in March, 2007. This analysis will consider items such as the environmental suitability of each site, timing of drawdowns to Lake Roosevelt or other altered river flows, economic considerations such as the cost of pumping water into the reservoirs, and impacts on tribal cultural resources.

Development of a storage project of this magnitude is expected to take several years.

For more information about the Columbia River Water Management Program, go to <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/crwmp.html>. \*

COMMENTS ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER PROGRAMMATIC EIS will be accepted through Nov. 20 and may be directed to Derek Sandison, Department of Ecology, Suite 200, Yakima, WA 98902. Comments also may be emailed to [dsan461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:dsan461@ecy.wa.gov).

## EPA REPORTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

- Where contaminants are most concentrated;
  - How contaminants move through the lake and the food chain;
  - What plants and animals may be affected;
- The data collected will be utilized in future studies to assess specific human health and ecological risks.

Data collected supports previous studies about the general distribution and concentration of contaminants.

## NEXT STEPS

Tech Cominco and EPA signed an agreement in the Spring of 2006 that makes Teck Cominco responsible for carrying out the rest of the RI/FS (see page 3). The next series of studies will be determined based on EPA’s approval of study plans that Teck Cominco is providing by year’s end. \*

## 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. \*