

Committed to the
environmental and
economic well being
of our community

Lake Roosevelt Forum

NEWSletter

SPRING 2004

INside

Getting to Know	2
Student Discovery Week 2004	3
Houseboat Tour	3
White Sturgeon Awareness	4
Council Seeks Public Comment ...	4
Fishing Dates	4
EPA Investigation ..	5
PWC Use Allowed	5

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

Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Released In Lake Roosevelt for First Time



UNBEKNOWNST TO MANY, A PREHISTORIC FISH SWIMS THE WATERS OF LAKE ROOSEVELT. Called white sturgeon (or *Acipenser transmontanus*), this species has remained virtually unchanged for

175 million years. These ancients of the deep can live for more than a century, grow up to nineteen feet and weigh 1,800 pounds. They have a torpedo-shaped body, large dorsal fin, flat head, bony plates and whisker-like sensors.

Sadly, the species of white sturgeon unique to this area is struggling to survive. The current adult population in the U.S. and Canadian portions of the upper Columbia River system is about three to four thousand. As importantly, research shows spawning has significantly declined and the mortality of juveniles is very high. And because female sturgeons do not spawn until age thirty, a crisis has emerged.

On May 12th, efforts to stem this decline included the first ever release of hatchery sturgeon into Lake Roosevelt. Utilizing fish produced at the Kootenay Sturgeon Conservation Hatchery in Canada, and reared since February by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) at their Moses Lake facility, about 2,000 ten to twelve inch long sturgeon were released in the Kettle Falls, North Gorge and Northport areas. Implanted



with "PIT" (passive integrated transponder) tags, these fish will be monitored as part of on-going research efforts.

Says Jason McLellan, the WDFW biologist who coordinated the release, "The hatchery sturgeon release acts as a 'stop gap' measure to

FOR SLIDE TOURS, THE LATEST RESEARCH AND MORE, VISIT THE UCWSRI WEB SITE AT WWW.UPPERCOLUMBIASTURGEON.ORG.

ensure juvenile recruitment into the population while the recovery team works on other measures to increase natural reproduction."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

GETTING TO KNOW MATT HOWELL

Matt Howell grew up on the east coast of England. He is one of two children raised in a family who relied on commercial fishing for its livelihood. Says Matt, “I got my sea legs early. I can’t remember a time when boats, hooks, and bait weren’t second nature to me.”

Today, Matt’s catching fish for a very different reason. He’s on the front line working to restore a robust population of white sturgeon to Lake Roosevelt.

If you were on the northern portion of the lake this spring, you may have seen Matt leading a set lining crew. With several setlines, each consisting of six hundred feet of ground line and forty hooks baited with pickled squid, the crew caught and released white sturgeon up to ten feet and 350 pounds.

The work is hard and arduous. But, notes Matt, “It’s critically important to establishing the current situation and getting good baseline data. We’re learning about their size, abundance, age and migration behavior.”

And how does someone from a commercial fishing village in England end up living just outside Colville by a small, idyllic lake? “That’s easy,” says Matt. “First you get a scholarship to the University of Nottingham and get a masters degree in Environmental Science. Then you fall in love with someone from Portland. You move to Oregon and hire on as seasonal help with Oregon Fish and Wildlife. It turns out knowing about boats and commercial fishing was a help to people working with white sturgeon on the lower Columbia.”

In 2001, Matt hired on with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) as a project biologist. Last October, he was recruited to move to Lake Roosevelt. Since then, he’s been a whirling dervish of activity.

“Doing this work is a unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to the knowledge of white sturgeon biology in the Columbia River,” says Matt. “We’re following the lead of the Canadians who’ve been researching the upper Columbia sturgeon populations for over a decade, and they’re teaching us a lot. Since sturgeon don’t recognize international boundaries, it’s really important we work together closely.”



Matt is a project biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

But Matt and the agencies working to restore white sturgeon know it’s a fight against time. “We need,” continues Matt, “to get moving right now because the population hasn’t successfully reproduced since the early ‘70’s. That means that most of the fish out there right now are over thirty years old. Over the next ten to twenty years

numbers will decline to just a few hundred, at which point genetic diversity will be severely reduced. The population will then become functionally extinct in about fifty years. To preserve the diversity of the population its imperative we establish a hatchery program, similar to the Canadians, as soon as possible”.

“We are working toward completion of a hatchery feasibility study. And we know from conservation aquaculture programs on the Kootenai River and in Canada that raising sturgeon is a bit of an art. So, while the feasibility study is underway we’ll keep raising and releasing fish from the Canadian hatchery and try some experimental spawning work of our own to develop on the ground experience right away.”

Matt’s sense of urgency is mixed with knowing there are no quick fixes. In Matt’s view, he’ll be about ready to retire before knowing if the efforts of today began a path toward success. According to Matt, “It may take several years to establish a successful hatchery program and it’ll be another thirty years before the fish we initially produce reach adulthood and are ready to spawn. During that time we need to keep researching the reasons for the current population decline and mitigate for them. Then when these fish reach maturity they’ll have the environment they need to successfully produce the following generation.”

Knowing this work is a marathon with sprints here and there, Matt is settling in for the long haul. From his cabin he enjoys the abundance of wildlife, including the moose that recently walked through his backyard. And to fully enjoy Lake Roosevelt, he’s building a wooden sea kayak and a 21-foot pocket yacht.

Says Matt, “I really like the Colville community. They are friendly helpful people. And please ask people to contact me if they know anything, like fishing stories, about white sturgeon in this area. We need every piece of information we can get.” ✨

Student Discovery Week 2004

753 STUDENTS, 23 TEACHERS AND NUMEROUS PARENTS PARTICIPATED in Student Discovery Week 2004. Each year students from schools throughout the Lake Roosevelt area can take a field trip to visit a discovery zone. Here, natural resource specialists share their knowledge and introduce students to environmental projects and activities around the lake.

Said Debra Berg, whose 7th/8th grade students visited Grand Coulee Dam and learned how to use GPS systems, "The added treasure hunt was excellent! The students had fun and learned a lot from both tours. The tour guides were very patient, informative and fun!"



And Kim Todd's 3rd graders from Odessa wrote to say "Please thank the people who donated money to your organization so that kids like us can learn about the environment! ... We had a great time at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area with Juli & Mike. We hope all third grades in Odessa can continue to attend this day of learning and fun!"

Evaluations show strong appreciation for the efforts of the agencies which come together to make student discovery week possible. This year, zones were supported by the Bonneville Power Administration, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, Colville Confederated Tribes, Lake Roosevelt Volunteer Net Pen Project, National Park Service, Spokane Tribe of Indians, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Based on input from teachers and agencies, the Forum looks forward to providing even more discovery zone opportunities next year. ✱

Forum Hosts Educational Houseboat Tour

ON JUNE 10TH, community members and representatives from federal, state, local and tribal agencies took a house boat tour of Lake Roosevelt. 50 people on four house boats toured an area from Seven Bays Marina to the San Poil.

Utilizing grant assistance from the Washington Department of Ecology and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the tour provided participants a unique opportunity to explore the diverse and interwoven environmental, economic and cultural issues of Lake Roosevelt.

Said Deral Bolenus, a Lincoln County Commission and President of the Forum Board, "We talk about the lake a lot, and each of us has specific things we're really concerned about. But talking about the lake is different than being on the lake. And being able to informally talk with others about specific questions or interests is also hard to come by. The house boat tour gave us these opportunities in a way that was also a lot of fun."



Cami Grandinetti from EPA agrees, "The boat tour was a great opportunity to connect with people working on related issues. We know there are a lot of people doing valuable work at the local level, and we'd like to take advantage of that during our study as much as possible."

At different locations, the houseboats stopped and agency and/or community representatives provided an overview of an important issue. Issues included topics such as fishery programs, water quality, lake operations and planning.

These and other topics will also be important parts of the Forum's Annual Conference. This year, the conference is scheduled for November 15 - 17 at the historic Davenport Hotel in Spokane, Washington. Community and tribal scholarships to assist with attendance will be available.

Specific information about the conference will be available at <http://www.lrf.org/conf/index.html>. ✱

White Sturgeon Community Awareness Program Begins

FUNDING FROM THE BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION ALSO INCLUDES community outreach. Says Deanne Pavlik, program manager for STOI and coordinator of the Lake Roosevelt Fisheries Evaluation Program, "Natural resource managers want a knowledgeable, involved public. From school kids to adults, having this unique species in our area should be a source of pride. Bringing sturgeon back from the brink will require lots of helping hands and cooperation."

American community outreach efforts began in January. Working collaboratively with Canadian partners, the UCWSRI web site (www.uppercolumbiasturgeon.org) was launched. Notes John Whalen, WDFW Fishery Program Manager, "The site has slide tours and other information that make learning about white sturgeon easy for all ages. At the same time, technical people from both sides of the border can find the latest research and recovery information."

In May, the public was invited to the release of hatchery sturgeon. And on May 27th, the Forum helped host a house boat tour from Kettle Falls to the Evans area for over 30 natural resource managers and community members. Presentations and informal conversations built a rich picture of what's being done, the challenges being faced and hopes for the future.

Efforts are now focusing on a PowerPoint presentation that can be given to interested community groups, a brochure summarizing conditions and recovery efforts, opportunities for K-12 students to become involved, and broadening the Canadian community committee (called the Action Planning Group) to include American participation.

If you want to make sure an individual, group or classroom can be part of these upcoming efforts, contact the Forum at info@lrf.org ✱

Council Seeks Public Comments on Subbasin Plans

THE NORTHWEST POWER AND CONSERVATION COUNCIL IS INVITING public comment on subbasin plans submitted to the Council's Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program. The Council may use these plans as the basis for making recommendations to Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) funding of projects that protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife adversely impacted by the development and operation of the Columbia River hydropower system.

In our area, the Intermountain Province (IMP) submitted plans to the Council on May 27th. The IMP submission included Lake Roosevelt (called the Upper Columbia), Coeur d'Alene, Pend Oreille, Spokane, San Poil, and Lake Rufus Woods.

Writers of the IMP submission state that their plan includes:

- an assessment providing the technical foundation for the plan by describing the current condition of fish and wildlife in the subbasin and identifying limiting factors;
- an inventory providing a summary of recent and ongoing projects to protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife in the subbasin, along with an analysis of evident gaps; and
- a management plan describing the vision, objectives and prioritized implementation strategies in the subbasin."

Written comments are now being invited. All comments should be received by the Council by 5:00 p.m. on August 12th, 2004. The Council address is 851 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1100, Portland, Oregon, 97204.

The plan can be viewed or downloaded via the world wide web at www.subbasins.org/imp. ✱



Fishing Dates

DATE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
August 7th and 8th	Valley Marine Annual Open Bass Tournament	Banks Lake, Coulee Playground
August 21st and 22nd	Two Rivers Trout Derby	Two Rivers Casino & Resort
April 1st – Sept. 30th	Fish Tag Prize Drawing See http://www.lrf.org/Env/Env-FishTagPrize.html for details	Lake Roosevelt

EPA Gearing Up for Investigation of Upper Columbia

THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) IS MOVING AHEAD with a study of hazardous waste contamination in the upper Columbia River (Lake Roosevelt). The study, called a remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS), will take two to four years to complete.

EPA and its contractor, CH2M Hill, will be developing a detailed work plan for the RI/FS this summer with input from tribes, state agencies, local officials, citizen groups, and other interested parties. Sampling is not likely to begin until 2005. An important aspect of the work plan is to determine what information currently exists about the site, and what information needs to be collected during the RI/FS process.

EPA will also continue to work with local communities to make sure people have access to useful information about the project. You can get on EPA's mailing list to receive periodic updates by contacting Deborah Neal at 1-800-424-4372, extension 0115, or email neal.deborah@epa.gov. You can also visit one of the eight information repositories that have been established throughout the project area to provide access to technical documents and other materials related to the investigation.

EPA's project manager, Cami Grandinetti, attended the Lake Roosevelt Forum's annual boat tour in June and expects EPA to remain engaged with the Forum throughout the RI/FS process. "The Lake Roosevelt Forum is a tremendous resource to EPA," she said. "Local input is critical to our process and the Forum enables us to hear from many diverse interests at one time." ✱

PWC Use Allowed Within Lake Roosevelt

PERSONAL WATER CRAFT (PWC) USE IS ALLOWED within the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area (LRNA) except for the following conditions. PWC use is closed in National Park managed areas within the Kettle River (from its confluence with the lake upstream approximately seven miles). There is a no wake zone for PWCs (and all other boats) from the area adjacent to the Fort Spokane boat launch on the Spokane arm to just downstream of Two Rivers Marina (at the confluence). Also there are no wake zones 200 feet from marinas, campgrounds, picnic areas, swim beaches, and water skiers and other persons in the water.

Since November, 2002 PWC use in the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation area was banned. This ban resulted from a national court case between the National Park Service and a coalition of environmental organizations called the Bluewater Network. Lifting of this ban and implementation of the rule stated above is a result of LRNA completing an environmental assessment. ✱



WHAT IS AN RI/FS?

With a name like "remedial investigation and feasibility study," it's no wonder you're more likely to hear the acronym RI/FS. The RI/FS is a process established under Superfund to evaluate contaminated sites. During the remedial investigation (RI), EPA determines the nature and extent of contamination at a site, assesses risks to human health and the environment, and establishes cleanup criteria. Once the RI is completed, EPA conducts a feasibility study (FS) that considers different alternatives for cleanup and evaluates those alternatives against nine different criteria, including protectiveness, cost, ability to implement, and public input. Based on this evaluation, EPA then recommends a cleanup action that is made available for public review and comments.

Where to find more information:

Documents related to EPA's work on the upper Columbia River are available at the following locations. Be sure to call ahead for business hours:

NORTHPORT: Northport Town Hall, 315 Summit St., (509) 732-4450

COLVILLE: Colville Public Library, 195 S. Oak Street, (509) 684-6620

INCHELIUM: Inchelium Tribal Resource Center, 12 Community Loop, (509) 634-2791

NESPELEM: Office of Environmental Trust, Colville Confederated Tribes, 1 Colville Street, (509) 634-2425

GRAND COULEE: Grand Coulee Library, 225 Federal Street, (509) 633-0972

WELLPINIT: Spokane Tribe Department of Natural Resources, 6290 B Ford-Wellpinit Road, (509) 258-9042

DAVENPORT: Davenport Library, 411 Morgan Street, (509) 725-4355

SPOKANE: Spokane Library, 906 W. Main, (509) 444-5334

You can also visit the EPA Region 10 web site at <http://www.epa.gov/r10earth> (click on "Index A-Z," then "U" for Upper Columbia River)

Lake Roosevelt Forum

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORTED STANDARD

US POSTAGE

PAID

SPOKANE, WA

PERMIT #4

STURGEON RELEASE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

This historic effort is a collaboration of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the Spokane Tribe of Indians (STOI), and the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT). With STOI serving as the coordinating entity, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) fish and wildlife program is funding their work.

The collaborative effort is also international. Because this species travels the Columbia into Canada, over twenty five U.S. and Canadian government agencies, tribes, industry, organizations and others launched the Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative (UCWSRI) in 2000. Working cooperatively, scientists and natural resource managers developed a joint recovery plan. One part of the plan identifies research studies needed to identify barriers to successful reproduction and survival. Other aspects of the plan focus on aggressive actions needed to preserve genetic diversity and reverse population declines.

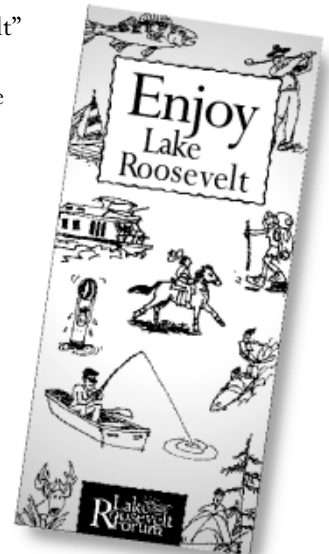
Rudy Peone, STOI Department of Natural Resources Director, summed up the effort by commenting "White sturgeon in the upper Columbia River has been a part of the river ecosystem for thousands of years. These fish are an important fixture in regional Native American culture and have also become popular with sport fishers. Collectively, we need to work to bring this ancient species back from the brink of extinction and to retain this piece of our heritage." ✱

Enjoy Lake Roosevelt

This year's "Enjoy Lake Roosevelt" user guide is now available and being distributed throughout the area.

Within it, you'll find the names and contact information for the most popular attractions around Lake Roosevelt.

To receive one or more copies, please contact the Forum. Call (509) 535-7084, or e-mail us at info@lrf.org.



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 at 1-509-535-7084 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.