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# Lake Roosevelt Forum

# NEWSletter

WINTER 2008

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## Forum Conference Once Again Attracts People from New and Far

**LAKE ROOSEVELT FORUM 2007 CONFERENCE**  
*Water Quality • Fisheries • Community*



OVER 235 PEOPLE attended one or more days of the Lake Roosevelt Forum's 2007 conference. This continues a series of successful, high profile conferences that started in 2000.

"What's remarkable," says Andy Dunau, Executive Director of the Forum, "is the number of new faces. About half of attendees had not been to the previous conference. This also happened at the last conference. It demonstrates that new community members continue to be engaged and there are new agency and tribal personnel becoming involved. The conference is the place they can get the big picture and find people to collaborate with."

This year's conference featured diverse sessions and presentations regarding water quality, fisheries and community development. The first two days of the conference featured two plenary sessions, 12 concurrent sessions and 55 individual presentations. Keynote luncheon speakers included Jay Manning, Director of Washington State's Department of Ecology and Tom Karrier,

Chairperson of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council.

Conference sessions and speakers provided unique opportunities for sharing and networking. Presentations provided attendees:

- Timely information about critical water quality, fishery and community development issues.
- Options for considering how to best balance needs for flood control, power, irrigation, healthy fisheries, cultural resources, and recreation.
- Opportunities to "connect the dots" between the many initiatives and people working diligently to meet the environmental, cultural and community development needs of the Lake Roosevelt area.

Conference PowerPoint Presentations are available at [www.lrf.org/conf](http://www.lrf.org/conf)

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# GUEST EDITORIAL

## HELP PRESERVE LAKE ROOSEVELT

By *Debbie Bird*

*Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area Superintendent*

Nothing can spoil a trip to Lake Roosevelt's beaches on a warm summer day so quickly as the discovery of piles of human waste and toilet paper, as a group of community leaders discovered for themselves earlier this summer.

I took this group out to experience first hand this very real threat to the health and vitality of the national recreation area – a problem that well symbolizes the larger question of how we Americans view, and subsequently use, our national parks.

If you think the problem of solid human waste left lying around on the ground is confined to Lake Roosevelt, think again. Conditions along the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon got so bad as far back as 1968 that it energized rafters to begin the trend of packing out their own body waste; the same is now required from boaters on many well-loved waterways throughout the country. In Washington state, Mount Rainer has been a leader in the "blue bag" project, requiring that climbers and winter campers use the Wagbag, a specially engineered double bag waste containment system containing enzymes and polymers to treat human solid waste. A large sign now greets hikers embarking on the trail to the top of Mount Whitney in California with the words "Pack Out Your Poop" and hikers are required to pack out their waste in the Wagbag or similar system.

Earlier this summer while camping near a small lake in Mount St. Helens National Monument popular with local picnickers and fishermen, I was sickened to see piles and the attendant toilet paper behind every bush and piece of driftwood. It made the anticipated pleasure of taking off my shoes to walk through the shallow water unthinkable.

The good news is that this is a problem that can be solved. The technology already exists and the fix isn't even particularly expensive. The main requirement will be a fundamental shift in our thinking about how we



*Debbie Bird*

use our national parks – all public lands, actually – and a corresponding change in our national behavior.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines stewardship as: "the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care." As Americans, and as citizens of one of the most bountiful and

diverse nations on the planet, we have a constructive role to play as stewards of the public lands that our forebearers thought to leave in our collective care.

Often called "America's greatest idea," our national park system is the envy of others. It is also unique to us and has been copied all over the world. Unfortunately, we sometimes take this superb collection of natural, cultural, and recreational icons for granted in the same way that some recreationalists on Lake Roosevelt take for granted that their waste magically disappears once they leave the place. Or worse yet, maybe they don't think about it at all?

Simply providing more built toilet facilities may not be the best, or only, answer. In fragile environments, installing toilets may not be an option. In other cases - such as the shoreline of Lake Roosevelt – placing enough toilets to adequately service every mile of shoreline is neither economically feasible nor desirable.

Standing on the beach with my guests last August, I was asked "What is the solution?" My response, the same now as it was then, is that our visitors will be integral to making any proposed remedy successful. While I might have some definite ideas with which to start off the conversation based on my 30 years of managing visitor use in the National Park Service, the dialogue must be sustained by the same people who look forward to returning to their favorite beach campsite year after year and expect to find it clean, safe, and sanitary.

Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area is a national treasure; a special place to be enjoyed by all; a place to relax with family and friends; a place to teach your kids how to fish, to discover hidden coves, experience the incredibly diverse geology, to ponder the record of over 10,000 years of human habitation. It is also a place to watch and wonder at nature, and perhaps begin asking questions about the meaning of stewardship and the obligations we have to future generations to leave these places in at least as good of shape as we found them. 🌿

# Park Service Asks Neighbors to Help Protect the Park

## THE LAKE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

(LRNRA) has long been a great destination for people interested in fishing, boating, swimming and other recreational activities. The 1.5 million annual visitors come from the region as well as distant parts of the nation and the world.

All of the land within the Recreation Area is public land maintained for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people.

It is one of the few large lakes or reservoirs in northeastern Washington with a large amount of public shoreline that is accessible to the public for recreational use and, as such, is a very important resource to the people who live and vacation here.

Over the past years, however, the National Park Service (NPS) has seen a trend which they say damages the resources of the park. Park Neighbors have been building roads, cutting down trees, and even constructing homes on park land.

Says Jim DeGraffenreid, Planning Services Director for Lincoln County, "Ninety percent of land under review for new development are view lots of Lake Roosevelt. Lots usually run one to twenty acres depending on the style of development."

To address this trend, NPS is reaching out to neighbors (new and old) whose land is adjacent to NPS managed land. Says Margaret Goodro, NPS's Chief Ranger for Lake Roosevelt, "As a national recreation area, our job is to protect the park's resources to allow for the enjoyment of the 1.5 million visitors. To protect the park's resources we must actively work with developers and adjacent land owners to help keep the lakeshore in as natural condition as possible. That's how we protect the natural and cultural resources and promote a positive experience."

According to Margaret, "There are currently over 272 documented encroachments. Each year there are more examples of people building roads to the beach area below, cutting down trees, and some people build structures on federal land. For the National Park Service

and the land owner, it becomes an expensive problem to fix. What we really want to do is work with the land owner to prevent a problem before it happens."

In efforts to reduce the resource damage to the park, Margaret and her staff have been actively meeting with realtors, developers and others to discuss the good neighbor policies. These include:

- Follow county setback guidelines to assure that buildings are not built on the park lands and that the park resources are not impacted.
- Follow Department of Natural Resource (DNR) recommendations for firebreaks around buildings. These can range from 30 to 100 feet depending on vegetation and other variables. Setbacks should not include park land as part of planned defensible space.
- Do not place a building, lawn, road, boat or other piece of property on park land.

Because of how land was purchased as part of building Grand Coulee Dam, knowing where the federal property boundary is can be particularly confusing. Some refer to the property line as the 1310 line. The reality, however, is a patchwork of ownership that varies in width along the margin of the lakeshore. The only way to know the boundary line for sure is to survey the land before purchasing property or building on it.

"One ounce of prevention and couple ounces of goodwill can go along way" says Deral Bolenus, Lincoln County Commissioner. "If the Park Service can effectively partner with neighbors, we can also help with things like cleaning litter and protecting habitat."

NPS has developed a pamphlet called "Park Neighbors Informational Brochure" to help

property owners and developers. To receive a copy of the brochure or receive additional information, contact Margaret Goodro at 509-633-9441 X123, or [margaret\\_goodro@nps.gov](mailto:margaret_goodro@nps.gov).



Trailer on National Park Service property.



Private road through National Park Service land.

# Teck Cominco and EPA Close to Agreeing on RI/FS Work Plan

IN THE SPRING OF 2006, TECK COMINCO AND EPA reached an agreement to conduct a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) of Lake Roosevelt. This agreement occurred after years of negotiations and was designed to build on prior investigations by EPA and others.

Although not listed as a Superfund site, conducting an RI/FS serves the essential purpose of determining if contaminated sediments are adversely affecting human health or the environment in Lake Roosevelt. Teck Cominco placed twenty million dollars in an escrow account to assure completion of the RI/FS.

## RI/FS WORK PLAN STATUS

Completing an RI/FS work plan has been a lengthy, slow process. More importantly, until Teck Cominco submits a work plan that EPA reviews and approves, studies to complete and RI/FS can not be initiated and answers to human health and ecological risks can not be answered.

Teck Cominco submitted an RI/FS work plan in December, 2006. EPA then held multiple interagency reviews, received comprehensive comments, and continued discussions with Teck Cominco. Nine months later, Teck Cominco was able to submit a revised work plan for review and approval. Almost two years after the agreement was signed, indications are that this draft work plan, with some revisions, is close to being approved by EPA. If so, the real work may begin.

## WHAT'S IN THE WORK PLAN?

The work plan is the foundation for a multi year study process. When the necessary studies are completed and approved, EPA can (through a record of decision) answer questions about safely eating fish, playing on beaches and

swimming in the water. As importantly, questions like long term effects on habitat can be answered. Further, these findings become the basis for considering possible clean up action.

Subject to EPA approval, Teck Cominco will conduct a number of studies in the upcoming 2008 season. These include:

- Sediment sampling (including an evaluation of bio-availability),
- Surface water quality sampling,
- Beach sediment sampling,
- Aquatic tissue residue sampling (includes fish and invertebrates)
- Recreational use survey, and
- Soil study.

Selection of studies is largely guided by a conceptual

site model contained within the work plan and agreed to by Teck Cominco and EPA.

Results of initial studies are not expected until late 2008 and 2009, meaning the first tangible results of the agreement will begin three years after it was signed. This also underscores the long term nature of the RI/FS process and the extraordinary patience being asked of communities who may be impacted by the results.



*Marko Adzic of Teck Cominco & U.S. EPA present at conference*

## OTHER QUESTIONS

Many people at the Forum Conference wanted to know about the possible ramifications of a 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision that EPA can enforce super-fund laws across an international border to protect U.S.

## Forum Conference CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The conference was kicked off by the Washington State Climatologist and others providing an overview of climate change and possible effects on the Northwest. This created a touch stone for presentations and updates regarding lake operations, Washington State's Columbia River Water Management Plan, flood control, and the Columbia River Biologic Opinion.

What I enjoyed most was the involvement of the students from Nespelem - it's heartening to know the next generation is getting involved.

On a separate track, fishery presentations highlighted successes, opportunities and challenges for maintaining a robust Lake Roosevelt Fishery. In addition, the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife resident fish committee

worked with conference organizers for the first time to provide a number of presentations about the status of fisheries throughout the region.

Another first time occurrence for the conference was a presentation by wildlife managers from the Spokane Tribe of Indians, Kalispel Tribe and the Colville Confederated Tribes. They provided an overview of protection, mitigation and restoration of wildlife populations and habitats over thousands of acres of lands surrounding Lake Roosevelt.

The second plenary session saw EPA and Teck Cominco updating attendees on the status of RI/FS (superfund) studies and actions (see page 4). This was followed up by a Department of Health (DOH) presentation regarding results from fish tissue analysis. The Forum hopes to collaborate with DOH and others to develop a public guide that will help explain the results of fish tissue and consumption analysis before the next recreation season.

As with past conferences, the Forum was pleased to work with our friends from Canada to highlight transboundary issues and seek areas of collaboration, e.g.—white sturgeon recovery, the Columbia River Water Management Plan, the RI/FS, and total dissolved gas.

Other sessions filled in critical areas of concern and opportunity. These include protecting the lake's cultural resources, learning from tribal council members, aquatic weed control, and meeting the needs of a growing recreational use.

The third day of the conference included work group meetings for the Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Team, the Lake Roosevelt Cooperative Weed Management Area and the Greater Columbia Water Trail.

Participants came from throughout the Columbia Basin, including Canada. They represented federal, state and local agencies; tribal members and representatives; elected officials; watershed councils; conservation groups and other associations; property owners; local businesses; and interested citizens.

It is great to get a variety of scientific minds together in one building to discuss the research and develop relationships.

**THE NEXT CONFERENCE IS CURRENTLY BEING PLANNED FOR APRIL, 2009. SO MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!**

## Teck Cominco and EPA CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

land, air and water. Currently, the U.S. Supreme Court is considering whether to hear the case.

In an important development, the U.S. Justice Department recently provided an opinion that the Supreme Court should not hear the case. Regardless of how this case is decided, Teck Cominco says they are committed to carrying out the RI/FS as called for in the agreement.

Teck Cominco's engagement in the RI/FS process stems from their lead and smelter operations conducted on the banks of the Columbia River in Trail, B.C. (ten miles north of the U.S. border). Combined with other mining, smelting and pulp operations, discharges from these operations wrought a legacy of contaminated sediment that is at the bottom of Lake Roosevelt. 🌐

# Lake Roosevelt Forum

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