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Lake Roosevelt Forum

NEWSletter

WINTER 2011

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Environmental Assessment to determine future of Lake Cabins

There are 25 vacation cabins located on the beautiful northern shores of Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. They date back to the early 1950s when the National Park Service wished to promote recreational uses of the lake. 10 cabins were built on the western shores by Sherman Creek, and 17 cabins were built on the eastern shores by Rickey Point.

Occupants were initially given 20-year, \$35 a year leases for each vacation cabin constructed. What a deal!

As described by the Park Service some big changes have occurred over time, "Early cabins were modest in size, and vacation cabin lots were characterized by a naturalized setting with few impervious surfaces. Over time, this balance shifted away from predominantly vegetated, open space to increasingly modified areas, with more area of each vacation cabin lot being converted to support a variety of human activities and uses."

In total, the cabins reside on just over a mile of shoreline. This represents less than one percent of the 312 miles of shoreline managed by the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area (LRNRA). Little wonder then, that from year to year and decade to decade these cabins were not the focus of much attention.

That changed in 2007 when the Department of Interior's Office of Inspector General issued a report finding that the "NPS has allowed private parties or exclusive clubs to monopolize desirable locations near urban areas for decades and has improperly retained millions of dollars that should have been remitted to the U.S. Treasury."



Lake Roosevelt Lake Cabin

This unfortunate circumstance was achieved by NPS providing special permits that enabled private parties and clubs to enjoy "exclusive rights to public lands through restrictive and costly memberships that deny the general public the same benefits."

Further, the report found that permits were renewed without ensuring environmental review.

Although Lake Roosevelt was not the source of the Inspector General's ire, a national call to review all special use permits put the future of the cabins front and center.

Times, they are a changing

Since the cabins were built sixty years ago, management and environmental perspectives have changed dramatically. Back then, nobody even questioned that the NPS lacked specific statutory authority to permit private vacation cabins on Lake Roosevelt. Today, the NPS is

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Making Sense of the Remedial Investigation / Feasibility Study

**Mindy Smith, Citizens for a Clean Columbia
Secretary, MD, MS**

This article was written on behalf of Citizens for a Clean Columbia (CCC) to share with readers our views of Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) progress. We invite you to learn more about our citizens group by visiting our web site at www.cleancolumbia.org.

The RI/FS has been a slow and at times frustrating process. It is, however, much better than its predecessors. Prior to the 2006 agreement with Teck Cominco, studies on the pollution of the Upper Columbia River were random assortments of unrelated studies with no common direction, much overlap and gaping holes in the data. A number of the earlier studies were poorly designed and executed. We believe that the study designs and protocols developed as part of the RI/FS have the potential to produce important and useable data, in part because of the solicited critique and input by the participating parties, CCC and their technical advisor, and the EPA team.

The design, sampling and sample analysis phases of two major RI/FS studies has been completed. These two studies exemplify the slow and frustrating aspects of the RI/FS. The first draft Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for both the fish tissue and surface water quality studies issued on July 18, 2008. The final approval signatures on these two study plans were made in September, 2009. Selected preliminary results from these studies were presented at the Lake Roosevelt Forum (LRF) Conference in November, 2010, almost two and a half years from the first draft dates. Final reports have yet to be issued. The draft beach sediment QAPP issued in August, 2008. Final sign-off on the study QAPP occurred in August, 2009. The most recent

amendment to the beach sediment QAPP was approved on February 9, 2011. Preliminary results from 7 beaches sampled in fall 2009 and spring 2010 were also presented at the LRF conference. Sampling of the remaining 28 beaches is scheduled to be completed in early May, 2011. Preliminary data on the complete study probably won't be available before this fall, three years after the first study draft issued.

While the review process for these three pivotal studies was excruciatingly long, it isn't clear that it can be significantly shortened and still allow for the inclusion of all major study concerns from the participating parties. A one plus year period may be required for study QAPPs to be developed and refined. We believe that if the resulting study QAPPs address all the sampling and analysis concerns raised, this is a much better situation than running multiple studies over an extended time line to "pick up the pieces later." In addition, data interpretation is greatly simplified if all samples are acquired at the same time rather than over multiple years.

Both the fish tissue and surface water quality studies appear to be definitive studies. All data required to evaluate human and environmental risk from fish tissue and surface water may well have been obtained from these studies. This is a relief. No further studies on these sample types should be required in the future. Hopefully the beach sediment study will yield similar results when completed. The Washington Department of Health is working on a new fish advisory based on the recently completed fish tissue study data.

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CITIZENS
FOR A
CLEAN COLUMBIA

www.cleancolumbia.org



Citizens for a Clean Columbia

General Meeting

Date: Monday, April 25th

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Colville Museum

Address: 700 North Wynne St. Colville, WA

For more information call Hilary: 509-685-0933

www.cleancolumbia.org

Massachusetts General Hospital doctors to research colitis type diseases in Northport



Jamie Paparich

Northport is a picturesque town with 330 people. Located near the Canadian border, its residents are hardy folks that can withstand both bitter cold temperatures in winter and the heat of summer. You live here because you like open space, enjoy a rural life style and have the physical constitution to match.

Strange, then, that over fifty current and former residents of Northport are diagnosed with ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease, two types of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). In a town the size of Northport, the number should be around two. In the world of epidemiology (which studies the health and illness of a population in a specific geographic area) the high incidence of IBD is called a cluster.

Is it a random occurrence? Or is there something unique to the Northport environment that is triggering these high rates?

Answering these questions is what Dr. Josh Korzenik and Dr. Sharyle Folwer from Massachusetts General Hospital, in cooperation of the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America, intend to find out. They are conducting an epidemiological study of Northport residents, both current and past, who have been diagnosed with ulcerative colitis, crohn's, or any other IBD disease.

For residents in Northport, this is very welcome news. Said Jamie Paparich, a resident that spent years trying to bring attention to this issue, "No one likes to talk about their illness because it's difficult and painful with no cure. You just try your best to manage it. It's hard to believe so many cases in such an isolated area are just a coincidence. We want answers."

The first step is to help doctors collect health questionnaires (see box). The questionnaires, along with possible requests for medical records, will help confirm if there is a disease cluster. The surveys are also a first step to see if there are discernible patterns, e.g.—age, diet, use of the river, family history, etc.

If evidence warrants it, the doctors are committed to seeking funding to see if environmental factors, genetics or something else may be the underlying reason. Beyond helping people in Northport, the study holds the promise of shedding new light on ways to prevent, treat or even cure this illness. 🌟

Meet the Doctor, participate in the survey

Date: Sunday, May 1st

Time: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Location: Northport Community Center

Dr. Fowler will meet with people to answer questions and discuss both the survey and research being planned.

All current or former residents of Northport are invited to participate in the survey, regardless of whether you have or think you may have ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease. Researchers need to compare the characteristics and lifestyles of people with and without the disease. Participation is voluntary, and all responses confidential.

To complete a survey, either:

- Visit the Northport Community Center May 1st
- E-mail NorthportIBD@gmail.com. You will be given a web site and log in information to complete the survey on-line.
- Contact Dr. Sharyle Fowler (contact information below) to receive a paper survey to complete and return via U.S. mail.

More information is also available by contacting Dr. Sharyle Fowler at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Crohn's and Colitis Center, 165 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor, Boston, MA, 02114, (617) 724-1619, NorthportIBD@gmail.com.

Environmental Assessment to determine future of Lake Cabins

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responding to a cacophony of laws, regulations and agreements that protect everything from clean water, to endangered species, to cultural resources.

From the LRNA perspective, the Inspector General report meant that an Environmental Assessment (EA) needed to be completed before any special use permits related to the vacation cabins could be issued. According to LRNRA, “the EA analyzes whether the use of vacation cabins at Lake Roosevelt NRA is compatible with the NPS mission of protecting park resources and providing for the enjoyment of the general public.” Doing less would mean not living up to their responsibilities for protecting and preserving public lands, a result the Inspector General already had admonished at other locations.

From a cabin occupant’s perspective, the EA is an unnecessary yet lengthy and expensive government process. And with a potential alternative being the removal of the cabins, it becomes an example of government “double dealing.” Although there was never a guarantee of leases or, in the recent past, “Special Use Permits” always being renewed, not providing a renewal opportunity would callously ignore sixty years of investing time, money and goodwill. Moreover, cabin owners see themselves as good neighbors whose contributions to local customs and traditions are part of the community fabric. Tear the fabric; tear the trust between government and the communities they serve.

Such is the context with which LRNRA began developing the necessary environmental assessment in 2008.

The Environmental Assessment

The Vacation Cabin Environmental Assessment was released in February, 2011. Following National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines, alternatives are identified to avoid or mitigate potential environmental impacts.

For this EA, alternatives address issues such as shoreline (public access and appearance), water conveyance (e.g.—irrigating gardens with lake water), water quality (e.g.—effect of poorly functioning septic systems), public safety (e.g.—fire prevention, electrical accidents), natural resources (e.g.—protecting wildlife, loss of habitat, impacts to native vegetation, and noxious weed control), and cultural resources (e.g.—limiting ground-disturbing activities).

Three alternatives were identified. Simply put, they were:

- A: Maintain the status quo opportunity to renew special use permits every 5 years.
- B: More proactively implement applicable regulations to assure the protection and preservation of these lands fits within the mission and guidelines of LRNRA and the NPS. Like A, there would be an opportunity to renew special use permits every 5 years.
- C: Remove the cabins, returning the land to its natural state. No new permits would be issued.

Alternative B as the Preferred Alternative

Alternative B preserves the cabins and their ability to continue to seek permits every five years.. The cost of these permits would continue to be based on current market value of the property and appropriate reductions due to the restrictions imposed by LRNRA.



Lake cabins are diverse in style and appearance

More proactive administration of applicable regulations will affect cabin occupants. The easiest example is septic tanks. In 2010, a survey of these systems found that 20 of 26 were classified as “failing” or of “limited functionality.” Alternative B “would require that vacation cabin permittees demonstrate compliance and consistency with Washington State regulations governing rural domestic septic systems as a condition of receiving a special use permit.”

Incentives will also be used to encourage cabin owners to utilize native landscaping and implement other measures that maintain these properties in a manner that reflects natural conditions. To do this, LRNA will work with willing permittees to develop an approved Habitat Enhancement Plan. According to the EA, “These plans would

include management actions to address parking areas, landscaped areas (including native and nonnative species management and use of fertilizers), appropriate actions to allow for the removal of individual outbuildings and improvements, wildlife habitat improvements, riparian buffer strips, and management of landscaping in accordance with Firewise guidelines.” Off-season storage of vehicles, the general appearance of the lots, and actions

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that protect the existing native trees and wildlife will also be addressed.

In return for developing and implementing such plans, LRNRA will offer reduced annual fees as an incentive.

LRNRA also clarified in Alternative B that:

- there will be no further development of lands within the recreation area to support vacation cabins (reaffirming the 2000 General Management Plan for the park),
- occupants can not use these cabins as their year round residence since they have always been labeled as vacation cabins and the NPS does not have the authority to permit permanent residences on public lands.
- a special use permit can be transferred from one occupant to another, but all of the terms and conditions must be in compliance before this can happen.
- the NPS cannot offer extended permits that help permit holders to amortize their investments out over more than 5 years.
- cabins that are destroyed or become uninhabitable will not be rebuilt or have their permits renewed.
- failure to comply with the updated terms and conditions of the special use permit will jeopardize the current permit and any rights to apply for future permits.

Debbie Bird, LRNA superintendent, commented “I know going through this process has caused a lot of anxiety for people, particularly cabin occupants. In the end, however, I’m hopeful we’ve come up with something that effectively transitions us from the past sixty years to the next sixty years. We want these cabins and their care to represent the best about NPS working effectively with people to preserve and protect our resources.”

What’s Next

The public comment period ended April 8th. NPS will analyze comments and, if no significant additional impacts are identified, the LRNA superintendent will recommend a proposed action (currently Alternative B) to the Pacific West Regional Director. Final regulatory language would then be put in place, the updated terms and conditions would be prepared, and cabin occupants could then apply for five year special use permits. 🌀

RI/FS 2011 Sampling and Report Status

Surface Water: Sampling occurred in fall 2009 (September – October), and spring (May – June) 2010. EPA has completed review of data for quality assurance and is presently reviewing the draft data summary report. Preliminary findings show surface water concentrations for all metals (e.g., arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury, selenium, and zinc); and organics (e.g., PCBs, and dioxins/furans) to be within limits protective of aquatic life and people.

Beach Sampling: Additional beach sampling is scheduled to occur from April 21st - May 4th, 2011. Sampling will occur at 26 additional beaches throughout Lake Roosevelt (e.g., Evans Campground, Colville Flats, Bradbury Beach, and Seven Bays etc). Results from 2009-2010 sampling are being reviewed by EPA. Due to elevated lake levels, 2009-2010 beach sampling was largely limited to beaches sampled in 2005 (e.g., Black Sand Beach, Northport, and Dalles Orchard). Concentrations measured in 2009/2010 were similar to those in 2005. For 2005 data, the Washington Department of Health concluded there was “no apparent public health hazard.”

Fish Tissue Sampling: Over 2300 fish were sampled in fall 2009. Sampling included all size classes (small-, medium, and large fish) and a wide range of species (e.g., largescale sucker, pikeminnow, yellow perch, kokanee, walleye, smallmouth bass, whitefish, rainbow trout, and burbot). EPA has completed review of the data for quality assurance and is presently reviewing the data summary report. Preliminary finding show most fish tissue concentrations are below screening level benchmarks, meaning adverse ecological effects are not expected. Burbot and suckers did show some concentrations above national screening levels for human consumption of fish. The Washington Department of Health is expected to issue an updated fish advisory (for human health) in the summer of 2011.

Recreational Use Survey: A survey to assess where, when, what, how, and how long visitors utilize Lake Roosevelt and the Upper Columbia River was developed and pre-tested in summer 2010. Surveying over a one year period began in October 2010 and will continue throughout the 2011 recreational season.



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On the other hand, two exposure studies on White Sturgeon and one methods development study were developed, approved, amended and completed in 2010. It isn't clear that data from these studies will be useable. These studies appeared to be poorly planned prior to initiation. Further, numerous problems and changes to the protocols of the sturgeon studies hampered data collection, possibly making interpretation of results difficult. EPA has engaged an independent panel to review these studies to ultimately address whether the data are trustworthy. CCC along with the participating parties and EPA await the panel responses.

A number of study QAPPs are currently being developed and reviewed. These include river sediment, sediment pore water and benthic (sediment dwelling) organism studies. These are all crucial studies for the environmental risk assessment portion of the RI/FS. Hopefully these studies will be developed with due diligence. With proper design and execution, these studies should provide the remaining information required for preliminary environmental risk assessment. It will be interesting to see if these study QAPPs can be properly developed in less than a year.

It is important to remember that the overall human health risk assessment will be made from a synthesis of the data provided by these RI/FS studies and exposure scenarios developed from the ongoing Tribal and Recreational Use

surveys. The environmental risk assessment will be made in a similar fashion, and time line.

CCC hopes that RI/FS studies can be performed once and provide sufficient quality and quantity of data for risk assessments to be made without the need to repeat studies. In the long run, this will result in the shortest road to risk assessment. Then remediation can be considered.

We wish to clarify that one major shortfall of the RI/FS process is the lack of investigation into historical damage to human or environmental health. This is also true of the EPA mandate and is not specific to the UCR. Hopefully, these issues may in part be addressed by the ongoing Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA).

This process is being conducted by the UCR Natural Resource Trustees (i.e., Colville Confederated Tribes, the Spokane Tribe of Indians, the State of Washington, and the U.S. Department of the Interior) (<http://www.lrf.org/Env/Env-SedimentRelatedActivities.html>). The group is independent of government and charged with assessing natural resource injury and restoration needs. Teck and Celgar have been invited to participate.

On a final note, CCC is deeply indebted to the Tribes for their determination in filing and pursuing the lawsuit with Teck Cominco. Without the tribe's continuing efforts, there would be no RI/FS. 🌟

Forum Conference a success

The 2010 Lake Roosevelt Conference was a big success. Hosted by the Forum every eighteen months, 221 people attended. Representing agencies, tribes, stakeholder groups and citizens, attendees came from throughout the Northwest and Canada.

Andy Dunau, Executive Director, remarked that "Sixty percent of those that attended were new to the conference. This underscores the importance of the conference to introducing people to our area and the important issues being addressed."

Over the two day period, there were two keynote presentations, two plenary sessions and sixteen concurrent sessions. Collectively, there were fifty four

presentations that covered a diverse set of lake operations, water quality, fishery and community issues.

Said one attendee, "I always enjoy the diversity of information that is available from experts in the field. This always raises the level of awareness to leaders who hopefully take it back to their communities." 🌟

To view conference presentations, go to <http://lrf.org/conf/presentations/StartHere.html>.

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Teck



Collecting artifacts results in fine, probation for Kettle Falls man

Lake Roosevelt is home to over nine thousand years of Native American history. Gravesites, pottery and tools are just some of the items scattered throughout the area. Some artifacts lay beneath the waters, covered when the gates of Grand Coulee Dam closed and water levels rose several feet. Other artifacts rest just beneath the sand, sometimes being exposed when water levels fall during parts of the year.

Protecting these cultural resources is a priority of the National Park Service, Spokane Tribe of Indians and Colville Confederated Tribes. Although collecting artifacts is a federal crime that can result in jail time, the law is rarely enforced.

As a tribal member put it, "How would you feel if a guest in your house stole an heirloom?" Every year, the Park Service and tribes work to educate vacationers to not pocket artifacts as souvenirs.

Then there are those who live in the area and should know better.

One of these men is Sandie McNeil, a lifelong Kettle Falls resident. His lawyer, as reported by the Spokesman Review, describes him as someone who "has seriously pursued his passion for collecting historical artifacts."

Last November, McNeil was sentenced to three years

probation, and ordered to pay a \$2000 fine and an additional \$2000 in restitution. His lawyer argued that "His reverence for the historical importance of Native American culture in Kettle Falls is every bit as sincere as the framers of these laws." He also noted that McNeil did not try to profit from his collections.

When it comes to taking legal action against those, like Mr. McNeil, who flagrantly and repeatedly ignore the law, the Forum is supportive. The Forum also strongly supports the Park Service and area tribes educating the public whenever possible. Preserving and protecting the unique and diverse cultural resources of this area is everyone's responsibility.

Help Respect and Protect Cultural Resources

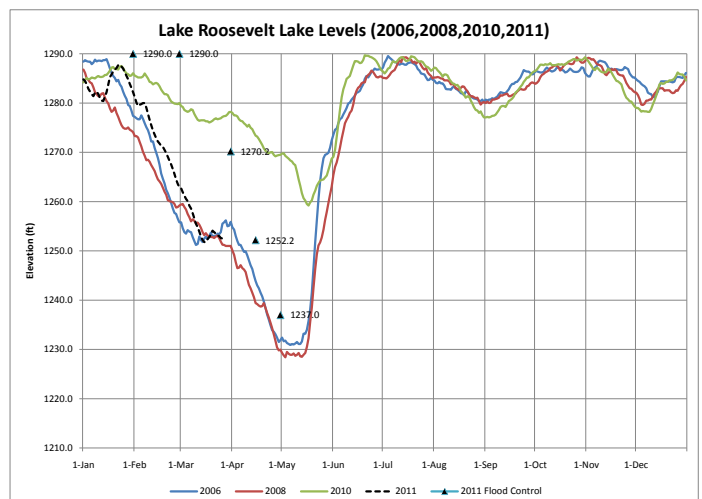
- Don't dig.
- Don't collect anything or move it from where you found it.
- Before you go boating or drive your ATV, know the rules and follow them.
- If you see someone digging at Lake Roosevelt, don't try to stop them. It's not safe. Get identifying marks like license plate numbers and call law enforcement. The National Park Service number is 509-738-6266, the Spokane Tribal Law Enforcement number is (509) 722-4445, and the Colville Tribal Law Enforcement Number is (509) 634-3145. 🌟

2011 Spring Draw Down at Lake Roosevelt

Regardless of what Mother Nature had in store, Lake Roosevelt was drawn down to 1255 feet on March 15 for drum gate maintenance at Grand Coulee Dam. The work is underway and is anticipated to last eight weeks.

When water is released over the dam's spillway, drum gates help manage this flow. At Coulee, a drum gate is 135 ft. X 28 ft. in size. Maintenance will not affect lake levels being brought back to typical summer elevations.

According to Lynne Brouger, Grand Coulee Dam's public information officer, "The early bird spring forecast calls for an elevation of 1237 ft. by the end of April in order to be able to capture this year's spring runoff". This elevation may change with the final flood control forecast in April. For daily lake level forecasts, call 1-800-824-4916, or visit the Forum web site at www.lrf.org, then click lake levels. 🌟



Lake Roosevelt Forum

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RI/FS 2011 Sampling and Report Status

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Plankton Sampling: EPA has chosen to postpone plankton sampling. The purpose of this sampling is to determine if contaminants of potential concern (COPC) are concentrating in plankton, then adversely affecting fish populations as they migrate up the food chain. Current fish sampling data does not suggest the need for plankton sampling at this time. EPA will reassess the need for this data as they proceed with the risk assessment analysis.

Sediment and Upland Soil Testing: Teck submitted a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for sediment sampling in March 2011, and is in the process of finalizing one for upland soil testing. The purpose of the

sediment testing is to evaluate if there are unacceptable risks to benthic invertebrates (sediment dwelling bugs) associated with exposure to metals and other chemicals in sediments. The purpose of soil sampling will be to collect information on concentrations of chemicals in soils to evaluate potential risk to exposed ecological receptors and people.

Sturgeon Toxicity Testing: Two different types of lab tests have been completed to assess how exposure to contaminants in surface water and sediment may affect early life-stages of sturgeon. Draft reports are expected in fall 2011. 🌐

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