

Committed to the environmental and economic well being of our community

Lake Roosevelt Forum

NEWSletter

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- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Colville Confederated Tribes
- Ferry County
- Lincoln County
- National Park Service
- Spokane Tribe of Indians
- Stevens County
- Teck American
- Upper Columbia United Tribes
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Deeper Winter / Spring Drawdowns of Lake Roosevelt May Be Coming

September 2024 should be circled on your calendar. If the United States and Canada do not reach an agreement on modernizing the Columbia River Treaty by that time, treaty flood risk management provisions change to “called upon.” Called upon means the United States will call on Canada to specify flood risk management space needs from Canada, which (following a consultation) Canada must then provide. Most important, the United States would need to demonstrate the use of all related storage before requesting Canadian space.

Instead of “called upon,” the Corps now uses the phrase “real time operations” or “real time flood risk management” to describe what will occur.

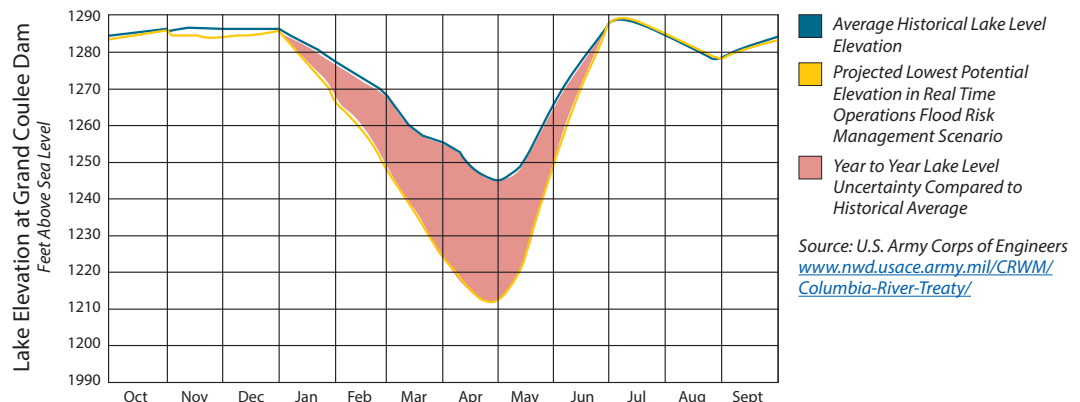
Last fall, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation hosted public webinars to explain the potential effect of this change in practical terms. Although there is a lot of uncertainty, the webinar’s

intention was to make the public aware of potential changes with the assurance that agencies will share additional information when more is known.

In opening remarks, Brigadier General Geoff Van Epps, Northwestern Division Commander, said the change to real time operations “may lead to deeper drafts in Grand Coulee [Lake Roosevelt] as well as reduction in some flexibility.”

Figure A shows the potentially dramatic change to Lake Roosevelt water elevations. The blue line at the top shows, historically, average lake elevations month to month. Depending on seasonal weather conditions and how Canada may choose to operate its reservoirs after September 2024, the yellow line shows how deeply Lake Roosevelt could be drawn down, representing a worst-case situation. The shaded area shows the potential range in these average elevations during winter and spring if Treaty negotiations result in some degree of pre-planned or other operational benefits from Canada.

FIGURE A
POTENTIAL CHANGES TO LAKE ROOSEVELT WATER ELEVATIONS



Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers www.nwd.usace.army.mil/CRWM/Columbia-River-Treaty/

Teck American 2023 Donations to Upper Columbia Communities

As Reported By Teck American

COLVILLE FISH HATCHERY



Students at Colville Fish Hatchery displaying Teck's donation to their program.

\$10,000 to the Colville Skills Center branch campus of the Colville School District. Students manage the retired Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife fish hatchery for Stevens County, raising triploid rainbow trout that are used to pay the mortgage and sell to private landowners that want to stock their own ponds. Students work closely with WDFW Sherman Creek Fish Hatchery, which is now being run by former students of the program. Working with agency personnel gives the students the opportunity to learn about careers that are hands-on and outdoors.

N.E.W. HUNGER COALITION



Kris McCaig, TAI Vice President, Environment, and Cristy Kessel, TAI Environmental Specialist, are pictured with Stephani Smith, of N.E.W. Hunger Coalition and Dee Acheson of Front Porch Farm.

\$4,000 to help the organization with several initiatives, including the purchase of fresh locally grown produce to be delivered to 17 food pantries. This past year, N.E.W. Hunger Coalition launched Grow Your Own Row classes and helped almost 300 participants get home gardens started. They supplied two community gardens with seeds and plant starts, one at a retirement center, the other at Wellpinit Food Pantry. Finally, with the help of an Innovia Foundation grant, they were able to add a walk-in cooler that enabled them to extend their season and move more produce to 17 food pantries. Learn more at newhungercoalition.org

OPERATION SANTA OF KETTLE FALLS



Kris McCaig, TAI Vice President, Environment, pictured with Chuck Omit of Operation Santa.

and backpacks, furniture and household goods, and medical equipment. www.facebook.com/operationsantakf

\$5,000 donation to help make sure each child in the local community of Kettle Falls, WA and beyond, wakes up Christmas morning to gifts from Santa, as well as a stocking filled with goodies, a book to read, and essentials like toothbrushes and toothpaste, soaps, blankets and socks. Year-round assistance is also provided to community residents with back-

to-school clothing

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF WASHINGTON STATE



Students from Republic, Washington, with Shannon Young, Communities in Schools Coordinator for the Republic School District.

\$4,000 to support Republic School District. Their mission is to empower students to stay in school and achieve success in life. To do this, the program identifies and addresses students' immediate needs as well as more complex challenges. Learn more at ciswa.org.

[Click here to see complete donation descriptions](#) as well as additional donations to St. Margaret's Shelter, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and other causes in eastern Washington. 🌟

Lake Roosevelt Updates

National Park Service

DAN FOSTER RETIRES

Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area (LRNA) Superintendent Dan Foster retired in December. He was LRNA's Superintendent for 10 years. His career with the National Park Service spanned 31 years. The Forum thanks him for his service.

Roseann Worley, an NPS Internal Controls Coordinator in the NPS San Francisco regional office, will be the interim Superintendent for four months. In 2021, she was the interim Superintendent at Lava Beds National Monument. Welcome, Roseann!

WINTER ACCESS

Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area invites you to come and enjoy the great outdoors no matter the season. With reduced staffing and resources during the winter, facilities, and services are limited. Visit www.nps.gov/laro for winter access details.

KELLER FERRY MARINA IMPROVEMENTS

Public input through January 31 is being sought for replacing and improving houseboat docks at the Keller Ferry Marina.

Per their press release, "NPS proposes to improve the Keller Ferry Marina by replacing parts of the aged docks with houseboat and potentially short-term and transient moorage, as well as grading the marina lakebed to provide a flat surface for anchoring the new dock system." To comment, go to www.parkplanning.nps.gov/kellerferrymarina.

SEVEN BAYS MARINA ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Public review and comment period for the Seven Bays Marina Rehabilitation Environmental Assessment (EA) will open on January 29, 2024 and go through February 28, 2024. The EA outlines a range of feasible project alternatives, including a no action alternative, and analyzes the environmental effects of each. It also incorporates comments received during the public comment period held



in August 2023. The public can access and comment on the EA document online through the Planning Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website: www.parkplanning.nps.gov/sevenbaysmarina.

Upper Columbia United Tribes

NORTHERN PIKE INFORMATION SHARING VIRTUAL WORKSHOP



Date: February 15, 2024

Time: 12 to 3 PM PST

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81699344412?pwd=aTlDWUzLUUUtqKzhMSnhqMTQzL01Ddz09>

Meeting ID: 816 9934 4412

Passcode: 930964

Topics will include:

- Lake Roosevelt Northern Pike work and lessons
- Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission Northern Pike surveys
- Okanagan Nation Alliance Northern Pike work
- Alaska Department of Fish and Wildlife's work to quantify the impacts of invasive Northern Pike
- Discussion of topics of mutual interest and concern

Spokane Tribe of Indians

UPPER COLUMBIA BASIN CONTAMINANT STUDY

The Spokane Tribe completed project scoping activities in 2023 including two test deployments of a sediment particle trap, and limited sampling. The Tribe plans to use information gained in 2023 to implement the full suite of project sampling in 2024 which will include collection of water, suspended sediments, bottom sediments, biofilm, and crayfish. This EPA grant funded project assists efforts to evaluate distribution of heavy metals in the Upper Columbia River and Lake Roosevelt across media, identify which contaminants are entering the food web via biofilm, evaluate movement of contaminants transported through the river, and to test the feasibility of a sediment particle trap design.

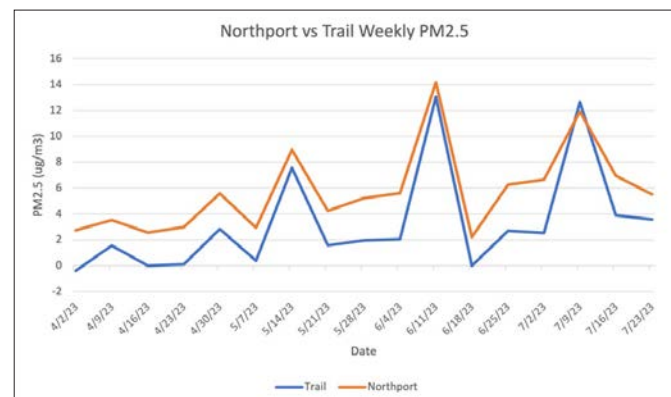


Spokane Tribe of Indians

Citizens for a Clean Columbia

AIR MONITORING UPDATE

Last November, summer intern Dev Nirschl provided Citizens for a Clean Columbia (CCC) some initial data from PurpleAir monitors placed near the Upper Columbia River. Said CCC's newsletter, "She found that over several summer months, Northport and Trail PM 2.5 sensors followed a similar pattern, as shown below, but Trail readings were consistently lower." Nirschl's slide deck noted "Northport's elevated ambient PM2.5 levels could be coming from wood heating in colder months and outdoor and residential burning during non-smoke periods." 🌿



EPA Releases Updated Residential Soil Guidance

As previously [reported by the Forum](#), EPA drafted and received public input on a draft "Strategy to Reduce Lead Exposures and Disparities in U.S. Communities." Of particular importance to the Upper Columbia Valley communities are objectives to reduce exposure to lead in soils.

Below is EPA's January 19 email regarding additional guidance and how it may affect Upper Columbia River Site actions.

EPA Email Notification

This email is to notify you that EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management has finalized the attached [Updated Residential Soil Lead Guidance for CERCLA Sites and RCRA Corrective Action Facilities](#).

As you are aware, the EPA has been revising its guidance on residential soil lead contamination resulting in the new guidance memo. This guidance is specific to residential properties defined as, "any areas where children have unrestricted access to lead contaminated soil". Updating the residential soil lead guidance is a significant milestone in EPA's agency-wide [Strategy to Reduce Lead Exposures and Disparities in U.S. Communities](#). EPA has made this change because protecting children from lead exposure is a top priority, and because science has shown that lead exposure is harmful to children's health at lower levels than was reflected in previous agency guidance in 1994.

WHAT IMPACTS MIGHT THIS HAVE ON THE UPPER COLUMBIA RIVER SITE?

Screening levels are not cleanup levels. Screening levels are used to help identify areas, contaminants, and conditions that may pose risk and require further attention at a particular site. Areas of a site where concentrations are below screening levels generally require no further action. Areas where concentrations exceed screening levels may warrant further investigation, and may, but not

always, require cleanup or other actions necessary to address unacceptable risks.

Previous studies have shown that Pb concentrations exceed soil screening levels throughout upland portions of the UCR study area. EPA's Upper Columbia River Team will be assessing what this new guidance means for the cleanup. The updated Pb guidance will be used to determine where additional sampling may be required and will be considered in the development of soil-based cleanup goals. EPA makes cleanup decisions specific to each site, including setting cleanup levels, using site-specific factors such as risk factors, community input, and the level of lead that was already in the area (called the background level).

More than 70 residential properties and common use areas within the Upper Columbia River study area have been cleaned to date, during which contaminated soil was replaced with clean soil. It is unlikely that previously cleaned areas will be affected by the new guidance.

WHAT NEXT?

Although the guidance is effective immediately, EPA welcomes feedback from the public which may be considered in any future updates to the guidance. Please submit written feedback on the guidance in the public docket on www.regulations.gov (Docket ID: [EPA-HQ-OLEM-2023-0664](#)) for 60 days from January 17, 2024 – March 17, 2024. 🌐

EXPOSURE TO LEAD CAN SERIOUSLY HARM A CHILD'S HEALTH



Damage to the brain and nervous system



Slowed growth and development



Learning and behavior problems



Hearing and speech problems

Source: CDC.com

EPA Nears Decision on Proposal to Add the Upper Columbia River Study Area to the National Priorities List

In October, the Forum reported that EPA may propose adding the Upper Columbia River study area to the National Priorities List (NPL), aka-- Superfund. The Upper Columbia River study area currently extends from Grand Coulee Dam to the Canadian border (a 150-mile river reach that includes Lake Roosevelt) and includes about 77,000 acres of land east and west of the Columbia and south of the U.S.—Canada border called the “uplands.”

If EPA proposes a Superfund (NPL) listing at this time, it will begin with a federal register notice in February to open a public comment period. The next opportunity to propose a listing may be in September. NPL listing is a two-step process. First, sites are proposed to the NPL. Then, after public comment is received and reviewed, a second federal register notice is required to formally place a site on the NPL.

In EPA briefings to stakeholders, reasons to propose a listing include:

- Enough is known to determine if the Upper Columbia River belongs on the NPL list that ensures cleanup of high priority contaminated sites.
- Lead contamination exists through upland portions of the area that poses risk to residents in affected areas.
- EPA can request funds to conduct remedial actions or cleanups on the National Priorities List.



- The existing EPA Settlement Agreement with Teck that currently funds the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) does not cover cleanup actions EPA may propose.
- The U.S. Supreme Court found that Teck is not liable for cleanup of upland soils or other areas found to be contaminated because of air emissions.

EPA has received letters of “concurrence” or support from [Washington State Governor Jay Inslee](#), the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT), and the Spokane Tribe of Indians.

Said Jarred-Michael Erickson, the Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, “The Colville Tribes supports Superfund listing for the Upper Columbia River. It is beyond question that this section of the river is polluted, and a thorough restoration of the river will be an expensive project. A Superfund listing will unlock access to necessary funds for remediation, and a listing would reflect the high priority for cleanup that this site deserves.”

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EPA Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) Update

In 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) initiated the Upper Columbia River Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS). Funded under a settlement agreement with Teck, its purpose is to establish the nature, extent and possible human and ecological risks of metals and other contaminants released into the environment.

EPA and the Participating Parties (Ecology, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Spokane Tribe of Indians and Department of Interior) are currently reviewing the Draft Final Upland Remedial Investigation (RI) Report, that Teck American Inc., submitted in October 2023.

EPA released the Final Upland BERA (Baseline Ecological Risk Assessment) in December 2023. The BERA evaluates the risk of chemicals (in this case primarily metal contaminants) in soils to plants and wildlife. Also known as Operable Unit 3, the uplands refer to approximately 100

square miles (64,000 acres) east and west of the Columbia River below the U.S.—Canada Border. The BERA is posted at www.ucr-rifs.com/documents/risk-assessments/bera/.

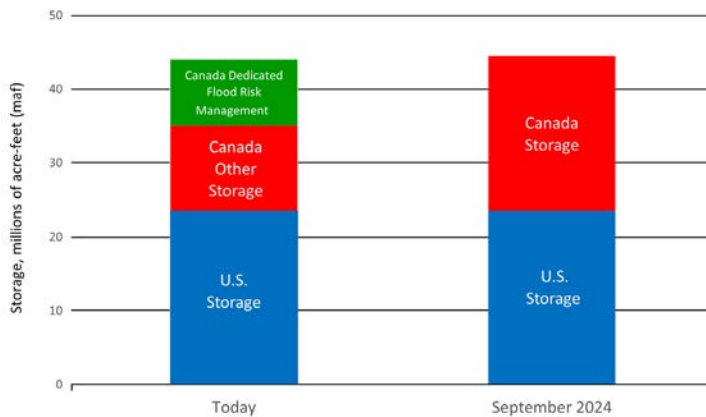
The upcoming Upland Feasibility Study will define the areas needing cleanup and evaluate a range of cleanup alternatives to address risks to people’s health and the environment.

TAI will submit the Aquatic BERA in April 2024. This BERA will evaluate risk to plants, wildlife, fish, and other organisms in and along the river from contaminants such as zinc, copper, cadmium, mercury, and lead found in sediment and slag. 🌱

Deeper Winter / Spring Drawdowns of Lake Roosevelt CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Figure B provides an easy way to understand the need for additional drawdowns of Lake Roosevelt. Under current treaty provisions, the green area represents the dedicated reservoir storage Canada provides annually for flood risk management. Representing 8.95-million-acre feet, it “is about double the amount of water in Lake Roosevelt behind Grand Coulee Dam,” said Reservoir Control Center Chief Julie Ammann with the Northwestern Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

FIGURE B
AVAILABLE COLUMBIA RIVER SYSTEM STORAGE CAPACITY



Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers webinar
www.nwd.usace.army.mil/CRWM/Columbia-River-Treaty/

In September 2024, the Canadian dedicated flood risk management provision in the treaty sunsets. And with it, flexibility in managing Lake Roosevelt drawdowns to meet downstream flood control needs. While Treaty negotiations with Canada continue, the current level of Canadian flood risk management should not be expected to continue.

Eric Rothwell, a Columbia River civil engineer with the Bureau of Reclamation Pacific Northwest Region, noted the following increased potential drawdown effects to Lake Roosevelt:

- Temporary, seasonal, closure of boat ramps during times when minimum lake elevation requirements are not met. As boat ramps have varied lake elevation requirements, how many boat ramps would be closed and for how long would be dynamic.
- Loss of Gifford and/or Inchelium ferry service during periods when lake levels are below docking requirements. Loss of service would affect medical emergency response, school activities, and other time sensitive needs.
- Increases in shoreline erosion and beach exposure.
- Potential negative effects to resident fish include entrainment (juveniles being forced past Grand Coulee Dam because of increased water flows) and potential decreased spawning habitat availability.
- The timing of pumping water to Banks Lake may be affected, with greater water level fluctuations, and the cost of pumping may increase. Irrigation water delivery to the Columbia Basin Project is likely to be unaffected.

An additional potential negative impact of deeper drafts not mentioned by the Corps and Reclamation is increased transport of contaminated sediment from upstream to downstream portions of the reservoir. Deeper and more frequent drawdowns also have the potential to alter the thermal structure in the reservoir and impact the size and composition of the planktonic communities, thereby affecting the food web. These changes may affect the Environmental Protection Agency’s Upper Columbian Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study, particularly the Baseline Ecological Risk Assessment that is currently underway.

On the positive side, not mentioned is that white sturgeon recovery efforts may benefit because higher flows may mitigate recruitment failure at the larval stage, the time from hatching to developing into juveniles.

To view the webinar in full, visit www.nwd.usace.army.mil/CRWM/Columbia-River-Treaty/

Negotiations to modernize the Columbia River Treaty began in May 2018. Since then, 18 rounds of negotiation have occurred. The U.S. Department of State leads the American negotiating team, which includes representatives from the Bonneville Power Administration, the Corps Northwestern Division, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The U.S. delegation also includes expert advisors from the Coeur d’Alene Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. [Click here](#) for the Department of State’s most recent status update on negotiations.

If negotiations do not bear fruit, the real time operational changes to Lake Roosevelt begin in September. 🌐



Upper Columbia River

Historic Multi-Million Dollar Agreement Powers Salmon Reintroduction Forward



Colville Confederated Tribes releasing salmon

Houston, we have lift-off.

In September, the Department of Interior announced a historic agreement that includes Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) providing \$200 million over 20 years to advance the Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUTs) salmon reintroduction [Phase 2 Implementation Plan \(P2IP\)](#).

Further, the Bureau of Reclamation is providing the UCUTs \$8 million over two years to support P2IP, including funding from their new WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program. Additionally, Cathy McMorris Rogers led securing \$5 million dollars through congressional appropriations in FY23, and NOAA Fisheries awarded

\$1.1 million in Salmon Recovery grant funding. Lastly, the Washington State Legislature and Governor Inslee secured over \$6 million in the 2022 Supplemental Budget and the 2023-2025 Biennium Budget. This long-term commitment of federal and state funding and support is a key step to securing the future of salmon in the Upper Columbia River.

P2IP will occur in a stepwise fashion over approximately 20 years. The first step focuses on the collection of baseline information regarding salmon survival and behavior in the blocked area as well as after they migrate to the ocean. The tribes and state are also working to ramp up the availability of salmon for release in the blocked area, including hatchery-raised juveniles for tagging studies and surplus hatchery adult salmon for re-populating the spawning grounds. Later steps will focus on the development of interim fish passage facilities and collecting data necessary to design permanent passage solutions.

2024 efforts include:

- Continuation of an outmigration study to collect data on juvenile salmon behavior as they migrate downstream, and hauling adult salmon from hatcheries below Chief Joseph Dam to spawning areas in the blocked area.
- First steps toward exploring and developing fish passage options.
- Additional educational and cultural releases.
- Increasing tribal capacity to take on the heavy and important lift of implementing the P2IP.

The Forum looks forward to regularly reporting progress on this extraordinary effort. 🌟

Northport Waterfront Cleanup Set to Begin February 2024

Following a public comment period, the WA Department of Ecology (Ecology) completed the [Engineering Design Report](#) for cleanup of smelter-related metals contamination on Northport's waterfront area next to the Town Park. The report provides details about the excavation of contaminated materials in the waterfront, bay, and hillside areas, site staging and hauling, stormwater management, and public access improvements.

The engineering design meets Ecology goals to protect people and restore the shoreline environment next to the park. State funding of this effort comes from the Eastern Washington Clean Sites Initiative.



Northport, WA

Six companies submitted bids for the cleanup. The winning bidder is Versatile Industries, Inc. of Ione. Construction is scheduled to begin Tuesday, February 20, 2024. Temporary closure of Park Road, the Town Park, and the boat ramp and waterfront will begin on that date.

Ecology is coordinating with the Northport Mayor on the temporary closure and working to accommodate the community's plans to use the park and waterfront. 🌟



Sherman Creek Fish Hatchery

Lake Roosevelt Water Festival Brings Smiles and Knowledge to Students

Held September 19th and 20th, over 440 3rd – 5th grade students from 11 schools gathered at the Kettle Falls Swim Beach area and Sherman Creek Hatchery to participate in this fall's Festival.

Students and teachers were greeted by area agencies, tribes and other natural resource managers manning 15 interactive learning stations. As students rotated through, their knowledge of Lake Roosevelt and the watershed grew.

Said one teacher, "Thank you for another wonderful Lake Roosevelt Water Festival! The students really enjoyed their experience, and I overheard a few students say, 'This is the best field trip I've ever been on!'"

A big thank you to Forum partners and volunteers for making this happen: Avista, Colville Confederated Tribes, Colville High School, Ferry Conservation District, National

Park Service, National Weather Service Spokane, Spokane Tribe of Indians, Stevens Conservation District, U.S. Forest Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 🌱



Kids enjoying Water Festival activities

EPA Nears Decision on Proposing Superfund Listing

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

EPA has briefed staff for U.S. Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, and Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers. In addition, EPA provided a staff briefing to the U.S. Energy and Commerce Committee chaired by McMorris Rodgers.

In a January 26th discussion with the Eastern Washington Council of Government, Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers was clear that she does not support an NPL/Superfund listing at this time.

Eastern Washington County Commissioners continue to oppose a listing. Their objections and concerns are summarized in both the Forum's October [eNews article](#) and [letters recently sent](#) to EPA from Stevens County, Lincoln County and the Eastern Washington Council of Governments. In addition, [Stevens County sent a letter to Governor Inslee](#) objecting that "... not a single local elected was contacted, consulted, or allowed any discussion with you on this subject prior to you sending this letter of concurrence."

If EPA proceeds with proposing a listing, the documents used to determine eligibility for the NPL will become available for public review as part of a public comment period. In that event, the Forum will be committed to assuring maximum review and community engagement.

Regardless of whether there is a Superfund listing, the 2006 agreement with Teck to fund and conduct the RI/FS will continue. 🌱

We are going digital in 2024

DON'T MISS OUT!

The Lake Roosevelt Forum print newsletter is going digital. Make sure this free resource comes directly to your inbox by subscribing at www.lrf.org/signup