

Committed to the environmental and economic well being of our community



NEWSletter

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Columbia River Treaty Interim Measures Adopted

Effects on Lake Roosevelt Reviewed

With much fanfare, the United States (U.S.) and Canada reached a non-binding Agreement in Principle (AIP) to modernize the Columbia River Treaty in July 2024. Provisions for a modernized treaty would extend through mid-September 2044.

The original treaty, which began implementation in 1964, supported 15.5-million-acre feet (MAF) of additional water storage through the construction of four dams (3 in Canada and 1 in the U.S.). The essential purpose was to optimize operation of the Columbia River to achieve flood control and hydropower benefits desired by both countries.

A key takeaway for Lake Roosevelt is that from

March through May, interim measures will result in lake levels being lowered up to an additional 7 feet compared to the historical average. Future lake level (reservoir) changes and timing may also be affected by climate change.

Federal agencies will continue to work with tribes and resource managers to address cultural, fishery, recreation, Banks Lake management, and operation of Inchelium Ferry impacts.

Said Jarred-Michael Erickson, chairman of the Colville Business Council, about the ferry, "This impacts emergency response and ambulance travel times, creates longer drive times for Colville government staff that live on the

east side of the Columbia, and generally makes it more difficult to access the goods and services tribal members/ community members need from off the reservation." The Bureau of Reclamation is committed to evaluating whether the ferry infrastructure can be modified to operate at lower reservoir levels.

Other key components of the AIP and Lake Roosevelt effects include:

FLOOD CONTROL AND HYDROPOWER

Under the original treaty, 8.95 MAF of water (reservoir) storage is first dedicated to flood control. The AIP reduces this to 3.6 MAF.



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New Forum Executive Director Settles In

Walking into the role of executive director last summer, I knew I had enormous shoes to fill. Former Executive Director Andy Dunau's leadership of the Forum and commitment to its mission for the past 25 years is inspiring. Dunau has tirelessly dedicated himself to developing timely innovative programming that is responsive and relevant to diverse issues of concern throughout the Lake Roosevelt basin. With his guidance and encouragement, I have spent the first few months on the job listening and learning, and am excited for what's to come in 2025.



Happy Avery

When I came on board the Forum was preparing for the Water Festival in September (see article on page 3), a wildly successful annual event that blends longstanding tradition with evolving knowledge and technology. As a former teacher, I could not have been more thrilled to see so much energy and excitement around this fun-filled, hands-on learning experience where students and their teachers rotate through stations engaging with tribal and agency experts on a variety of topics related to water quality, resources, habitat, and safety.

Another highlight from early on the job was having the opportunity to tour Grand Coulee Dam with about 30

representatives from NPS and other organizations in October. What a treat it was to explore the depths of this remarkable historical landmark while learning more about how it functions today as a leading provider of irrigation in the region and the largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States. Equally gratifying was having the opportunity to spend time connecting with so many of the Forum's partners while taking it all in.

In addition to relationship building with the Forum's tribal and agency partners, a fortunate meeting this fall with Keith Green of the Lake Roosevelt Property Owner Association presented us with an exciting new opportunity for partnership in public outreach initiatives focused on recreational access, safety, aquatic health, and other concerns (see article on page 8). The Forum will host a community meeting later this winter to introduce ourselves and provide an opportunity for residents to meet tribal and agency leaders. Please reach out to info@lrf.org if you would like to be added to our contact list for this event and other Forum news.

I have heard loudly and clearly over these last few months that it is high time for the return of the Lake Roosevelt Conference. After a five-year hiatus touched off by COVID, I am excited to announce the Forum is planning a two-day event in downtown Spokane for mid-October 2025. Keep an eye out for more details.

I am grateful for the Lake Roosevelt community's warm welcome over these past few months, a testament to my predecessor's success in building meaningful relationships to execute a vast array of impactful education and outreach initiatives over the years. Dunau has left the Forum's programs and services in outstanding shape, and I am committed to keep them moving forward while I continue to explore what's next. 🌍



Touring Grand Coulee Dam

EPA Adds Upper Columbia River to Superfund National Priorities List

In December 2024, EPA added the Upper Columbia River (UCR) site to the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL).

EPA lists Superfund sites based on identified releases of contamination and where that contamination is found. Geographic site boundaries are determined after all investigative work has been completed and the full extent of contamination has been determined, including the risk it poses to human health and the environment.

The boundaries of a Superfund site will be documented in a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will also identify cleanup actions necessary to address the contamination.

Although site boundaries are not determined as part of the listing, related investigations have stretched from the U.S. – Canada border to Grand Coulee Dam, which includes Lake Roosevelt and the Upper Columbia Valley.

Said EPA, “Listing the site on the NPL will help EPA secure comprehensive and timely cleanup of the river and adjoining uplands and provide access to critical federal funding.” This includes the UCR site now being eligible for additional federal funding, if needed.

[Click here for additional information](#) about the NPL listing on EPA’s website. 🌐



EPA Updating Community Involvement Plan for Upper Columbia River

EPA Staff Contribution



This month, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is wrapping up a total of 20 scheduled interviews with community members who volunteered to share their thoughts, questions, and concerns about Upper Columbia River contamination.

Last fall, EPA reached out to affected communities within the site to invite people to participate in community interviews and to learn how and when they would like to be involved in the Superfund cleanup process. EPA staff and supporting contract associates from Skeo Solutions conducted voluntary interviews with representatives from the broad community: residents, community organizations, tribes, government agencies, and other interested parties involved in the Upper Columbia River.

Results from the interviews will be used anonymously to update the site’s Community Involvement Plan, originally created in 2004. Interviews also included questions to better understand the current needs for technical assistance and communication preferences.

The Community Involvement Plan will provide a road map that describes how EPA will conduct community involvement throughout the investigation and cleanup process. The plan will include a profile to describe the site and affected communities, general outreach activities, project milestones and timeframes where possible, and an action plan. The Technical Assistance Needs Assessment summary report will help meet identified needs.

Both the updated Community Involvement Plan and the Technical Assistance Needs Assessment summary report will be shared with the public later this year. 🌐

Welcome Mary Mitchener, Teck American Incorporated Environmental Manager

In the fall of 2024, Teck American Incorporated (TAI) announced the appointment of Mary Mitchener as a TAI’s Environmental Manager. Based out of Spokane, her duties include oversight of TAI’s UCR RI/FS project team and activities.

Mary comes to the position with over 25 years of environmental management experience in diverse national and international settings. This includes RI/FS investigations, regulatory compliance, strategic planning, and project implementation. Said Mary, “I’m looking forward to working

with agencies, tribes and communities to continue TAI’s commitment to completing the RI/FS.”

Mary is following in the footsteps of Kris McCaig, who previously led the TAI team. Kris retired last fall and is now enjoying Montana’s big sky country. 🌐



Mary Mitchener, Teck American Incorporated Environmental Manager

Remedial Investigation & Feasibility Study Updates

As part of a 2006 Settlement Agreement with Teck, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is directing the Upper Columbia River Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study. Its purpose is to establish the nature, extent, and possible human and ecological risks of metals and other contaminants released into the environment.

SOIL SAMPLING

EPA and Teck America, Incorporated (TAI) will conduct additional residential soil sampling in 2025. The upcoming sampling will help further define the boundaries of contamination and will provide residents the opportunity to have their properties sampled.

INTERESTED IN HAVING YOUR PROPERTY SAMPLED IN SPRING 2025?

Contact **Robert Tan**
EPA Project Manager
Email Tan.robort@epa.gov
or call (206) 553-2580.

Additional residential sampling is needed to more accurately estimate the total number of properties that may be eligible for soil cleanup. Sampling is voluntary and will be offered to owners of residential properties that have not yet been sampled within the study area. See Figure 1.

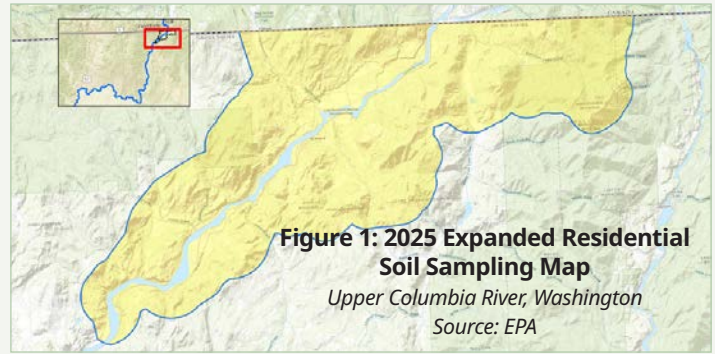


Figure 1: 2025 Expanded Residential Soil Sampling Map
Upper Columbia River, Washington
Source: EPA

Following sampling, residents can expect to receive results that will help inform them about potential lead and arsenic soil concentrations on their properties and how they compare to risk-based screening levels. EPA will continue to evaluate options for early action, including cleanup, at properties with elevated contamination.

EPA anticipates sampling to begin in spring 2025. Signup sheets will be sent to eligible property owners beginning in February. Residents who are interested in having their property sampled are also encouraged to contact EPA directly (see box to the left).

[Continued on Page 8](#)

Northport Area Soil Cleanup

EPA Residential Property Cleanup



Field crew worker installs new sod at a residential property where lead-contaminated soil was removed (U.S. EPA photo)

In fall 2024, the EPA conducted a time-critical removal/soil cleanup action on residential properties within the Upper Columbia River site in and around the Northport area. In total, approximately 5,400 tons of contaminated soil were removed and transported for disposal.

EPA reviewed existing soil sampling data and identified properties with concentrations in soil that are above the removal action level of 200 mg/kg for lead and/or above 90 mg/kg for arsenic where children and/or women of childbearing age have unrestricted access to lead contaminated soil.

Fiscal Year 2023 federal Superfund tax funds were used for the 2024 soil cleanup action. The State of Washington contributed to this soil cleanup action by directly funding the disposal of contaminated soil. 🌱

Washington Department of Ecology Waterfront Cleanup

2024 SUMMARY

Crews were at the Northport Waterfront last spring and summer to clean up historic smelter contamination along the Columbia River hillside and seasonal beach area downstream of the jetty and upstream of the SR25 bridge. Much of the material excavated was found to contain high levels of lead and other metals. Some hotspots tested well above levels designated as “hazardous” under federal standards.

Only 21 facilities nation-wide accept this level of hazardous waste, and none are in Washington. Around 2,000 tons with this designation were trucked to Arlington, Oregon to be stabilized and disposed of. Another 13,000 tons of non-designated waste were sent to Steven’s County Landfill. Lastly, about 4,000 tons of excavated river rock above 6 inches in diameter were retained and mixed with imported materials for reuse on site. Photos of the 2024 efforts can be accessed from [Ecology’s Northport Waterfront cleanup page](#) and [Flickr album](#).

2025 NEXT STEPS

Capping of the jetty, bay, and bay shore as well as any remaining excavation will start in March 2025. Due to unpredictable river levels, it is not possible to choose the window the boat launch will be closed for construction. However, it is estimated it will be closed for approximately 2 weeks sometime between March and May. Ecology will give the public as much notice as possible. The newly constructed access road east of Park Road will continue to be open for all traffic accessing the Town Park and waterfront. 🌱



LAKE ROOSEVELT: MODERATELY WET YEARS

Said Peter Dickerson, Acting Chief of Columbia Basin Water Management for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, regarding the AIP, “The U.S. reservoirs will maintain current levels of flexibility in a minimum of 70% of years, including 60% of driest years.”

As the graphic shows, the combination of coordinated power and flood risk management is being used to minimize changes to Lake Roosevelt reservoir operations.

FLAWS FOR SALMON

A supplemental agreement to the current treaty supports annually releasing 1 MAF of water in Canadian reservoirs between May and August to support salmon and steelhead migration. This will be increased to 1.5 MAF in drier years. In addition to benefits for downstream Environmental Species Act (ESA) listed salmon, this is also expected to support non-ESA listed salmon reintroduction efforts above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams.

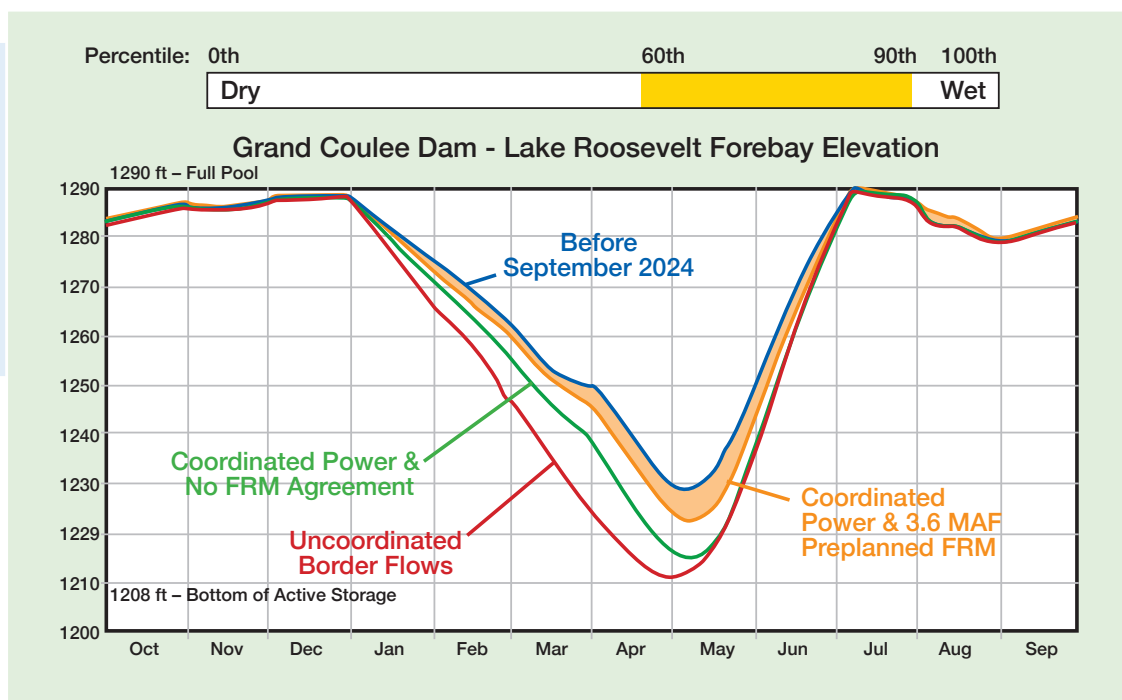
ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION

The AIP does not make ecosystem function a co-equal purpose to managing operations for flood control and power benefits.

Instead, both countries are committed to forming a Kootenai/y Transboundary Collaborative Workgroup (KTCW). The KTCW will coordinate with an additional new advisory group called the Joint Ecosystem and Tribal and Indigenous Cultural Values Body, which will be made up of First Nations and U.S. tribes. Individually and collectively, they will make non-binding recommendations to system operators regarding adaptive management to support informed ecosystem and cultural decisions.

TRANSMISSION

Improving and potentially creating new transmission lines will support the exchange of renewable energy, e.g.—hydropower, wind and solar, between the United States and Canada. This is expected to improve reliability by reducing blackouts, mitigating the effects of extreme weather, and reducing the variable nature of when renewable power generation is available.



COMPENSATION

The original treaty resulted in Canada initially receiving \$64.4 million for flood control benefits that corresponded with building 3 Canadian dams and their reservoirs. In addition, the original treaty annually compensated Canada for half of the estimated increase in downstream hydropower generated at U.S. dams, commonly referred to as the Canadian Entitlement. Depending on the value of hydropower in any given year and other factors, the U.S. estimates the entitlement was worth \$229 million to \$335 million annually to Canada.

The AIP provides a different annual compensation package with three distinct components.

- The value of the Canadian Entitlement will be immediately reduced by 37%, with plans for additional reductions to 50% by 2033. The Entitlement will decrease further if Canada invokes their AIP option to reduce coordinated storage by up to 4 MAF annually.
- The U.S. will provide \$37.6 million annually (indexed for inflation) for the value of preplanned flood risk management (FRM) storage in Canada.
- The U.S. will pay an additional \$16.6 million annually (indexed for inflation) for additional benefits, e.g.—irrigation and navigation, supported by Canadian storage.

Although the calculations and sources of annual compensation to Canada are now different, it appears total annual compensation to Canada will be reduced by 15 to 25 percent.

NEXT STEPS

The final text of a modernized treaty remains to be completed and adopted by both countries. Whether this will be a lengthy process is not known. Interim measures are expected to continue until both countries adopt a modernized treaty. 🌐

Lake Roosevelt Agency Updates

National Park Service

CAMPING FEES

Starting January 1, 2025, the National Park Service (NPS) at Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area increased camping and boat launch fees. A new dump station/water fill fee was also introduced. [Click here for fee and related information.](#)



SEVEN BAYS MARINA IMPROVEMENTS

A "Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI)" was approved for the project to Replace Docks and Fuel Systems, and Rehabilitate Parking Areas at Seven Bays Marina. Said NPS, "As one of the busiest concessions operated marinas and boat launches for transient boaters on the lake, these improvements are critical and will address deferred maintenance in the park." Construction is expected to begin in the summer of 2025.

Bureau of Reclamation



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

SALMON REINTRODUCTION PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT

In November, The Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Bonneville Power Administration opened a 30-day comment period for the public to review and provide feedback on a draft programmatic environmental assessment of the Phase 2 Implementation Plan (P2IP) to test the feasibility of salmon reintroduction upstream of Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams. The draft assessment outlines federal support of the P2IP, which was developed and is being implemented by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Spokane Tribe of Indians, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and Upper Columbia United Tribes.

[Click here to learn more](#), including signing up for the project mailing list, reading Frequently Asked Questions and responses, or posing additional questions.

SUPPLEMENTING THE 2020 COLUMBIA RIVER SYSTEM OPERATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The 2020 Columbia River System Operation (CRSO) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) analyzed the coordinated operation and maintenance of fourteen Federal multi-purpose dams and related facilities located throughout the Columbia River Basin. This includes Grand Coulee Dam. In December, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, or co-lead agencies, announced their intention to supplement the CSRO. The purpose is to address new information and circumstances since it was published in 2020.

To support this effort, the co-lead agencies are inviting the public to submit scoping comments relevant to the supplemental National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process no later than March 20, 2025. The co-lead agencies will also hold at least three virtual public meetings the week of February 10, 2025.

[Click here to learn more and provide public comments.](#)

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE RULES

In August 2024, the first case of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in Washington was confirmed in north Spokane County. Four additional cases have been confirmed in Spokane County since then and one in Pend Oreille County. CWD is a fatal, neurological illness affecting members of the deer family, including white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, and moose.

[Click here to learn important information about the disease](#), preventing its spread, new rules for hunters, and other information. Rule changes cover WDFW Region 1, which includes Stevens, Ferry, Lincoln, Spokane, Pend Oreille, Walla Walla, Whitman, Asotin, Columbia, and Garfield counties.

Lincoln County

MILES CRESTON ROAD WORK

Miles Creston from Highway 2 to Copenhaver Road is open to traffic as a gravel roadway but will be hard surfaced in late spring 2025. Miles Creston is a main thoroughfare to Lincoln Mill, Hawk Creek, and Seven Bays.



BROADBAND INSTALLATION

Lincoln County continues to build direct fiber networks to provide municipalities and unincorporated communities significantly faster, more reliable, and more secure internet access. Multiple state grants totaling \$24 million have allowed Lincoln County to build these projects.

The county is currently in the design phases for the Deer Meadows/Seven Bays Project. They are also in the process of applying for dollars to start the BEAD Project Area in the Northwest part of the County. This will take in communities along Lake Roosevelt like Spring Canyon, Keller Ferry, Hanson Harbor and Lincoln along with other rural areas. "We are 'Lighting Up' Lincoln County," said Commissioner Scott Hutsell.

Lake Roosevelt Property Owners Association Merges with Forum

The Lake Roosevelt Property Owners Association has merged its operations with the Lake Roosevelt Forum. Starting in 1997, property owners on the Spokane Arm of Lake Roosevelt banded together to make sure their voices and needs were heard with the National Park Service and other agencies. Over the years, the Association addressed safety, enforcement, aquatic invasive species and other needs. The Forum has benefited greatly from their efforts, sharing a passion for public education and engagement affecting Lake Roosevelt.

Property owner Keith Green set the tone and managed the association from the outset. "Keith is a great example of people not just caring but proactively doing something to make the lake a better place," said Forum Executive Director Happy Avery.

Post pandemic, the Forum and Association jointly identified a need for a community meeting in this area. "The timing is good because there are plenty of things to make sure people are up to speed on," said Avery. Please stay tuned for an announcement. 🌐

Landslide on Lake Roosevelt



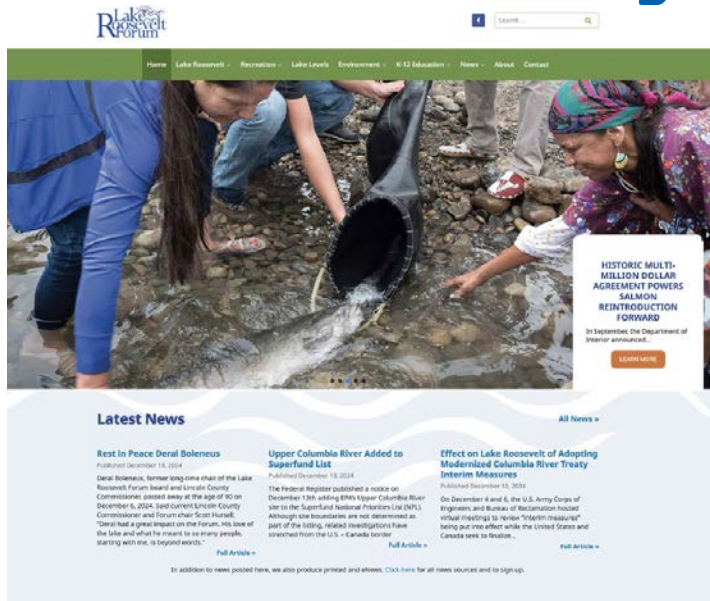
This stunning landslide occurred in November with the area being stable since. [Click here to learn more.](#)

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Lake Roosevelt Recreation Guide



Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study Updates

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Additional residential sampling and analysis will incorporate new guidance released by EPA in 2024 regarding the residential soil lead regional screening level and the regional removal management level to be used at superfund sites. [Click here](#) for more information.

Specific cleanup levels will not be determined until EPA's Proposed Plan and following a Record of Decision.

EPA also anticipates sampling additional non-residential upland areas in 2025 to support their ecological risk assessment.

RIVER ASSESSMENT

The Draft Aquatic Baseline Ecological Risk Assessment evaluates risk to plants, wildlife, fish, and other organisms in and along the Columbia River from the U.S. - Canada Border to Grand Coulee Dam.

Teck submitted the Draft Aquatic BERA in April and received comments from EPA in December 2024. EPA and TAI are discussing EPA's extensive comments in January/February.

LEARN MORE

For summaries of studies and human health assessments completed, [click here for Forum Public Guides](#) and more information. [Click here for EPA's summary information.](#) 🌐