

Committed to the environmental and economic well being of our community



# Newsletter

## SUMMER 2025

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## 2025 Lake Roosevelt Fisheries Update

Every year, Lake Roosevelt attracts approximately 1,500,000 visitors for a range of popular recreational activities, especially boating, fishing, and camping. Extraordinary angling opportunities inspire visitors and residents alike to spend thousands of hours catching more than 150,000 fish annually. While most go for rainbow trout, kokanee, white sturgeon, walleye, and smallmouth bass, the effort to suppress northern pike – a predator that devastates other fish populations – provides additional opportunities for enthusiasts.

Co-managers from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the Spokane Tribe of Indians, and Colville

Confederated Tribes summarized this year’s highlights for our readers. Annually, they invest more than \$9,000,000 to develop and maintain Lake Roosevelt fisheries.

### RAINBOW TROUT AND NET PENS

The long-term goal is to release up to 750,000 rainbow trout annually with higher release numbers corresponding to higher angler success rates. Rainbow trout were released into Lake Roosevelt in May. They average 7.35 inches in length and 7 fish to the pound. Many will grow to about 16–18 inches by September and will be available in the system for the next 2 angling seasons.

All rainbows released are triploids, meaning they are sterile and will not interbreed with wild trout. In addition, their adipose fin is clipped. Wild fish with an intact adipose fin should be released to ensure keeping only hatchery fish in Lake Roosevelt.

The goal is for a 5% annual return to creel, the estimated amount caught by anglers based on survey data collected by co-managers. Anglers had an estimated return of 16.7% in 2024.

Supporting this effort are the WDFW Sherman Creek and Ford Hatcheries, the Spokane Tribal Hatchery and 63 net pens located between Keller Ferry and Kettle Falls. Volunteers support maintenance and feeding needs of 45 net pens from October through their release in May.

In 2023, white, green, blue, and orange research tags were deployed in rainbow trout raised in Lake Roosevelt net pens. Tags have been steadily returning to fisheries personnel to provide an independent evaluation of the fishery from the annual angler survey/creel program.

The evaluation benefits greatly from angler retention of tagged fish being high, with many



*Colby Peone and his son with a 6-pound hatchery trout caught from the Spokane Arm*

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## Fish Fest is a Catch!

On June 8th, the National Park Service (NPS) hosted the annual “Fish Fest,” a free and family-friendly fishing festival at Spring Canyon. The festival had more than 150 attendees, and 76 fishing poles were handed out for free to kids under 14.

At the festival, participants attended park ranger programs, learned how to cast, reel, and tie knots, and had the opportunity to earn a Junior Angler badge. With the help of a wide variety of partner agencies and organizations, NPS also set up stations with fish-related activities, allowing families to learn about conservation, aquatic invasive species, Leave No Trace, water safety, and how to be good stewards of the water.

If you missed it this year, Fish Fest is a keeper and will be back next summer. All families are always welcome and encouraged to attend! 🍷



Having fun at Fish Fest



## A Step Back in Time at the Fur Trade Festival

For this year’s Fur Trade Festival in May, the National Park Service (NPS) celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s establishment of Fort Colville at Mission Point near Kettle Falls. This fun, family-friendly event, which counted 643 people over four days, taught participants the history of fur trading in the Inland Northwest and how it shaped interactions between Native American tribes and European settlers in the region.

Taking attendees back in time, Northwest Fur Trade Historians re-enacted the ways that fur traders dressed, communicated, hunted, and trapped. They held demonstrations and presentations about the fort’s establishment back in 1825, the role of women, the use of sign language, animal trapping, and trading.

On the first two days of the festival, which were reserved for local school groups, students enjoyed an engaging field trip where they learned lessons in history as well as orienteering, fire starting, and native cultures. Hunter Wood, the District Interpretive Ranger at Fort Spokane, said that “the fur traders did an amazing job at teaching skills and working with the kids,” and that he “look[s] forward to doing it again next year.”

The festival also coincided with the grand reopening of the Kettle Falls Historical Center, which will remain open for the season until September 15th.

Thank you to the Northwest Fur Trade Historians and the National Park Service for another memorable Fur Trade Festival! 🍷

## LRF Conference Returns: Save the Dates!

After a nearly six-year hiatus, the Lake Roosevelt Forum is excited to announce the return of the conference this fall. We hope you can join us at the 2025 Lake Roosevelt Forum Conference on October 28 and 29 at the CenterPlace in Spokane Valley, WA, where we will once again convene opinion leaders, elected officials, natural resource managers, policy makers, environmentalists, businesses, and concerned citizens from throughout the region.

The last time we convened in 2019, the Forum welcomed 299 participants who attended one or both days and represented a cross section of interests. The conference allowed attendees to share information and find opportunities for increased collaboration and coordination. “Historically, the conference has been popular because it offers a unique setting for tribal members and representatives; local, state, and federal agencies; watershed councils, elected officials, conservation groups and the public to come together for a deep dive into issues, innovations, and opportunities with transboundary, regional, and local implications,” said the Forum’s Executive Director Happy Avery. “We know there is high demand for the conference and are thrilled to be able to bring it back this year.”

The 2025 Lake Roosevelt Forum Conference promises to once again provide a unique opportunity for information sharing and networking. Over the coming weeks and months, we will be sharing with you details about the agenda, including keynote speakers, sessions, registration, and more to make this a great event. For now, mark your calendars and save the dates! 🍷

# Updates on Northport Area Soil Cleanup

## Washington Department of Ecology Waterfront Cleanup

### 2025 PROGRESS

This spring, construction crews got the ball rolling again on cleanup and renovations to the Northport area. Excavation and capping of the jetty, bay, and bay shore have been completed, and contaminated materials have been removed from the seasonal beach and boat dock areas. The excavated areas have all been filled with clean materials.

The access road east of Park Road continues to be open for all traffic accessing the Town Park, boat launch, and waterfront.

### NEXT STEPS

Ecology has listed the following for its next steps on the waterfront cleanup:

- Planting two red maple trees on the jetty to replace the former elms and provide shade during the summer heat.
- Installing two benches and a pavilion picnic area.
- Replanting all areas impacted by earthwork with native vegetation, including topsoil, compost, and mulch. Steep slopes will be stabilized.
- The embedded link to the Department of Ecology's website can be used to keep up with the Northport work in real time, including an attached photo album. 📷



Northport Waterfront Cleanup



## EPA Residential Soil Sampling

During April and May 2025, contractors from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Teck American Incorporated provided soil sampling for 87 residential property owners who volunteered for the opportunity to have their soil tested for lead. A total of 381 soil samples were collected.

The samples have been analyzed at a third-party laboratory in Kelso, Washington, and the analytical results are currently being validated by a third-party quality assurance contractor. The validated analytical results are expected by late July. When the soil sampling results are available, the EPA will notify individual property owners. 📷

# EPA Nears Finalized Community Involvement Plan for Upper Columbia River

Later this year, the EPA will publish the updated Community Involvement Plan (CIP) that was initiated last fall. The CIP will guide the EPA's approach to the Superfund cleanup process of the Upper Columbia River, reflecting their intentions of working closely with the communities in and around Lake Roosevelt on this process.

The CIP will contain a range of important information, including the following:

- overview and history of the Superfund site
- contaminants that may be of concern to people and the environment
- descriptions of the communities around the site
- partners that have been working with the EPA on the site
- community issues and concerns based on interview comments from participating residents and community

organizations, tribes, government agencies, and other interested parties involved at the site

- and an action plan with ways that EPA plans to inform the community, using a variety of tools and activities based on community input

Additionally, the CIP will include a Technical Assistance Needs Assessment which will summarize input gathered during community interviews about technical needs and desired assistance to better understand the cleanup process and how people can be involved.

After internal review, the CIP should be made accessible for the public this fall. Community members will continue to have input to the CIP, which will be subject to revisions after it is finalized. In the meantime, the Lake Roosevelt Forum welcomes questions and inquiries about the progress of the CIP. 📷

# Lake Roosevelt Agency Updates

## National Park Service

### SPRING CANYON SEAWALL PROJECT

From mid-March to mid-May we replaced a crumbling section of the seawall at Spring Canyon that stretched from the boat launch to the government dock.



Spring Canyon Seawall

### SEVEN BAYS MARINA IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

Replacements of dock and fuel system and rehabilitation of parking areas at Seven Bays Marina, originally expected to begin in summer 2025. Due to some delays in the design process, the estimated start date for construction has been moved to spring 2026.

### REMINDER: SUMMER FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Total fire restrictions are in place at Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. Due to extreme fire conditions, all fires are prohibited until further notice.

## Lincoln County



### HAWK CREEK ROAD STABILIZATION PROJECT

Estimated to start in Fall 2025. Working with Federal Highways and Lincoln County through the Lincoln County Federal Lands Access Program.

The project will realign and stabilize a 400-foot section of Hawk Creek Road between the Hawk Creek campground and boat launch.

### MILES CRESTON ROAD READY FOR THE SUMMER

Work on the Miles Creston Road from Highway 2 to Copenhagen Road was completed in late June, in time for the busy Fourth of July weekend. As the main thoroughfare to Lincoln Mill, Hawk Creek, and Seven Bays, there will be lots of traffic going to and from Lake Roosevelt through Lincoln County for the next two months.

## Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Department of Ecology



As you are enjoying Lake Roosevelt this summer, be aware of a few

potential hazards: algal blooms, wildfires, curious and hungry bears, and chronic wasting disease (CWD).



### ALGAL BLOOMS

Algal blooms are rapid growths of algae that occur in warm and slow-moving bodies of water. While they are not always toxic, they are often harmful to human and animal health.

To avoid algal blooms, be sure to steer clear of water that is slimy, scummy, and/or foamy in texture and blue-green, reddish-brown, or pea-green in color.

Symptoms of exposure to algal blooms in humans and pets include skin rashes and sudden sickness after being in the water. To learn more about algal blooms and ways to stay safe on the water this summer, the Washington Department of Ecology has a helpful blog post: [ecology.wa.gov/blog/may-2025/make-room-for-algal-blooms](https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/may-2025/make-room-for-algal-blooms).

### WILDFIRES

Based on restrictions placed by the National Park Service, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has restricted campfires, target shooting (to certain hours), and other activities since July 1 on WDFW-managed lands in Eastern Washington to support public safety. Learn more here: [wdfw.wa.gov/newsroom/news-release/campfires-target-shooting-and-other-activities-restricted-wdfw-managed-lands-eastern-washington](https://wdfw.wa.gov/newsroom/news-release/campfires-target-shooting-and-other-activities-restricted-wdfw-managed-lands-eastern-washington).

### BEARS

It's the time of year when campers can come a little too close for comfort to bears nosing around campgrounds and dispersed campsites looking for food. When camping in bear country, like many spots along Lake Roosevelt, keep a clean campsite, store food in the trunk of your vehicle or locked in your RV or in a bear food locker if available (the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area on Lake Roosevelt has brand new bear-resistant food lockers available to campers), don't bring anything into your tent that could smell good- including toiletries- to bears, and double-bag your trash and store in your vehicle if there are not bear-resistant trash receptacles available. More tips on avoiding conflicts with bears, and what to do if you have a close encounter with one, are on the WDFW website: [wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-10/2018\\_playing\\_bear\\_countryrich.pdf](https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-10/2018_playing_bear_countryrich.pdf).

### CWD

Following up from our January newsletter, CWD was first identified in north Spokane County in August 2024 and several more cases have been confirmed since then in Spokane and Pend d'Oreille Counties. It continues to be a hazard of concern as a fatal neurological illness affecting cervids (deer, elk, moose, caribou) that is transmitted from animal to animal through feces, saliva, urine, and other environmental contaminants. The Washington Department of Wildlife (WDFW) approved new rules to limit the spread of CWD in March 2025.

Although CWD has not been shown to infect people or pets, it is best to exercise caution around wildlife -- especially when they appear to be ill or are acting strangely. If you see sick or dead animals, please report them to the regional WDFW office or use the online reporting form. To learn more about CWD, preventing its spread, new rules for hunters, and other information, visit [wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/chronic-wasting](https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/chronic-wasting). 🐾

# Columbia & Lower Snake Rivers Temperature TMDL

Due to high water temperatures exceeding Washington water quality standards in the Columbia and Lower Snake Rivers, the Washington Department of Ecology is in the early stages of producing a state-specific implementation plan to accompany the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) finalized by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2021 to reduce water temperatures. High water temperatures are particularly dangerous to endangered salmon populations that depend on cool water to live, spawn, and migrate. Not surprisingly, water temperatures are particularly high during summer months, from June through October.

TMDL is defined by the EPA as a “calculation that identifies the amount of a pollutant [in this case, heat] that a river or other waterbody can receive and still meet specific standards set by a state or Tribe to protect water quality.” EPA’s TMDL plan addresses Washington and Oregon portions of the nearly 900 miles that the Columbia and Lower Snake Rivers span. Because these watersheds cross so many boundaries, the EPA was responsible for producing the TMDL while the states will be responsible for implementation plans.

Although it is still being developed, the implementation plan will include “a strategy for working with dams, updating permits for point sources, and prioritizing tributary work to address high river temperatures and to protect salmon.”

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Ecology is requesting public input on the TMDL. Readers can access a public survey that allows partners and the public to provide input on a continual basis. Participants should provide input on direct actions that can help reduce heat loads listed by the TMDL, including dams, tributaries, and point sources. Survey responses are accepted until 11:59 p.m. on Oct. 31, 2025.

Additionally, Ecology hosts regular advisory committee meetings to support the development of the plan. Advisory group meetings are open to the public, and anyone interested is encouraged to listen to these webinars. Time is reserved at the end of each meeting for questions and comments from members of the public.

For more specific details about the plan and opportunities to participate in the process, please visit this link: [fortress.wa.gov/ecy/ezshare/wq/WaterQualityImprovement/ColumbiaSnakeKickoffPresentations.pdf](https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/ezshare/wq/WaterQualityImprovement/ColumbiaSnakeKickoffPresentations.pdf)



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- Dave Anderson**, Community Member
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- Mike Kuttel, Jr.**, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Cindy Marchand**, Colville Confederated Tribes
- Brent Nichols**, Spokane Tribe of Indians
- Zack Trudell**, Ferry County Commissioner

## STAFF

- Happy Avery**, Executive Director
- Cami Haveman**, Managing Director
- Maddox Reimer**, Undergraduate Fellow

# Columbia River Treaty Interim Provisions Under Review

The provisions of the non-binding Agreement in Principle (AIP) that was established in July 2024 remain in effect. The new Trump administration is reviewing and considering modifications to the draft treaty before submitting it to the US Senate for approval.

The main purpose of the treaty, which dates back to 1964, is to ensure flood control throughout the river basin and a distribution of hydropower between the U.S. and Canada. The Forum published an article in the January newsletter detailing the effects of the updated provision of the Treaty on water levels, salmon, ecosystem function, power production, and more.

# Lake Roosevelt Water Festival Returns in September

After an impressive turnout last year, the Lake Roosevelt Forum is excited to announce that the annual Water Festival will take place again this year on September 16 and 17 at Sherman Creek Hatchery and Kettle Fall Swim Beach! Every year the festival attracts hundreds of 3rd through 5th grade students from area schools to these two locations for direct educational experience on a variety of topics related to water and the Lake Roosevelt watershed, such as fish and other wildlife, water quality and resources, invasive species, boater safety, to name a few.

The Forum is still in the process of finalizing details for this year’s festival. Any schools and/or teachers interested in participating should contact LRF to coordinate their attendance for one of the two days.

We look forward to working with the following tribes and agencies who have supported the Water Festival for over twenty years: Avista, Colville Confederated Tribes, Ferry Conservation District, National Park Service, National Weather Service, Spokane Tribe of Indians, Stevens Conservation District, Stevens County Public Utility District, US Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, WA Department of Fish & Wildlife, WA Department of Natural Resources, and WA State Parks.

# 2025 Lake Roosevelt Fisheries Updates CONTINUED FROM COVER

being caught by shore anglers in addition to boat anglers. There have been a few fish caught as far downstream as Bridgeport, Banks Lake, and Rufus Woods, so they are not entirely constrained to Lake Roosevelt.

## **SPOKANE ARM RAINBOW TROUT SUPPLEMENTAL RELEASE**

Each early spring-summer, the Spokane Tribal Hatchery supplements annual net pen releases of triploid rainbow trout by releasing 40,000 fish in the Spokane Arm, a part of the reservoir where net pens are not operated. From March through June, 25,581 triploid rainbow trout greater than 1 pound each were released at the Little Falls Dam tailrace and Cornelius Campground Boat Launch. The hatchery has approximately 20,000 triploid rainbow trout on hand greater than 2 pounds each that will be released in July. The intention of the Spokane Arm releases is to provide a fishery in a part of Lake Roosevelt where net pen releases do not occur and due to the large size at release, provide trophy size trout for angler harvest.

## **WHITE STURGEON**

Beginning in 2017, a recreational fishery for white sturgeon in Lake Roosevelt was reopened after more than 20 years of closure for conservation purposes. The fishery was made possible due to surplus sturgeon from U.S. and Canadian conservation hatchery programs to help stem a decades-long population decline.

Because of white sturgeon recruitment failure (a situation where young fish do not survive and “recruit” to the population), the population was in a perilous position prior to the initiation of the hatchery programs in the early 2000s. In the current program, managers capture sturgeon larvae from the wild, rear them in a hatchery, and then release around 3,000 fish back into Lake Roosevelt in the spring at a size that ensures good survival. In June and July, tribal and state fishery managers are out at night collecting sturgeon larvae for this purpose.

The exact cause of recruitment failure has not been determined, but it is the subject of on-going research. In the meantime, the hatchery program ensures continuation of the population while also supporting both tribal and recreational fisheries.

For 2025, the angling season will run from September 15 – November 29 from Grand Coulee Dam to the Canadian border. The harvest slot (size of sturgeon that can be retained) has not yet been determined. Looking forward, managers expect to maintain a limited harvest opportunity for the next few years but with gradually tightening slot limits to protect against overharvest. Within a few years, the fishery is likely to move to catch and release only to protect weaker year classes from 2011 to 2016. Stronger year-classes have been produced consistently since 2017. Once they become large enough, managers anticipate a harvest season can resume.

## **WALLEYE**

Since 2002, the co-managers have conducted Fall Walleye Index Netting (FWIN) to monitor the walleye population. Monitoring enables managers to track the abundance, age, growth, condition, sex ratio, and age at maturity.

WDFW reports that the walleye fishery has remained stable and resilient over time. Abundance of walleye decreased slightly in 2024 but was above the 20-year average. There were two large year classes detected for the 2025 fishery: age-2 fish that will be 12-14 inches and age-4 fish that will be 16-18 inches. Abundance of these age-4 fish was a record over the 23-year dataset, so anglers can expect better fishing for quality-size walleye than past years.

## **NORTHERN PIKE**

Anglers are encouraged to participate in the Northern Pike Reward Program at Lake Roosevelt to help reduce the spread of the non-native invasive northern pike.

“The Lake Roosevelt co-managers (Colville Tribes, Spokane Tribe of Indians and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife) are particularly concerned with the negative impacts northern pike pose to tribal and state resources,” said Holly McLellan, the fish biologist for Colville Tribes Fish and Wildlife.

A northern pike can be over 50 inches long and weigh around 45 pounds and a female northern pike can produce up to 250,000 eggs. The female pike is also known to be able to eat frogs, birds, trout, salmon and steelhead with their large teeth and mouth.

Anglers should NOT confuse the native northern pikeminnow with northern pike. The native pikeminnow should be released in Lake Roosevelt, as their populations are depressed in this reservoir.

The co-managers have been working to remove the northern pike from the lake since 2015. Since that time, 21,415 pike have been removed. The good news is that the number of pike captured per net has dropped from a high of 3.08 in 2017 to less than 0.50 pike per net in 2024. Their distribution, however, is slowly creeping downstream with the highest catch now occurring in the middle sections (Hunters and Gifford areas) of the reservoir.

Researchers will continue with the standardized removal program through 2025. This includes an increased gillnet effort in the spring, when pike are in shallow waters preparing to spawn, and adjustments based on population abundance gillnet surveys that occur in the fall. 🟡

## **Lake Roosevelt Forum**

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