

SPOKANE RIVER, WEST CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOOD. The Spokane River, the river's fish and wildlife, and future generations will need your help. PHOTO: John Osborn

SPOKANE RIVER FLOWS: 2500 CFS FOR SUMMER SEASON FLOWS

ECOLOGY'S PROPOSED 850 CFS THREATENS RIVER, BUSINESSES, STATE'S LEGAL STANDING

Protecting Spokane River flows is important for fish and wildlife, boaters and floaters, businesses and jobs, and Washington's legal standing with Idaho.

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) is proposing to set summer season minimum river flows at 850 cubic feet per second (cfs), an extremely low flow level that fails to protect the river and its values. Sierra

Club and the Center for Environmental Law & Policy (CELP) are calling on the agency to set flows at 2500 cfs to maintain a fully functioning Spokane River.

FISH AND WILDLIFE NEED A FUNCTIONING SPOKANE RIVER

Thousands of people know the "Downriver Reach" and its exceptional

values located from Spokane Falls to the pool behind Nine Mile Dam. All year long we are drawn to the beauty of the river, its waterfalls and gorge, pools and rapids. The river is home to fish and wildlife, and supports a vibrant and expanding sporting and recreation economy.

The City of Spokane Shoreline Master Program designates the shorelines of the Downriver Reach as either Natural or Urban Conservancy Environment. The Department of Fish & Wildlife designates this reach as Urban Natural Open Space. Habitat values are high, as stated in the City of Spokane Shoreline Inventory:

The reach, along with adjacent reaches [from Monroe dam to city limits], is particularly important in that they are almost entirely functional, natural habitats for fish and wildlife. . . .

Habitat for fish and wildlife appear to be functioning at excellent levels in this reach [Hangman Creek to TJ Meenach]. . . .

Habitat for fish and wildlife is functioning

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ETHICS CONFERENCE CALLS FOR MODERNIZING THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY

On May 13 about one hundred people from around the Columbia River Basin gathered at Gonzaga University to hear first-hand accounts of losses suffered by indigenous people due to dam-building on the Columbia River and to approve a Declaration on Ethics and Modernizing the Columbia River Treaty (see link at the end of this article) calling on Canada and the United States for specific actions to right historic wrongs and achieve stewardship in managing the river.

Conference speakers included Roman Catholic Bishop William Skylstad, Evangelical Lutheran Bishop Martin Wells, Okanagan Nation Alliance Executive Director Pauline Terbasket, Upper Columbia United Tribes Executive Director D.R. Michel, and many other

indigenous voices. Historians, scientists, and Tribal and First Nation speakers recounted the damage to stream flows, cultural traditions, fish habitat, forests, and farmlands experienced by indigenous people and other residents along the river and its tributaries.

The Declaration will be used to promote a basin-wide respectful dialog in seeking ethics-based reforms to the Columbia River Treaty, which governs the management of the Columbia River shared by Canada and the U.S. It notes that the Columbia Basin Tribes in the U.S. and the First Nations in Canada were not even consulted during the Treaty's negotiation and that their rights and management authorities were ignored in the Treaty ratified in 1964.

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- Respect the rights, dignity and traditions of the Columbia Basin tribes and First Nations.
- Include healthy ecosystem function as an equal purpose of the Treaty.
- Achieve balance among river uses that include healthy water and sustainable fish and wildlife populations.
- Develop flow and water management operations to help withstand climate change.
- Provide for ecosystem management of the region while protecting tribal and subsistence uses.
- Engage local communities in a meaningful manner that is transparent and inclusive.
- Address economic and environmental justice for the poor.
- Restore anadromous and resident fish passage to all historical locations throughout the Columbia River basin.

ETHICS CONF continued from front page

The Declaration recognizes the Columbia River Pastoral Letter by the bishops of the international watershed as a template for decision-makers in both nations as they consider the moral dimensions of the decisions that result from the Treaty's renegotiation. The Declaration sets forth eight principles for modernizing the Columbia River Treaty (see front page).

The U.S. State Department is expected to announce the United States' negotiating position on the Columbia River Treaty later in 2014. U.S. agencies leading the review have recommended that the United States and Canada "develop a modernized framework for the Treaty that ensures a more resilient and healthy ecosystem-based function throughout the Columbia River Basin while maintaining an acceptable level of flood risk and assuring reliable

and economic hydro-power benefits." All four Northwest states, 15 Columbia Basin tribes, fishermen and environmentalists support that recommendation.

In March, British Columbia released its draft recommendation that the Treaty be renewed and that changes occur within the existing framework. The B.C. Province holds that ecosystem values as well as adaptation to climate change should be important considerations in Treaty planning and implementation. The federal government in Ottawa has not yet announced Canada's position.

The conference was hosted by Gonzaga University's Political Science Department, Native American Studies, and Environmental Studies.

SEE THE DECLARATION ONLINE AT:
[HTTP://WWW.WATERPLANET.WS/PDF/ETHICS-TREATY_DECLARATION.PDF](http://www.waterplanet.ws/pdf/ethics-treaty_declaration.pdf)

UPPER COLUMBIA RIVER GROUP

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EXPLORING THE INLAND NORTHWEST WITH THE SIERRA CLUB

SUMMER IS HERE, SIGN-UP FOR OUTINGS!

OUTING WITH THE COAL CAMPAIGN: PICNIC & HIKE

THURSDAY, JULY 10TH 6-9 pm

Meeting Location:
High Bridge Park Picnic Shelter
Difficulty: Easy
Sign up:
Jace Bylenga
509.209.2395
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Join Sierra Club's Beyond

Coal Campaign

and Upper Columbia River Group for a picnic style meal, social gathering, and a leisurely hike exploring the Hangman Creek area. Entree provided, bring sides and beverages to share.

Coal export proposals threaten to drastically impact the northwest. This outing will tour an area that could be uniquely impacted: the head of the "rail line funnel" where all coal export rail traffic would need to travel if proposed

facilities are built. Currently, the Sierra Club is involved with a Clean Water Act suit over coal falling off rail cars and into Hangman Creek in the area we will explore. This valley is home to diverse wildlife including but not limited to: blue heron, golden eagles, osprey, marmot, etc. Binoculars recommended. Jace Bylenga, Associate Organizer for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign, will lead and provide an update for the campaign.

Join us at 6 pm for food and discussion. Hike to follow at 7 pm. This hike will traverse from the High Bridge Park picnic shelter, under the rail line bridge, across the creek, and up a trail on the bluff to Browne's Addition and back again. Climbing the bluff is more moderate, but we'll be sure to travel at a speed that will accommodate the group. Tennis shoes or hiking shoes are recommended.

DISHMAN HILLS HIKE: GLORIOUS SUNSET VIEWS

THURSDAY, JULY 24 6-9 pm

Meeting Location:
3712 S. Thierman Road, Spokane

Difficulty: Moderate



Sign up: Jeff Lambert
jlambert@envirosciencegroup.com

The hike is about 5 miles and will visit the relatively new Glenrose and Cliffs Conservation area in the Dishman Hills. Excellent views of Spokane and Spokane Valley. While we do encounter some steep sections, it's still rated as moderate.

SIGNING UP FOR SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS IN THE INLAND NORTHWEST JUST GOT EASIER.

For either of these hikes and/or to check the entire summer Outings series, go online to <http://www.meetup.com/Exploring-the-Inland-Northwest-with-Sierra-Club/>

Contact: Carolyn Leon, Chair
Sierra Club's Outings Program
lonestar4@aol.com

 Upper Columbia River Group | Coal Free Spokane

RIVER FLOWS *continued from front page*

at or near pristine levels in this reach [T] Meenach to city limits].

This is a critical reach of the river, and maintaining clean, cold water is essential to the health of local fisheries. A post-licensing study prepared by Avista indicates the importance of the reach downstream of Monroe Street dam as a spawning and rearing area for redband trout. This productive reach deserves full protection.

In addition, federal agencies have proposed discussion about restoring anadromous fish passage at Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams as part of the Columbia River Treaty update process. This puts the potential for return of salmon to the Spokane watershed on the table. Specifically the joint Bonneville Power and Army Corps of Engineers recommendation states:

The United States should pursue a joint program with Canada, with shared costs, to investigate and, if warranted, implement restored fish passage and reintroduction of anadromous fish on the main stem Columbia River to Canadian spawning grounds. . . .

The instream flow rule should anticipate and prepare for return of salmon to Spokane Falls.

In its draft 850 cfs proposal, Ecology failed to mention the unique and important public values of the Spokane River. Ecology needs to acknowledge these values and, accordingly, increase flows to 2500 cfs.

850 LEAVES BOATERS & FLOATERS HIGH AND DRY

The 850 cfs proposed summer flow is not protective of recreational and navigational uses of the river. The river reach between the Monroe Street dam and Nine Mile

dam, which runs through Riverside State Park, is very popular for summer boating. Nonetheless, Ecology has conducted NO studies to determine the appropriate flows for recreation and navigation uses. The only study conducted for this reach is the “Whitewater Paddling Instream Flow Assessment Study Report” (Louis Berger 2004), which is characterized in the Avista Draft Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment, Section 5.10 (July 2005).

This document reveals that a single optimum flow for the Lower Spokane is problematic, and that a range of flows between 1350 cfs to 2558 cfs is necessary to support recreational use and navigation on the Downriver Reach. The Draft EA states that:

Whitewater boating opportunities are generally available at flows above 1,500 cfs as measured at the USGS gage located in downtown Spokane. Park and play boating opportunities generally exist when flows exceed 2,500

cfs. During low-water years, boating opportunities are often limited in the late summer and early fall when flows can drop below 1,000 cfs at the Spokane gage.

IDAHO V. WASHINGTON: SETTING A HIGH FLOW ADVANTAGES WASHINGTON

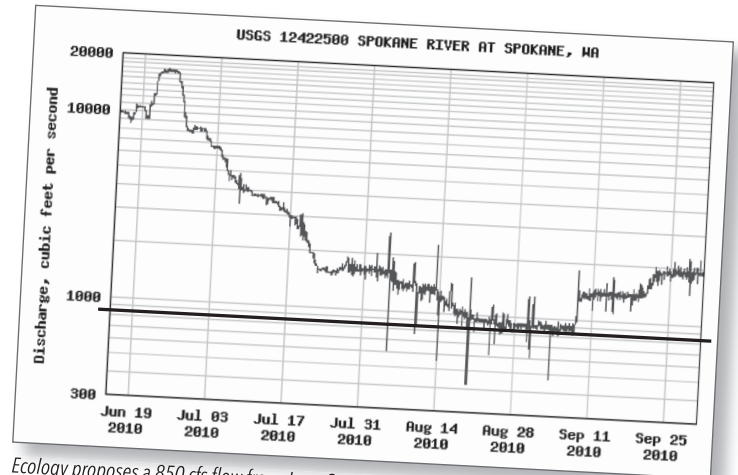
Like “Kansas vs Colorado” or any of the other interstate legal battles over limited water, Washington and Idaho will eventually negotiate or go to court over limited water in the Spokane-Coeur d’Alene Basin. Setting a high flow for the Spokane River will strengthen Washington’s position in protecting state interests in the Spokane River.

Here is the problem: water from Idaho that would flow to Washington is intercepted. Idaho has stopped issuing water rights elsewhere in the state – but not in the Spokane-Coeur d’Alene Basin. Thousands of wells (and more on the way) pumping water from the bi-state aquifer are taking flow from the Spokane River. Washington State government officials know this and yet fail to act.

Drawing the state boundary across the

middle of the watershed was a mistake in American history, and sets up interstate conflict over water. With climate change and environmental refugees, people will move to the Spokane River-Lake Coeur d’Alene Basin because of an apparent abundance of fresh water. Water conflicts will intensify. Washington needs to stake out a position that actually protects the state interest and the larger public interest.

Ecology’s proposed minimum flow of 850 cfs is a major tactical mistake for Washington, and threatens the Spokane River.



Ecology proposes a 850 cfs flow from June-September. This chart of 2010 flows below Monroe Street dam shows Spokane River flows dropping below 850 cfs on only a few days. Under Ecology’s proposal, all of the water between the upper line and the horizontal line would be available to issue new water rights. Graph modified from US Geologic Survey gage data.

ETHICS AND THE SPOKANE RIVER

The State of Washington holds in trust the Spokane River for its citizens. As such, the state has ethical duties to protect the river. Ecology’s failure to adequately protect Spokane River flows, and harm Washington State’s position - and the river - in adjudication with Idaho is a breach of public trust.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: MAKE TIME FOR THE RIVER

While we await Ecology’s formal public comment period on its proposed flows (probably to be held in the autumn of 2014), spend time this summer enjoying the Spokane River. Visit the waterfalls at Riverfront Park. Spend time at the Bowl & Pitcher at Riverside State Park. If you fish, or boat, or just enjoy the neighborhood views of the Spokane River Gorge, then make time to reflect on the river. The Spokane River, the river’s fish and wildlife, and future generations will need your help. This summer make your personal commitment to protect home waters.

John Osborn, MD, Conservation Chair, UCR Group

ACT NOW SAVE ENERGY, \$\$\$, AND THE PLANET TODAY!

Sierra Club & Sustainable Works have partnered to offer discounted Save Energy Today home energy audits. It’s an assessment of a home’s energy usage with immediate energy efficiency improvements. A \$1,200 value! Normally \$95, Sierra Club members in Spokane County pay only \$70 if you sign up before July 31st!

sustainableworks.com/sign-up
509.443.3471

SustainableWorks

MOVING SPOKANE BEYOND COAL:

STOPPING COAL EXPORT PROPOSALS AND THE USE OF COAL POWER FOR OUR ELECTRICITY

There are three coal export proposals in the Northwest that threaten our climate, health, safety, and values.

Citizens of the Northwest have raised their voices and have recently shown up in historic numbers to oppose coal export proposals. The states of WA and OR are listening, but this fight is far from over. If these proposals are permitted, every ounce of that coal would travel through Spokane and the Inland NW by rail. With the expected release of the Draft

Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the largest proposed facilities in Longview and Cherry Point (**both individually would be the largest such facilities on the continent**), we are expanding our organizing efforts. Public participation in this process is critical! We meet monthly in Spokane, Cheney, and Spokane Valley. If you are interested in being a part of a team of passionate volunteer grassroots organizers, please join us!



Above and below: Activists in East Washington celebrate the historic announcement of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) carbon rule this June, and thank WA Gov. Inslee for his leadership on climate. The rule will reduce carbon dioxide pollution from existing power plants 30% of 2005 levels by 2030.

For info, contact Jace Bylenga with the Beyond Coal's Spokane office.
jace.bylenga@sierraclub.org
509.209.2395



UPPER COLUMBIA RIVER GROUP

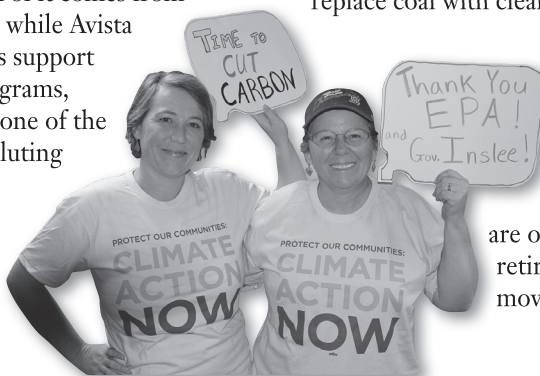
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CRITICAL CROSSROAD FOR WASHINGTON: MORE DIRTY COAL OR CLEAN ENERGY

While much of the Washington grid is powered by hydro and some wind and solar, a big chunk of it comes from coal-power. And while Avista and other utilities support clean-energy programs, they also rely on one of the biggest, most polluting coal-fired power plants in the West, located in Colstrip, Montana.

Right now, our state has a momentous opportunity to invest in clean energy and create good jobs in Washington State by moving beyond coal. Instead of continuing to rely on dirty coal, harming our health and the environment, we can call on utilities like Avista to completely replace coal with cleaner forms of energy.



Over 140 coal plants across the country, including the Northwest's TransAlta and Boardman plants, are on the path to retirement as our nation moves away from it's

reliance on coal. This opens the doors to a flood of clean-energy investment and a new era of healthy air and clean power.

Our future lies not in antiquated coal-fired power, but in making homes more comfortable, lowering cost, and creating a wave of innovation in the wind and solar industries. As we upgrade our buildings and invest in new sources of energy, we will create jobs, stimulate new technology and businesses, and unleash a diverse and safe energy future.

To get involved with this developing work, contact Jace Bylenga with the Beyond Coal's Spokane office.

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Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Planet.