

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



Upper Columbia River, Northeast Washington

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10

April 2005

Sediment Sampling Begins in April

In April and May 2005, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will collect sediment samples from the U.S. portion of the Upper Columbia River to test for contamination. The test results will help EPA evaluate whether or not the sediments pose an unacceptable risk to people's health or the environment. This sampling is being conducted as part of EPA's Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) of the Upper Columbia River.

Field crews will begin collecting samples during the week of April 4, 2005 near the US-Canadian border. They will finish about six weeks later in the lower reaches of Lake Roosevelt.

Five field crews will collect about 400 sediment samples from numerous locations along and within the river and reservoir. Each field crew will be accompanied by a cultural resource observer from the Colville Confederated Tribes, the Spokane Tribe, or the National Park Service. The observer will make sure that impacts to areas of cultural and archeological significance are minimized and/or avoided. Sampling will take place during daylight hours six days per week.

The sediment samples will be tested for heavy metals, such as arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury, and zinc. They will also be tested for other contaminants, such as dioxins, pesticides, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). EPA will provide a summary of the testing results in a future fact sheet. We will also put this information on the project website as soon as it is available.

A Frequently Asked Question

In each fact sheet we include answers to frequently asked questions. You can visit our website to find answers to other common questions.

Q: *What did the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) find in its recently released study?*

A: The USGS recently released its final report

from a 2002 study of sediment cores taken at six locations in middle and lower reaches of Lake Roosevelt.

According to the report, decades of liquid effluent from the Teck Cominco smelter in Trail, British Columbia, contributed most of the zinc, lead, cadmium, and other trace elements detected in the sediment samples. The results also indicate that slag particles found in some sediments showed signs of weathering and breaking down, demonstrating that slag is not inert and may be an ongoing source of contamination in the lake. You can find information on the recent USGS study by visiting the website for the USGS at <http://water.usgs.gov/pubs/sir/2004/5090>.

The USGS study, as well as prior studies, will be helpful to EPA as we conduct our work on the RI/FS.

The results of the EPA study will be used to:

- Help evaluate whether people's health or the environment is at risk;
- Determine if cleanup is needed;
- Develop and evaluate cleanup options.

Coming Soon Community Open Houses

EPA will host three open houses on sediment sampling in April and May. Potential locations are Kettle Falls, Inchelium and Davenport. When dates and locations are set, EPA will send out a postcard with details.

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Visit the EPA Website

To learn more about EPA's investigation of the Upper Columbia River, visit www.epa.gov/r10earth (click on *Index A-Z*, then *U*, then *Upper Columbia River*).

Project History

Past studies by federal and state agencies have shown high levels of hazardous waste contamination in Upper Columbia River sediments, including heavy metals such as cadmium, copper, lead, mercury and zinc, and other contaminants like dioxins and furans.

In August 1999, the Colville Confederated Tribes petitioned EPA to conduct an assessment of environmental contamination in the Upper Columbia River. The petition expressed concerns about risks to people's health and the environment from contamination in the river.

In 2001, EPA collected samples of river sediment to learn more about the types and amounts of pollution that exist. The results showed that contamination was present in the lake and river sediments, and that a more detailed investigation was needed to evaluate possible risks to human health and the environment.

Information Repositories

For your convenience, information about this project is available at eight locations throughout the project area. Each repository has the same information, including full copies of draft and final technical documents, fact sheets, and other information from EPA. Please call ahead for business hours:

Northport: Northport Town Hall, 315 Summit St., (509) 732-4450

Colville: Colville Public Library, 195 S. Oak St., (509) 684-6620

Inchelium: Inchelium Tribal Resource Center, 12 Community Loop, (509) 634-2791

Nespelem: Office of Environmental Trust, Colville Confederated Tribes, 1 Colville, (509) 634-2425

Grand Coulee: Grand Coulee Library, 225 Federal St., (509) 633-0972

Wellpinit: Spokane Tribe Dept. of Natural Resources, 6290 B Ford-Wellpinit Road, (509) 258-9042

Davenport: Davenport Library, 411 Morgan St., (509) 725-4355

Spokane: Spokane Library, 906 W. Main, (509) 444-5334



For people with disabilities, please call Deborah Neal with requests for reasonable accommodation. TTY users, call 800-877-8339.