

# Upper Columbia Fish and Water Sampling Underway — October 2009

## FACT SHEET



Region 10

October 2009

In October, fish tissue and surface water samples will be collected from multiple locations along the Upper Columbia River (UCR). This is part of a larger, multi-year study of contamination along the UCR to determine the potential risks to people and the environment.

## Fish tissue sampling efforts continue through October 16

Fish from three size classes will be collected from six areas, as shown on Figure 1:

- Small (less than 6 inches long)
- Medium (6 to 12 inches long)
- Large (longer than 12 inches)

The tissues of the fish will be analyzed for contaminants, including metals, pesticides, fire retardants and other organic chemicals. This will help determine if the contaminants are affecting the fish and in turn, posing a risk to the wildlife, such as osprey and mink, and the humans who eat them.

The study will evaluate contamination in yellow perch, rainbow trout, sucker, kokanee, walleye, whitefish, burbot, and smallmouth bass, otherwise known as the “target fish species.” If the fishing crews are not able to catch enough of the target fish species, they will collect additional types of fish for the study. The crews will use a variety of fishing techniques, including beach seines, gill nets, traps, and boat electrofishing, where an electric current is run through the water to stun the fish, which are then collected in nets.

## Water Sampling – October 9 through October 16

The first of three rounds of water sampling will begin on October 9th. Sampling crews will collect water at the nine locations shown in Figure 1. The northern most sampling location is in Canada,

approximately 15 miles north of the border; the most southern is near the Grand Coulee Dam.

Several samples will be taken at each sampling location along a line, known as a transect, that goes from one bank to the other. The sampling crews will collect water from the surface and from locations near the bottom of the river.

A second round of sampling will take place in late March/early April 2010 and a third round in May 2010. This will help account for seasonal changes in water quality.

The water samples will be analyzed for a variety of contaminants, including metals, pesticides, fire retardants and other organic chemicals. The data will be used to assess risks to people and the environment.

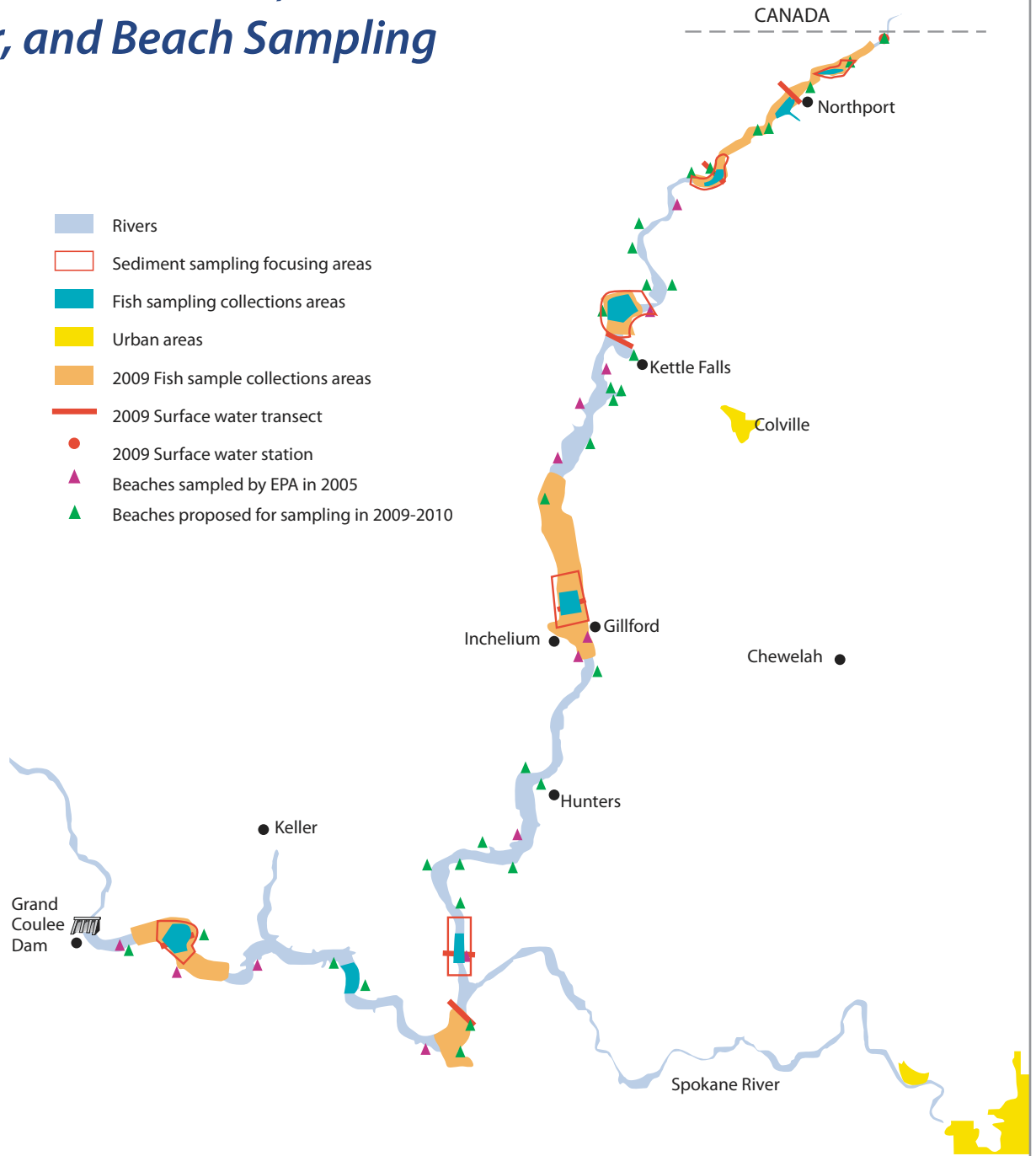
## Beach Sampling Began in September

A total of 33 beaches will be sampled in 2009 and 2010. Sampling began in September and will continue during the 2010 spring drawdown. Data from the beaches will add to the beach data generated by EPA in 2005. Beach sampling locations are shown in Figure 1.

## Who is doing the sampling?

Teck American Incorporated (Teck) is conducting the sampling with oversight from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

# Study Areas for Fish, Surface Water, and Beach Sampling



**Figure 1**

Courtesy of Lake Roosevelt Forum, [www.lrf.org](http://www.lrf.org)

## How can I get on the UCR mailing lists?

To be added to EPA's email or mailing list, please send a request to Jeanne O'Dell at [odell.jeanne@epa.gov](mailto:odell.jeanne@epa.gov).

## Where can I learn more?

EPA's project Web site: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/upperc>

Citizens for a Clean Columbia Web site: <http://cleancolumbia.org>

Teck's project Web site: [www.ucr-rifs.com](http://www.ucr-rifs.com)

Lake Roosevelt Forum Web site: [www.lrf.org](http://www.lrf.org) — click on the **environment** icon

## Information Repositories

Visit one of the Information Repositories listed below to find information about EPA's work on the Upper Columbia River, including full copies of technical documents. Be sure to call ahead for 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:** Colville Confederated Tribes Office of Environmental Trust, Building #2, (509) 634-2413

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

**Wellpinit:** Spokane Tribe Department of Natural Resources, 6290 B Ford-Wellpinit Road (509) 626-4425.

**Spokane:** Spokane Library, 906 W. Main (509) 444-5336, ext. 5404

## Who can I call if I have questions?

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*Toll-free number for all contacts: 1-800-424-4372*



*If you need materials in an alternative format, please contact Caryn Sengupta TTY users please call the Federal Relay Service: 800-877-8339*



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*Upper Columbia River Site  
Fish and Water Sampling  
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