

Citizens for a Clean Columbia

Our mission: to advocate for a clean Columbia River ecosystem

NEWSLETTER JULY 2012

Who are we?

Citizens for a Clean Columbia (CCC) is a volunteer organization focused on advocating for the health of the Upper Columbia River and Lake Roosevelt. Visit us at www.cleancolumbia.org.

News in Brief

Northport Health Study

- Investigators from Massachusetts General Hospital have completed their epidemiologic survey and confirmed a health cluster of cases of inflammatory bowel disease in Northport.

Young America Mine Contamination

- Based on confirmed lead, antimony, arsenic, cadmium, and manganese contamination, the EPA has recommended a removal action and referred the site to the EPA remedial program for further investigation.

Lake Roosevelt Forum (LRF)

- The LRF (lrf.org/conf/) was held in April 2012 in Spokane, WA. 240 people participated. There were 18 presentations and two poster sessions. Highlights of the meeting are presented within.

Beach Advisory Released

- All but 3 beaches (Bossburg Flats, Evans Campground, "swimming hole" near Sheep Creek) are considered safe for recreational use.

Fish Consumption Advisory Released

- Based on two recent fish studies showing mercury and Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCBs) contamination, the Washington State Department of Health placed limits on pikeminnow, largemouth bass, largescale sucker, burbot, longnose sucker, mountain whitefish, smallmouth bass, and walleye.

Technical Advisor Update

- CCC members are happy to announce 3 more years of funding from Teck for our technical advisor's work as part of the Technical Assistance Program.
- Dr. Joe Wichmann's work the past 6 months reviewing several draft reports helped CCC provide input to the EPA about our concerns.
- Joe also attended two webinars on topics that address UCR-RI/FS studies currently under development to help him assess future reports.

Teck Toxic Plume and Spill News

- The remediation plan for Teck's toxic plume is now due October 31, 2012 due to a need for additional investigation.
- On Saturday June 23, 2012, about 3 million gallons of raw sewage spilled into the Columbia River when heavy rains caused the Kootenay Boundary sanitary sewer system to overflow.
- On July 25th 2012, Zellstoff-Celgar Pulp Mill was sentenced to pay \$150,000 in penalties related to their 2008 "black liquor" spill.

Update on the Northport Health Study

In our July 2011 newsletter, we introduced investigators from Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) who obtained funding from the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America for a formal epidemiologic survey of our area focusing on inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). The study is now complete with responses received from 119 of the 297 people of Northport (2010 Census). Seventeen cases of IBD were confirmed compared with an expected 400/100,000; this is conservatively 10-15 times the expected rate. Of the cases, most (70%) had Ulcerative Colitis (UC) and the rest had Crohn's disease. Genetics account for about 20-25% of cases of Crohn's disease and even less for UC. Eleven of the cases were unrelated individuals and 7 cases lived on one road along the river.



Jamie Paprich with MGH team

The environmental exposure questionnaire did not identify particular risk factors within the town for IBD and further investigation is warranted. As the prevalence of IBD is increasing in the US, I agree that it is important to identify environmental risk factors for IBD. In addition to river contaminants, potential sources of exposure include stack emissions such as

sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide.

For next steps, the investigators are in contact with individuals from Trail, BC and Kettle Falls to continue to assess cases there. In addition, they may be joined by another investigator interested in endocrine conditions. Jamie Paprich's informal survey (featured in our July 2010 newsletter) identified thyroid problems which may be linked to organic compounds (such as those discharged from Celgar pulp mill in BC) that are known endocrine disruptors. Mindy Smith, MD, MS

Young America Mine Contamination

In the January newsletter, we reported on the Young America Mine located on Hutson Jones Way in Evans, Washington which operated until 1953 mining for zinc, lead, silver, and gold. In July and August 2011, a field analysis revealed elevated screening lead levels for 43/113 soil locations in the mill area and 15/46 in the mine area and some of the road samples. Elevated levels of lead, antimony, arsenic, cadmium, and manganese were confirmed in the laboratory that were above EPA Regional Screening Levels for residential soil in samples collected from the mill and mine areas.

One of the land owners had ten cubic yards of crushed rock placed on top of the most contaminated part of the access road on his property and clean sand placed on the access road. The preliminary estimated volume of contaminated material in the berms and surface soils outside the berm is about 700 cubic yards. The area of exposed contaminated soil on the hill between the mill and the impoundment is about 0.3 acres. The follow-up assessment conducted in August 2011 determined that soils on the property just south of the mine (about 7 acres) exceeded human health screening criteria. The mine and mill areas have been referred

to the EPA remedial program for further investigation. The assessment report was published in March 2012 and is available on our website.

Mindy Smith, MD, MS

Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) Update

The ongoing studies are the Recreational Use Survey due to end in January 2013 and the sediment toxicity study (planned for fall 2012, if the study plans are approved). Final reports on surface water, beaches, and fish are pending. The Tribal Use and Surface Water report have just come in and the Sturgeon draft report is expected in fall 2012. An Upland Soil study is planned for 2013.

On a sad note, Helen Bottcher, our project director stepped down in July. She has been an incredible asset to the project and to CCC. She has worked tirelessly to be transparent and inclusive. The board has been impressed with her willingness to come to general member meetings and her extensive knowledge of the problems facing our region and the study plans and reports from the RI/FS. She instituted monthly conference calls with CCC board members and our technical advisor and took all of our concerns seriously, passing along many of them to Teck to address in their plans and reports. We publically thank her and welcome her two replacements, Laura Buelow and Matt Wilkening. You both have a tough act to follow.

Mindy Smith, MD, MS

Highlights from the Lake Roosevelt Forum

The Forum was held this year in Spokane on April 16-17th. Presentations included updates on the Columbia River Treaty including a breakout session on possible alternatives, information about the

Independent Science Review Panel (ISRP) for fish and wildlife projects, the Columbia River Water Management Program, the Upper Columbia Cooperative Management Projects on restoring and protecting fisheries, Young America Mine, Canadian Community Settlement based on a justice forum following accidental mercury discharge, update on Washington Fish Consumption Rates, the Upper Columbia Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study, UCUT Regional Fisheries -Invasive species and protecting native trout populations, Grand Coulee operations and renovations, Northeast Washington Lakes background levels for fish, Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Research and Data Management, and Mid-Nite Mine Superfund Cleanup Agreement.

The following are highlights of the conference:

Columbia River Treaty - Background: The Columbia River Treaty (CRT) was signed by the U.S. and Canada in 1961 and was ratified in 1964. The treaty has no specified end date, however, either country can terminate the treaty starting in 2024 if they provide 10 years prior notice to the other country. As written, the CRT addresses only hydroelectric power generation and flood control issues. Ecological issues are not addressed in the treaty. Negotiations between the U.S. and Canada have recently provided support for concerns about fish ecology. An executive order issued by Lyndon Johnson in 1964 established that the administrator of Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), currently Mr. Steve Wright, and the division engineer of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), currently BG John McMahon, are the members of the US entity responsible for the day to day running of the treaty. The U.S. entity makes recommendations to the U.S. Department of State. The Department of State has the official say on CRT matters. On the Canadian side, BC Hydro is the Canadian entity and is

responsible for the day to day running of the treaty. BC Hydro reports to the British Columbia Ministry of Energy and Mines; this ministry has the official say on treaty matters. The Canadian government gave control of the CRT to the Province of British Columbia at the start of the CRT.



Keenleyside dam (from CBT.org)

The CRT specified that Canada build Mica, Keenleyside and Duncan dams with a combined storage capacity of 15.5 million acre feet (Maf). The CRT required the U.S. to build Libby dam, which backs up water 42 miles into Canada, with a storage capacity of 5 Maf. The treaty specified that the dams would be operated to maximize hydroelectric power generation in the U.S. In return, the U.S. would deliver one-half the estimated power benefit to Canada. This power benefit is called the Canadian Entitlement (CE). The CE is currently worth \$200 to \$300 million per year. The U.S. purchased the first 30 years of CE power for \$254 million in 1964. The province of B.C. owns the CE and BPA delivers the power. The CRT also specifies that Canada operate 8.45 Maf of the total storage capacity for downstream “assured” flood control. Canada received \$64.4 million from the U.S. in 1964 to provide assured flood control through 2024. The treaty also requires Canada to make the rest of the system storage capacity available for flood control on a “called upon” basis. If called upon flood control

is requested, the U.S. will reimburse Canada for any losses due to this use of the dams. To date, no called upon flood control request has been made. After 2024, the CRT assured flood control ends, but allows the U.S. to request called upon storage in Canada after all available flood control measures have been instituted in the U.S. Called upon flood control requests cannot be greater than the pre-2024 level. Negotiations between the two entities have resulted in 1 Maf of yearly capacity being devoted to fisheries issues. This capacity is less than seven percent of the total system capacity.

What we learned at LRF: Both countries are currently reviewing the CRT prior to the September 2014 date of earliest treaty termination notification. The three options available for each country are to continue the treaty, terminate the treaty, or negotiate a new treaty. The U.S. treaty review is spearheaded by BPA and USACE. They have established a sovereign review team (SRT) with representatives from the states of Washington, Idaho, Montana and Oregon, 15 Northwest Tribes, and the numerous federal agencies affected by the decision. Non-sovereign input has been sought through public meetings. Public “listening” meetings are planned for December, 2012 and May, 2013. The SRT hopes to make it's recommendation to the U.S. Department of State in September, 2013. The SRT is incorporating ecological concerns as well as power generation and flood control issues into the decision process. Some consideration is also being given to navigation, recreation, water supply, irrigation, and climate change issues.

The lead agency for the Canadian CRT review process is the British Columbia Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM). Their review is focusing on economic, environmental, social, legal and hydrology issues. MEM is having public meetings in October and November, 2012 to explain and obtain public

input on the potential CRT decision. An additional round of public meetings on the final decision is planned for spring 2013. MEM is also having direct consultations with First Nations throughout the remainder of 2012 and early 2013. MEM hopes to have a First Nations consultation report ready in June 2013.

The Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) in collaboration with four other Columbia River tribes, four Snake River tribes, two Flathead tribes and First Nations tribes in Canada developed and issued *Columbia Basin Tribes Common Views on the Future of the Columbia River Treaty*. Concerns expressed in the report include the lack of regard for tribal interests and rights in the CRT and the narrow design of the CRT for power generation and flood control with no thought of ecological systems. The report further states that tribal interests including cultural and natural resource issues must be represented in CRT implementation and review with each sovereign tribe represented. UCUT would like the tribes to have an equal voice in the 2014/2024 CRT review and equal representation on the U.S. Entity (this could be done at any time by executive order). UCUT would like ecosystem function to be given the same consideration as flood control and power generation in future CRT negotiations and operations.

Information on the U.S. review process is available at <http://www.crt2014-2024review.gov>. Information on the Canadian review process is available at www.cbt.org and www.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty. Information on the Tribal review process is available at www.ucut.org.

Submitted by a concerned citizen and LRF attendee

Midnite Mine - a former uranium mine located within the Spokane Tribe of Indians reservation that

operated from 1955 to 1981. There are two open pits, backfilled pits, a number of waste rock piles, and several ore stockpiles on site. The site drains into Blue Creek which enters the Spokane Arm of Lake Roosevelt. Elevated levels of radioactivity and heavy metals were indentified that pose a potential threat to human health and the environment. To address the immediate concern, an on-site treatment system was designed to capture and treat contaminated water emerging below the waste rock and ore piles.



Midnite mine site

In early 2005 to late 2008, a legal action and court ruling took place on liability. Within this period, EPA sought public comment on a proposed cleanup plan (September 2005) and a final cleanup plan for the site was issued in September 2006. Under a 2008 EPA order, Newmont Mining Co. and Dawn Mining Co. fenced the site and performed initial design studies. Between May 2009 and January 2012 negotiation and legal agreement was reached with the involved parties. The process is now in the phase of designing the remedy. This will be followed by construction and then operation, maintenance and monitoring that will likely continue indefinitely.

Background information about the mine and remediation process was presented at the LRF by Ellen Hale (hale.ellie@epa.gov), the Superfund site manager, and Louis Miller, the consulting engineer for Newmont and Dawn mining companies.

Members of the community, CCC, and Tribe also spoke. Lessons learned from this presentation by this attendee and speaker include the need for a long-term commitment by all involved (and consistent EPA staffing), technical expertise (as some of the science needs to be developed), a clean-up and restoration focus requiring involvement of all parties (including affected citizens), compensation for those injured, and most importantly prevention of waste that we can't effectively clean up perhaps through stricter standards and more public debate.

Residents are advised against drinking or using Blue Creek water; gathering plants in or along mine drainages and Blue Creek in the mining-affected area; consuming fish from Blue Creek or eating the organs, especially the liver and kidneys, from deer, elk, or other big game harvested in or near the Blue Creek drainage area.

Mindy Smith, MD, MS

Poster Session – Posters were presented by three students from Washington State University in Pullman, WA as part of their Northern Rocky Mountain Regional Landscape class. Several CCC members have been in communication with these students and their dynamic professor Jolie Kaytes as the students explored issues about land management and the environment.

A Phyto-remediation Concept Master Plan was proposed by Kassi Rolin for the Northport community as a method for removing heavy metal soil contaminants. Plants typically used in phyto-remediation include willows, grasses and reeds. Another poster by Patrick Grecu presented the history of the Grand Coulee Dam and Lake Roosevelt and the impact on Salmon runs and downstream communities (such as the loss of Kettle Falls, a once important cultural center for Native Americans. The project designer posed a reclamation scheme to mimic natural water flow, restoring the falls,

reintroducing salmon, and once again using river bottomlands for agriculture and wildlife habitat.

A final poster described Daniel Baum's investigation into the aftermath of the creation of the Grand Coulee Dam that inspired a moving poem entitled "When Sun Rose with Salmon" accompanied by four original paintings.

Mindy Smith, MD, MS

Beach Advisory Released

EPA also released their Beach Fact Sheet which can be found at

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/UCR/Fact+Sheets>. The main findings are:

- All but 3 beaches are considered safe for recreational activity (visiting the beach for day use, or camping on the beach for two weeks a year, for 30 years). The beaches that remain of concern are Bossburg Flat beach which has been closed due to high lead levels, Evans Campground with lead levels slightly above screening levels, and the "swimming hole" near Sheep Creek with levels of arsenic slightly above screening levels.
- Steps that can reduce exposure to contaminants include washing hands and face after playing at the beach and before handling food; washing heavily-soiled clothing, children's beach toys, and objects to remove beach sediments, avoiding muddy soil that might cling to clothes, toys, hands, or feet; and avoiding play that gets beach soil on children's faces or in their mouths.

Fish Consumption Advisory

The state Department of Health is advising people to avoid or limit certain types and amounts of fish they eat due to mercury and Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCBs) contamination. Information can be found at

www.doh.wa.gov. For the Upper Columbia and Lake Roosevelt area, they recommend the following:

- Women who are or might become pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children:
 - Don't eat northern pikeminnow.
 - Limit largemouth bass and largescale sucker to 2 meals a month.
 - Limit burbot, longnose sucker, mountain whitefish, smallmouth bass, and walleye to one meal a week.
- Other women and all men:
 - Limit largescale sucker to one meal per week.



Pikeminnow (from US Fish and Wildlife Service, Nat. Digital Library)



Longnose sucker (US Fish and Wildlife Service, Nat. Digital Library)

Technical Advisor Report

During the past six months, I reviewed and provided CCC with comments on two Upper Columbia River Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (UCR-

RI/FS) draft reports. CCC used my reviews as the basis of their comments to EPA on these draft reports. I attended two webinars on topics that address UCR-RI/FS studies currently under development. I also reviewed the study data evaluated for risk assessment in the "Beach Study on the Upper Columbia River" fact sheet recently released by EPA .

The "Incremental Composite Sampling Designs for Surface Soil Analyses" webinar presented by the Technology Innovation and Field Services Division of EPA (<http://www.cluin.org>) presented the currently accepted sampling methods for evaluating potential contamination of large areas of surface soils. The approaches presented will be valuable for providing input on the Upland Soil study plan currently under development by Teck America Incorporated (TAI).

The techniques discussed in the webinar entitled "Incorporating Bioavailability Considerations into the Evaluation of Contaminated Sediment Sites" presented by the Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council (www.itrcweb.org) will help inform final comments on the "Quality Assurance Project Plan for the Phase 2 Sediment Study" final draft which is currently under preparation. Field sampling for the study is tentatively scheduled for this fall.

With my assistance, CCC submitted review comments on the report "Draft EPA Technical Team Level of Effort (LOE) for Sampling and Analysis of Soil in the Upper Columbia River Basin (Soil LOE)" to EPA in early February. This memorandum provides guidance for development of the study protocol. In its review comments, CCC suggested that the 1929 and 1936 sulfur dioxide injury maps found in the book, *Smelter Smoke in North America: The Politics*

of *Transborder Pollution*,¹ guide development of the preliminary sampling area for the soil study. CCC also suggested that results from the soil sampling and analysis performed for the Boundary, Washington Land Port of Entry modernization project (the Waneta border crossing) be included in the final data set for the study. See the January 2012 CCC newsletter for a summary of the project and soil sampling results.

CCC provided review comments on the report “Draft Final Summary and Evaluation of Phase 1 (2005) Sediment Toxicity Tests Upper Columbia River Site” to EPA in March. CCC felt that more discussion of the porewater chemistry and toxicity data was needed in the document. CCC requested that a detailed and inclusive sample identification key be included in the report.

TAI issued a final draft of “Fish Tissue Data Summary and Data Gap Report” in April. Virtually all of CCC's comments were incorporated in the final draft including a detailed sample identification code key.

I devoted a significant amount of time to reviewing the “Beach Study on the Upper Columbia River” fact sheet released by EPA at the Lake Roosevelt Forum Conference in mid-April. The fact sheet presented the results of arsenic and lead analyses and the associated recreational use risk assessment for 43 beaches along the Upper Columbia River. The fact sheet listed the beach at Evans Campground as having lead levels slightly above screening levels and the beach at the Swimming Hole near the mouth of Sheep Creek as having arsenic levels slightly above screening levels. Bossburg Flat beach has high lead levels and the National Park Service has closed the

beach as a result. Below I provide a brief overview of the studies that led to these results.

In 2005, 15 beaches were sampled for analyses of potential contaminate levels. Three composite (combined) samples were collected from all 15 beaches. Each composite sample represented a single water level line and comprised a single subsample from the left, right and middle of the beach. The composite samples were sieved (separated by size) through a 2 millimeter (mm) screen prior to metals analysis. Three beaches also had nine additional single samples collected. A composite sample from the nine single samples was prepared and sieved into two size fractions; 2 mm to 75 microns (μm) and less than 75 μm . All 2005 beach samples were surface samples from the top 6 inches of the beach.

The sampling procedure for the beaches sampled in 2009 through 2011 involved collecting five composite samples and five individual core samples from most beaches. Most composite samples comprised 12 individual 0 to 6 inch subsamples randomly distributed over the entire beach. Two small beaches, Dalles Orchard and Northport Beach had only three composite samples collected; each comprised 12 subsamples. Three small beaches, Kamloops Island, Crescent Bay and Swimming Hole had 12 composite samples collected; each comprised of 7 subsamples. The core samples were divided into three subsamples by depth: 0 to 6 inches, 6 to 18 inches and 18 to 30 inches. All composite samples were sieved through 2 mm, 250 μm , 125 μm and 63 μm screens. One of the five (or three) composite samples from each beach had metal analyses performed on all of the five sieve sizes. The other four composite samples for each beach had metal analyses performed on only the less than 2 mm sieve sample.

1. Wirth, John D., *Smelter Smoke in North America: The Politics of Transborder Pollution*, 1999, 264 pp., University Press of Kansas.

The “Beach Study on the Upper Columbia River” fact sheet considered only the less than 2 mm composite sample metal analyses from the 2005 beach study and the less than 250 µm composite sample metal analyses from the 2009 to 2011 beach study. The data from the 2009 to 2011 study were reported in the fact sheet for the five beaches sampled in both the 2005 and 2009 to 2011 studies.

A major concern CCC has with the fact sheet is that for the 2009 to 2011 study, four of the five composite samples for each beach (two of the three composite samples for Dalles Orchard and Northport Beach) only had the less than 2 mm sieve size samples analyzed for arsenic and lead. The lead and arsenic values for the other composite samples for the less than 250 µm sieve size were estimated from the results from the single sample that actually had the 250 µm sieve size analyzed. CCC has requested that the composite samples for which lead and arsenic levels were estimated be directly analyzed using all sieved samples for lead (for Black Sand Beach, R. V. Park, China Bend, Dalles Orchard, Northport Beach, Summer Island, Evans Campground, Lyons Beach and Swimming Hole) and for arsenic (for Black Sand Beach, R. V. Park, Dalles Orchard, Swimming Hole, Bradbury Beach and Mitchell Point).

Another concern CCC has is the use of only the 250 µm sieve size data set for risk assessment. As the sieve size goes down, metals levels tend to go up. The 2009 to 2011 study had five sieve sizes obtained from each composite sample. If the less than 125 µm sieve size data is used for risk assessment rather than the less than 250 µm sieve size data, lead levels fall above screening levels for three additional beaches (Black Sand Beach (prior to cleanup), Dalles Orchard, and Northport Beach) in addition to Bossburg Flat, Evans Campground and the Swimming Hole. Similarly, using the less than 125 µm sieve size

data rather than the less than 250 µm sieve size data, Black Sand Beach (prior to cleanup), Dalles Orchard, the Swimming Hole and Bradbury Beach have arsenic levels above screening levels. The use of the less than 63 µm sieve size data for risk assessment brings lead and arsenic levels above screening levels for more beaches. CCC suggested the use of the less than 125 µm data for risk assessment because it would represent a more conservative approach. Additionally, the Northport beach data set is somewhat anomalous. The less than 2 mm, less than 125 µm and less than 63 µm data all have lead levels above the screening value. Only the less than 250 µm data does not have Northport Beach above the screening level for lead. An additional request CCC made was that archived 2005 samples from North Gorge and Marcus Island be sieved and reanalyzed for lead and arsenic. These beaches were sampled only in 2005 and had reported arsenic and lead levels greater than 50% of the screening level in the fact sheet. Because less than 2 mm sieve size samples were analyzed for the 2005 beaches, there is a possibility that the lead and arsenic levels would be above the screening level if the less than 250 µm or less than 125 µm sieve size samples were analyzed.

CCC requested that EPA report the core sample data from the 2009 to 2011 study. Comparison of the core samples to the composite samples would provide useful information on the distribution of contamination on each beach.

A final concern CCC has with the risk assessment presented in the recreational beach use fact sheet is the lack of any mention of near shore water play and the impact of accidental ingestion of suspended particles in water. One would expect the material suspended in water from water play to be the smaller 125 µm and 63 µm size particles, the particle sizes that contain the highest levels of arsenic and

lead in the beach samples. The disconnect between disturbed water sampling sites in the surface water study performed in 2009 and 2010 and the beach locations in the 2005 and 2009 to 2011 studies makes a direct comparison of disturbed water quality and individual beaches problematic. Black Sand Beach prior to the 2010 cleanup and perhaps Welty Bay are the only two beaches where disturbed water samples were collected.

CCC believes that the reanalyses suggested above would have little impact on the recreational use risk assessment, but may have an effect on local resident long-term risk assessments made in the future.

Joe Wichmann, PhD; CCC Technical Advisor

Spill News and Teck PLUME

- On Saturday June 23 2012, between 2.5 and 3.7 million gallons of raw sewage spilled into the Columbia River from the heavy rains causing the Kootenay Boundary sanitary sewer system to overflow. The Washington Department of Ecology among others is monitoring the situation but users of the northern stretches of Lake Roosevelt and the Upper Columbia River may come into contact with disease-causing organisms from the sewage spill.

Concerned about the lack of information about the sewage spill until late the following day, Matt Wolohan, a member of the Northport community, began a dialogue with the parties responsible for notification. Here is what he learned:

The spill began on Saturday afternoon around 2 pm and lasted until about 11 am Sunday morning from the Trail wastewater treatment plant (a combined storm water and sewer system) that was over capacity due to the heavy rainfall. This release contained liquid effluent and not solid material. The

responsibility for notifying local communities lies with three local agencies: The Stevens County Sheriff's Office, the Northeast Tri-County Health District and the Stevens County Emergency Management Office.

On Saturday evening, the Stevens County Emergency Services notified Tri-County about the spill. Matt Schanz from Tri-County issued a press release Saturday evening to media outlets, including the local radio station in Colville, and discussed the spill with the National Park Service (NPS). The NPS notified the Walleye tournament event organizers of the situation so they could notify participants on Saturday. Tri-County, in conjunction with the Department of Ecology (DOE), issued a follow-up press release. Matt Schanz did interviews with both the Spokesman Review and National Public Radio (NPR) the following day. He stated that there was some local television coverage of the spill on Sunday and one of our CCC members confirmed hearing about the spill on Monday evening on NPR. The Tri-County Health District encouraged people who came into contact with river water to take precautions, including avoiding ingesting the water.

Matt, along with the other CCC board members, are concerned that community members along the river did not hear about the spill in a timely manner. Matt Schanz from Tri-County asks whether we have suggestions about how the responsible agencies can be more effective in getting the word out to the local community. CCC members suggested direct calls to local businesses, the library, and post-offices of our river communities and CCC will notify our members through email as soon as we get information. We also suggested a "call" list using texts to as many local residents as possible. If you have suggestions, contact Matt Schanz at www.netchd.org or call him at [509-684-2262](tel:509-684-2262).

- Environment Canada continues to work with Teck on a contaminated groundwater plume at the Trail facility. The remedial plan required additional investigation and is now due October 31, 2012.
- In November 2008, the Zellstoff-Celgar Pulp Mill spilled about 600 million liters of “black liquor”, a partially cooked pulp used as biofuel, into the Columbia River when the material overflowed a spill tank. In 2009, Celgar responded to a government directive by taking measures to improve retention capacity of the mill’s spill ponds. They were found guilty on several counts related to the spill in February 2012 and sentenced on July 25th to pay \$150,000 in penalties.

Mindy Smith, MD, MS

Want to be More Involved?

CCC welcomes new members; you can join on our website (www.cleancolumbia.org). You can also find meeting minutes and links to other organizations involved in protecting the environment.

Our next General Member Meeting will be in the spring at the Museum in Colville. We will post updated information on the website. Please join us.

You can also write to our new EPA project managers Laura Buelow (buelow.laura@epa.gov), Matt Wilkening (wilkening.matt@epa.gov) or the EPA region 10 administrator Dennis McLerran (McLerran.Dennis@epa.gov)

For contact information with Washington State Department of Ecology John Roland (jrol461@ecy.wa.gov) or your legislators, see our January 2011 newsletter