

From: [Bitterman, Deborah](#)
To: [Bitterman, Deborah](#)
Subject: FW: DRAFT 2015 Whitewater Boating Report
Date: Tuesday, April 07, 2015 7:58:22 AM
Attachments: [DRAFT 2015 Whitewater Boating Report.docx](#)

From: Heit, Ray
Sent: Friday, April 03, 2015 2:22 PM
To: 'Thomas O'Keefe'
Subject: DRAFT 2015 Whitewater Boating Report

Hi Thomas

Attached is the draft Whitewater Boating Report/Study

If we could have your comments back no later than April 27 to meet our May 1 filing date we would appreciate it.

If you have any questions as you read through it please don't hesitate to call Myself or Michelle.

Thanks Thomas

Ray Heit

Parks Manager

Chelan County PUD #1

509 661 4133

LAKE CHELAN HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT
FERC Project No. 637

Chelan River Three-Year Whitewater Boating Monitoring Report

2012 - 2014

[For review with American Whitewater]

Draft, April 3, 2015



**Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County
Wenatchee, Washington**

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION..... 5

SECTION 2: ANNUAL SCHEDULE AND SPILL VOLUME 6

SECTION 3: RESERVATION SYSTEM AND LIABILITY REQUIREMENTS..... 6

SECTION 5: SURVEY TOOL 8

SECTION 6: EVALUATION OF SURVEY RESULTS 8

SECTION 7: RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE WHITEWATER BOATING EVENTS 11

APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION WITH AMERICAN WHITEWATER..... 12

APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS..... 13

APPENDIX C: SURVEY TOOL 14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On May 1, 2012, Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County (Chelan PUD) filed its three-year whitewater boating monitoring study report, with recommended changes, for the Lake Chelan Hydroelectric Project, FERC No. 637. On July 16, 2012, the Commission issued an Order Amending the Recreation Resources Management Plan which approved the proposed changes to the whitewater boating section of the April 14, 2008 Order Approving Recreation Resources Management Plan. As outlined in the revised whitewater boating plan, Chelan PUD is required to file a whitewater boating report by May 1, every three years.

In accordance with the July 16 Order, and after consultation with American Whitewater, Chelan PUD is filing its three-year whitewater boating monitoring study report for years 2012 – 2014. Documentation of consultation with American Whitewater is attached.

As outlined in the revised whitewater boating plan approved in 2012, Chelan PUD provides whitewater boating releases, annually, on the third weekend in September. Flows are approximately 375 cubic feet per second (cfs) on Saturday, and 400 cfs on Sunday.

During the 2012 – 2014 whitewater boating monitoring study period, six days were scheduled for whitewater releases on the Chelan River. A total of 121 whitewater paddlers participated. In 2012, there were 27 boaters on Sept. 15 and 24 boaters on Sept. 16. In 2013, there were 25 boaters on Sept 21 and 13 boaters on Sept. 22. In 2014, there were 19 boaters on Sept. 20 and 13 boaters on Sept. 21.

A survey tool, designed in collaboration with American Whitewater, was used to solicit input from whitewater boaters after running the Chelan River. The following is a summary of boater responses to the survey.

- A majority of the survey participants said they were extremely satisfied with the overall boating experience.
- When the number of boating participants rose to 27 boaters on Sept. 15, 2012, 68% responded it was not a problem and 10% said it was a slight problem.
- In response to whether launch times should be regulated to minimize the number of boaters in each section of the river at a time, 100% of the survey participants stated preference to maintain the current procedure of allowing paddlers to self-regulate launch times.
- 75% of the boaters felt 375 cfs (Saturday flow) was totally acceptable, 11% were neutral or thought it was moderately acceptable, while 4% felt it was slightly unacceptable.
- 86% of the boaters thought 400 cfs (Sunday flow) was totally acceptable, while 5% responded that it was unacceptable.
- Survey participants were satisfied with flows between 375 cfs and 400 cfs. Results varied under this survey question based on boater skill level.

- The aspect of the paddling experience boaters enjoyed the most included the group aspect and comrade, the beauty of the gorge,
- The aspect of the paddling experience boaters enjoyed the least included signing up for the release and extra required safety.
- 83% to 95% of the survey respondents stated they would participate in future whitewater boating events and 100% would recommend the Chelan River whitewater boating experience to other boaters.

In consultation with American Whitewater, and based on the 2012 – 2014 monitoring study, Chelan PUD has no recommended changes to the annual whitewater boating release flow, release schedule, survey and evaluation methods, criteria, or reservation system. Chelan PUD and American Whitewater are, however, respectfully requesting Commission approval to modify the three-year reporting requirement to be every 10 years, with the next report due for filing with the Commission on May 1, 2026.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County (Chelan PUD) owns and operates the Lake Chelan Hydroelectric Project (Project) in accordance with a License¹ issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) on November 6, 2006.

On November 7, 2007, Chelan PUD filed its recreation resources management plan (RRMP) pursuant to Article 407 of the Project License. The RRMP included the elements set forth in Settlement Agreement 11(h) of the Lake Chelan Settlement Agreement, which entailed a three-year whitewater boating monitoring study (2009-2011) and a final report. The Commission approved the RRMP on April 14, 2008.²

On May 1, 2012, Chelan PUD filed its final report of its three-year whitewater boating monitoring study with recommended changes. On July 16, 2012, the Commission issued an “Order Amending the Recreation Resources Management Plan,”³ which approved the changes to the whitewater boating section of the RRMP. Order Paragraph (B) of the Order requires Chelan PUD to file a whitewater boating report by May 1, 2015, and every three years thereafter. The Chelan PUD is to include with the reports documentation of consultation with American Whitewater, and copies of comments and recommendations on the report.

In accordance with the July 16 Order, and after consultation with American Whitewater, Chelan PUD is filing its three-year whitewater boating monitoring study report for years 2012 – 2014. Appendix A contains documentation of consultation with American Whitewater.

This whitewater boating monitoring study report for the three-year period (2012 – 2014) summarizes and evaluates the following information:

1. Annual schedule
2. Spill volumes
3. Reservation system and mechanism for liability protection
4. Threshold number of participants and use patterns
5. Effectiveness of the survey tool
6. Survey results
7. Consultation with American Whitewater

¹ 117 FERC ¶ 62,129 (2006), amended by 119 FERC ¶ 61,055 (2007)

² 123 FERC ¶ 62,047 (2008)

³ 140 FERC ¶ 62,051 (2012)

SECTION 2: ANNUAL SCHEDULE AND SPILL VOLUME

On May 1, 2012, Chelan PUD filed the Final Whitewater Monitoring Study Plan Report, with recommended changes to the whitewater release schedule to be the third weekend in September each year. The Commission Order issued July 16, 2012, approved the change. Flows during the three year monitoring study were targeted at 375 cfs on Saturdays, and flows on Sundays have been targeted at 400 cfs (within an approximate one percent margin of instrumentation error). To meet these flows, Chelan PUD begins ramping up flow at 11:00 am and begins ramping down flow no sooner than 6:00 pm, each day.

Below is a summary of the 2012 – 2014 whitewater boating events, including dates, participation levels and spill volumes.

Whitewater Boating Monitoring Study (2012 – 2014)			
	2012	2013	2014
Scheduled dates	September 15-16	September 21-22	September 20-21
Spill volume (increase from 80 cfs)	Saturday: 375 cfs Sunday: 400 cfs	Saturday: 375 cfs Sunday: 400 cfs	Saturday: 375 cfs Sunday: 400 cfs
Participation	September 15: 27 boaters September 16: 24 boaters	September 21: 25 boaters September 22: 13 boaters	September 20: 19 boaters September 21: 13 boaters
Skill level	Level V+ (all boaters indicated the extreme difficulty of this run at all levels of flow)	Level V+ (again, all boaters indicated the importance of the maximum level of skill and experience to complete this run at every flow level)	Level V+ (all boaters indicated the extreme difficulty of this run at all levels of flow)

SECTION 3: RESERVATION SYSTEM AND LIABILITY REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with the July 16 Order, a minimum number of boaters is not required for water releases. However, the Safety Code of American Whitewater discourages boating alone and in light of the unique challenges of the Chelan River, a minimum of two (2) paddlers must be present

at the designated boaters' put-in location.

In collaboration with American Whitewater, Chelan PUD has established a reservation system for whitewater boating events. No later than 5:00 pm on the Friday prior to the scheduled release date, boaters must make a reservation with Chelan PUD in person or via the Chelan PUD website at <http://www.chelanpud.org/whitewater-boating.html>. An American Whitewater representative will be designated and present to oversee both days of the event and to serve as a point of contact between Chelan PUD and the paddlers should any questions or issues arise.

On-line Registration

Chelan PUD created and maintains a link on its home page for registration and for information regarding every aspect of the run including a video and a link directly to American Whitewater's website for further information. Paddlers register on-line using this website. Each registration is forwarded to American Whitewater.

Check-in /Put-in

All paddlers check-in at the registration area and put-in at the designated area just below the Project dam before 11:00 am.

Take-out

Whitewater paddlers take out at Chelan PUD's Powerhouse Park, located near the Lake Chelan Project Powerhouse tailrace in Reach 4 of the Chelan River.

Run duration

The run takes most boaters approximately 3 to 4 ½ hours. Boaters were asked to finish the kayaking run by 6:00 pm, although all boaters typically completed the run and are off the river by 3:30 pm.

Liability and Washington State Recreation Use Statute

During settlement negotiations, Chelan PUD and American Whitewater agreed to work together to obtain legislative changes to the Washington State Recreational Use Statute that would reduce liability concerns during whitewater boating releases.

During the 2011 legislative session, representatives from Chelan PUD and American Whitewater testified on a proposed amendment to the State's Recreational Use Statute, Senate Bill 5388, which would provide liability protection for whitewater boating and viewing activities associated with FERC-regulated hydroelectric projects.

The Bill passed the Senate on March 1, 2011 and the House on April 1, 2011 and was signed by Governor Christine Gregoire on April 13, 2011. The amendment became effective ninety days after adjournment of the session in which the bill was passed, July 22, 2011.

SECTION 5: SURVEY TOOL

Each whitewater boater is asked to fill out a survey at the end of the run. This survey tool provides important information that is analyzed by Chelan PUD and American Whitewater to determine if the whitewater boating plan should be modified. No modifications are made without Commission approval and, based on the 2012 – 2014 monitoring study, no modifications are being recommended for future releases.

The survey tool continues to help evaluate: overall whitewater boating experience satisfaction; if crowding is an issue; whether or not there should be a set launch time for boaters to minimize the number of boaters in each section of the river at a time; quality of flows for craft and experience levels; preference for optimal flows based on craft and skill level; what aspect of the paddling experience was the most and least enjoyable; if boaters would participate in the event again; if boaters would recommend the Chelan River Whitewater boating experience to other boaters. The survey tool is attached as Appendix **C**.

SECTION 6: EVALUATION OF SURVEY RESULTS

Chelan PUD received 31 completed surveys in 2012, 25 completed surveys in 2013, and 6 completed surveys in 2014. Completed surveys are attached as Appendix **B**. The following summarizes survey results by year:

1. How satisfied were you with the overall whitewater boating experience?

2012- 100% of survey participants responded to this question.

97% of participants were extremely satisfied and 3% were moderately satisfied.

2013 –92% of survey participants responded to this question.

91% of participants responded they were extremely satisfied and 9% were slightly dissatisfied.

2014 –100% of survey participants responded to this question.

100% of survey participants were extremely satisfied.

2. Was crowding a problem on your run?

2012 – 100% of survey participants responded to this question.

68% of survey participants responded this was not a problem; 13% responded it was barely a problem; 10% responded it was a marginal problem; and 10% responded it was a slight problem.

2013 – 92% of survey participants responded to this question.

87% of survey participants responded this was not a problem and 13% responded it was barely a problem.

2014 – 100% of survey participants responded to this question.

100% of survey participants responded this was not a problem.

3. *Should there be a set launch time for boaters to minimize the number of boaters in each section of the river at a time?*

2012 – 100% of survey participants responded to this question.

100% of participants responded that, “No, allow paddlers to self-regulate launch times

2013 – 92% of survey participants responded to this question.

100% of participants responded that, “No, allow paddlers to self-regulate launch times

2014 - 100% of survey participants responded to this question.

100% of participants responded that, “No, allow paddlers to self-regulate launch times

4. *If you paddled on Saturday at flows of 375, score the quality of this flow for your craft and skill level. Please consider all the flow-dependent characteristics that contribute to a high quality trip (e.g., boatability, whitewater challenge, safety, availability of surfing or other play areas, aesthetics, and length of run).*

2012 – 90% of survey participants responded to this question.

75% of survey participants responded the flows of 375cfs were totally acceptable; 11% responded neutral, 11% responded that it was moderately acceptable and 4% responded that it was slightly unacceptable.

2013 – 76% of survey participants responded to this question.

79% of survey participants responded the flows of 375 cfs were totally acceptable; 21% responded that it was moderately acceptable.

2014 – 100% of survey participants responded to this question.

83% of survey participants responded the flows of 375 cfs were totally acceptable; 17% responded that it was moderately acceptable.

5. *If you paddled on Sunday at flows of 400, score the quality of this flow for your craft and skill level. Please consider all the flow-dependent characteristics that contribute to a high quality trip (e.g., boatability, whitewater challenge, safety, availability of surfing or other play areas, aesthetics, and length of run).*

2012 – 68% of survey participants responded to this question

86% of survey participants responded the flows of 400cfs were totally acceptable; 5% responded neutral, 5% responded that it was moderately acceptable and 5% responded that it was slightly unacceptable.

2013 – 56% of survey participants responded to this question

93% of survey participants responded the flows of 400 cfs were totally acceptable; 7% responded that it was moderately acceptable.

2014 – 100% of survey participants responded to this question

100% of survey participants responded the flows of 400 cfs were totally acceptable.

6. *If you could select an optimal flow for boating on this reach given your craft and skill level,*

what flow would you prefer? Please specify cfs.

2012 – 74% of survey participants responded.

Responses varied from anywhere from 375 cfs to 500 cfs. With most survey participants satisfied with the 375-400 cfs range. For specific responses/comments see 2012 survey results at Appendix B.

2013 – 80% of survey participants responded.

Responses varied from 370 to 425 cfs. For specific responses/comments see 2013 survey results at Appendix B.

2014 – 100% of survey participants responded.

Responses varied from 375 to 500 cfs. For specific responses/comments, see 2014 survey results at Appendix B.

7. What aspect of the paddling experience did you enjoy the most?

2012 – 87% of survey participants responded.

See specific comments at Appendix B

2013 - 84% of survey participants responded.

See specific comments at Appendix B

2014 – 83% of survey participants responded.

See specific comments at Appendix B

8. What aspect of the paddling experience did you enjoy the least?

2012 – 81% of survey participants responded.

See specific comments at Appendix B

2013 – 64% of survey participants responded.

See specific comments at Appendix B

2014 – 83% of survey participants responded.

See specific comments at Appendix B

9. Would you participate in this event again?

2012 – 97% of survey participants responded to this question.

87% of survey participants responded they would participate every year; 13% responded that they would participate every other year.

2013 - 88% of survey participants responded to this question.

95% of survey participants responded they would participate every year; 5% responded they would participate every other year.

2014 - 100% of survey participants responded to this question.

83% of survey participants responded they would participate every year; 17% responded they would participate every other year.

10. Would you recommend this Chelan River whitewater boating experience to other boaters?

2012 – 97% of survey participants responded to this question.

100% of survey participants responded they would recommend this event to other boaters under certain conditions. See survey results at Appendix B for specific comments on recommendations for other participants.

2013 – 88% of survey participants responded to this question.

100% of survey participants responded, “Yes” they would recommend the Chelan River boating experience other boaters.

2014 – 100% of survey participants responded to this question.

100% of survey participants responded, “Yes” they would recommend the Chelan River boating experience other boaters.

SECTION 7: RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE WHITEWATER BOATING EVENTS

In consultation with American Whitewater, and based on the 2012-2014 whitewater boating monitoring and survey results, Chelan PUD has no recommended changes to the annual whitewater boating release flow, schedule, survey and evaluation methods, criteria, or reservation system. Chelan PUD and American Whitewater are, however, respectfully requesting Commission approval to modify the three-year reporting requirement for providing whitewater releases on the Chelan River to be every 10-years, with the next report due for filing with the Commission by May 1, 2026.

APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION WITH AMERICAN WHITEWATER

APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS

APPENDIX C: SURVEY TOOL