

R Chelan County PUD **RELICENSING UPDATE**

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**Lake Chelan
Hydroelectric Project**
License expires 2004



**Rocky Reach
Hydroelectric Project**
License expires 2006

LAKE CHELAN HYDRO PROJECT

Kayakers make it through Chelan Gorge at three flows



Tracy Clapp of Sultan, Wash., finds his kayak pointing skyward as he fights his way through whitewater in the gorge.

More kayak photos, Page 3

Six highly experienced kayakers made three successful trips through the Chelan River Gorge July 8-10, demonstrating that the gorge might be suitable for future whitewater recreation. It's believed to be the first time anyone has been through the steep, rocky channel in a kayak.

Study leader Bo Shelby, one of the six kayakers who paddled through the 4.1-mile gorge each of the three days at different water flows, said the gorge was a beautiful spot the kayakers enjoyed thoroughly.

Video crews hired by the PUD documented all the runs from several vantage points. Another photographer hired by the PUD also took numerous still pictures. PUD operators and officials observed the runs, but the public was not allowed.

No one was injured during the test runs, other than minor scrapes and bruises. Kayakers did portage around several of the steeper drops in the gorge rather than running places where water dropped 20 feet or where the river ran through a tight boulder field that resembled a sieve.

The flow of water in the gorge was controlled by opening a single gate at the Lake Chelan Dam upstream. Flows were 273 cubic feet per second the first day, 391 cfs the second day and 475 cfs the third day. Flows during spring runoff are more typically in the 1,000 to 2,000 cfs range, but they can get above 12,000 cfs.

Kayakers said they thought the middle flow was closest to what most visiting kayakers would like to see. But they also said the higher flow offered some extra challenges that visiting boaters would find enjoyable.

The PUD must now wait for the final report from the kayaking study team evaluating the test. Then it will discuss the issue with other parties in the relicensing process to determine whether kayaking will become part of the terms and conditions for a new license.

Fish management plans in the works

Art Viola of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) presented the first draft of a fish management plan for Lake Chelan at a June 28 meeting of the full relicensing team. The plan is expected to change after other agencies review it.

Because the lake is so clean, it cannot be expected to support high densities of fish. But the proposed plan would emphasize these points:

- Rebuild the cutthroat trout population
- Gradually discontinue planting rainbow trout and replace them with cutthroat
- Continue to strive for a balanced kokanee population so they don't become too numerous and have their growth stunted
- Reduce the catch limit on chinook until their numbers can rebuild

(continued on Page 2)

Recreation and economics studies lead field work

A full summer of field work is leading to more information about fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, water quality, erosion and economic impacts related to the Rocky Reach Hydroelectric Project.

Economics study well along

Consultants Reed Hansen and Michael McHugh have interviewed many individuals about economic impacts associated with the Rocky Reach project. They expect to present a preliminary report in August that will help members of the Social Sciences Working Group understand the potential impacts of project operations.

Surveys look at recreation use

Hundreds of surveys have been filled out this summer by visitors to the Entiat City Park and at campgrounds up the Entiat Valley. The surveys are trying to determine which areas are most heavily used and whether there is any spillover at Forest Service campgrounds from recreation activity on the Rocky Reach reservoir.

Results will be available this fall.

Bull trout study still a challenge

Chelan PUD has recently approved a work plan for bull trout trapping to determine how the fish move through the reservoir. The trapping and telemetry portion of the study has

LAKE CHELAN HYDRO PROJECT (cont.)

- Do nothing different with smallmouth bass
- Attempt to reintroduce bull trout into lake tributaries, especially the Stehekin River

Other fish management plans are also being prepared by other agencies, and all will be considered as the full relicensing team attempts to combine them into a unified strategy.

Report looks at flows in Chelan Gorge

Members of the Natural Sciences Working Group are beginning to look at what flows make sense for the Chelan Gorge, now that they have a study report which evaluates instream flows, limiting factors and barriers in the gorge.

Water temperatures in the gorge suggest that the use of sections 1 and 4 by juvenile and adult trout may be limited. The fact that Lake Chelan is so clean is also a limiting factor on fish populations in the gorge because there is little feed.

Members of the working group on natural sciences may explore methods of rerouting the river channel through Section 4 to focus the water in a more concentrated flow to benefit fish.

been awarded to BioAnalysts of Boise, Idaho. The challenge is to develop trapping methods at Rocky Reach and Rock Island Dams that will not interfere with passage of other ESA-listed species. The scope of the study has expanded to include Chelan, Grant, and Douglas PUD project areas.

Cultural consultation process approved

A letter was received from FERC authorizing Chelan PUD to consult formally with the Colville Confederated Tribes and the Yakama Nation regarding relicensing. A study has been initiated to identify properties of traditional or religious significance to the Yakama Nation and Colville Confederated Tribes.

Erosion sites noted around reservoir

A total of 48 erosion sites were mapped and photographed by the working group in three days of field work. The

What's new on the Web?

Chelan County PUD has added extensive background information to its Rocky Reach Relicensing Web site related to the proposed Habitat Conservation Plan.

The new information is available under the "existing license" link on the Rocky Reach Web site (www.chelanpud.org/relicense). It includes interim protection plans, the HCP document itself and background studies.

The HCP is an attempt by the PUD to have no net impact on migrating salmon and steelhead by combining new bypass technology, habitat improvements and limited hatchery production.

In addition to the Web site information, a new subcommittee of the Natural Sciences Working Group has been created to respond to questions on anadromous fish.

working group will next work on completing a draft report of the inventory and will later look at methods of erosion repair and prevention.

Water quality getting a closer look

Data gathered the last four years at Chelan County PUD dams is being analyzed by consultants at Parametrix to try to determine the impacts of spill and turbine operation on total dissolved gas (TDG) in the Columbia River. They are also looking at new and existing data to evaluate water temperatures.

The state Department of Ecology has standards for TDG and temperature. By analyzing existing data, the PUD can determine what other information may be necessary to address gas and temperature issues for the future.

Going...



Steve Hair of KPQ Radio in Wenatchee interviews PUD Commissioner Jim Wall.



Rick Williams of Black Diamond, Wash., is elated at making it through a tough section.



Going...



Study leader Bo Shelby of Corvallis, Ore., paddles up to John Gangemi and Rick Williams in quiet water at the end of the day.

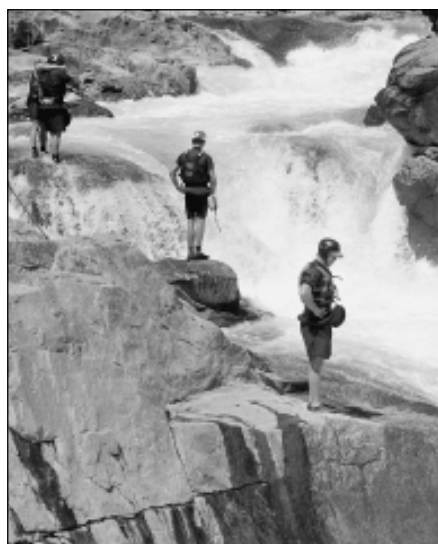
Gone!



Tracy Clapp of Sultan, Wash., all but disappears as he heads through a foamy section of the gorge.



Forrest Hubler of Hood River, Ore., squeezes through an opening in the rocks.



Kayakers stand at water's edge deciding if they want to run the section titled "entrance exam." Not everyone did.

(PUD photos by Steve Kaminoff)

GET TO KNOW THE RELICENSING TEAM



Steve Hays, Technical consultant

Bringing his vast background on fisheries, wildlife and natural sciences, Steve Hays is the newest member of the Chelan County PUD core relicensing team.

He will work primarily as a technical consultant, offering perspective on the various natural science issues involved in relicensing for both the Lake Chelan and the Rocky Reach hydroelectric projects. He will also interact with many of the stakeholder agencies involved with natural science issues as the terms and conditions for a new license application are developed.

His office will be in the Hawley Street building where the rest of the relicensing team was moved in May. All the existing members of the relicensing core team remain in their positions as well.

Hays is a veteran of the Chelan County PUD, beginning work in 1974 as a temporary biologist on dissolved gas research. After time away to serve in the Peace Corps, he eventually became a full-fledged PUD employee in 1977. For the next 18 years he worked on adult and juvenile salmon passage, bypass development, predator control and

the proposed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) which is now in its final stages of environmental review. He served as director of Fish and Wildlife from 1998-2000.

“I look forward to helping the relicensing team as we wrestle with the complex fish and wildlife issues,” said Hays. “Experience with the negotiation of the Habitat Conservation Plan will be valuable. However, the diversity of stakeholder objectives in the relicensing arena is even more complex than we dealt with in the HCP.”

Hays is pleased to be focusing on a project that will have such long-term significance for the PUD and Chelan County, where he has lived most of his life.

Hays met his wife, Maricruz, while he served in the Peace Corps in El Salvador. They have three children, ages 11, 12 and 16.

Hays has coached youth soccer for 12 years and also enjoys hiking and fishing.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Comments and questions on relicensing or on this newsletter can be directed to Steve Lachowicz, Chelan County PUD, 327 N. Wenatchee Ave., Wenatchee, WA, 98801. Or e-mail stevel@chelanpud.org or call toll-free in Washington: (888) 663-8121.

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