River Cleanups, Community Science Update, and Much more!

Spokane Riverkeeper's Late Summer 2021 Update

Water Conservation IS River Protection

This summer brought us tough news for your Spokane River. Between a historic drought, and an epic early summer heat wave, the Spokane River suffered this season. We've recorded record high water temperatures and seen extremely low flows this summer. But the good news is that you can make a positive difference in the life of your River. Much of our summertime flow in the middle and lower Spokane River originates from our Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer, the same source as our domestic water supply. That means that when we are using water, it competes with your River for critical flow. This matters most in the critical low flow seasons when the River is low and needs the aquifer water, and people are using over 200 gallons a day to water lawns. Every drop of water we conserve through wise water use and water saving devices, will feed your River during these critical low flow seasons. This in turn will provide cold clean water to stay in and sustain our River through these unprecedented times. To learn more about your ability to keep water in our River please visit the Spokane Riverkeeper River Journal:

1. Irrigation Best Practices by Chastity Kolb
2. Long term we need to pass a serious Water Conservation Plan conservation targets and a drought response plan for the City of Spokane - look for plans to come out in the fall.

Right: See the effect of pumping (up and down) on river flows in the Spokane River below down town - Spokane Gage 8/27/21 (Rivercast App - USGS data)
Community Science Updates: Crayfish, Turbidity, and Temperature!

Turbidity Studies:

Our community science turbidity study finished with 38 samplers collecting and reading over 650 turbidity samples from 157 sample events. Great job community scientists! We’re just finishing up our report, but early indications show that despite the very dry year, Hangman Creek causes the Spokane River to exceed state turbidity standards on nine occasions. In addition, we estimate that approximately 13,000 tons of sediment were deposited into the Spokane River by Hangman Creek over the study period.

Water Temperatures in the Spokane River

Midsummer Water Temperature Report - Spokane Riverkeeper

Spokane Riverkeeper has been monitoring temperatures in the Spokane River since 2015, and this summer marks some of the highest water temperatures we've
Crayfish Study:

We had a great time sampling crayfish for mercury with our community scientists and the University of Idaho's Water Resource Research Institute. We found plenty of crayfish and lots of other critters over the three sampling days. Results should be out soon and will help us understand pollution patterns in the Columbia Basin.

River Cleanups

Our river cleanup program set new records, with over 19,000 pounds of litter removed by almost 700 volunteers and our season isn't over yet! Sign up at spokanerivercleanup.org for our public river cleanup events.

We continue to thank our Partners at the Spokane River Forum and the Support of our primary Sponsor Northwest Renewables!
Hangman Creek Settlement

Progress restoring the Hangman Creek watershed continues, in part due to our settlement with the EPA requiring the State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to focus efforts in the basin. From this, six sites that contribute pollution to the creek have been fixed, with 10 in queue and awaiting funding. In addition, Ecology analyzed an array of GIS data that shows the impact of poor land use in the watershed. Read the 2020 report here which shows the grant funding going into the basin, data from priority sites, and so much more.

Save the Date: Spoken River on November 5th

We are excited to present our annual fundraiser "Spoken River, Stories of the River" this November 5th, 2021. For more information, check out our event page. In-person portion of the event is largely dependent on local and state requirements and guidance for COVID-19

Spoken River Podcast

Our new Podcast is available at both Apple and Spotify! We have three episodes out now the latest featuring artist Ellen Picken.

Have a listen here Apple or Spotify!

Spokane Tribe Releases Chinook Salmon

Chinook Salmon came back to the Spokane River Watershed this August! This Spokane Tribal ceremonial release was on the Little Spokane River. Thank you Spokane Tribe for your tenacity, vision, and perseverance in recovering salmon and our River. Thank you to all of those who have held the salmon in your hearts for 111 years and resisted their destruction, and to those who are now assisting their return to healthy rivers. Thanks also to the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy for partnering with the Spokane Tribe on the release and working to facilitate this event!
Drips and Drops:

- Don’t miss the new website on the long struggle to clean up PCBs (toxics) in our Watershed. Brought to you by the Rose Foundation! [https://spokaneriverpcbs.org/](https://spokaneriverpcbs.org/)
- We say good by to Intern and science outreach staff Stacy Lee King who has gone of to work with the Colville Confederated Tribes as a wetlands specialist - we will miss you as you are a true Waterkeeper! And we say "Thanks so much" to OSU intern Chastity Kolb who has been working on temperature and flows with the Spokane River all summer and into the fall!
- Thanks so much to our great partners and friends at the [Salish School of Spokane](http://www.salishschool.spokane.edu). We worked all summer with students on the River studying insects, water quality and just having a great time connecting to the River. [Limlmtx](http://www.limlmtx.com), friends!
Thank you for supporting the effort to keep Spokane River and its tributaries clean for generations to come.

Your Spokane Riverkeeper Team,

Jerry White Jr.
Jule Schultz

SRK Board

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