

John Iani, Regional Administrator
Region 10
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

Draft Conveyance Letter

Dear Mr. Iani:

Our communities would like to avoid the stigma of a Superfund listing. We would ask you to defer your listing decision while we conduct a series of studies that focus on our practical concerns about the Lake and the Upper Columbia River. Can you eat the fish? Can you drink the water? And can you play on the beaches? We have formed the Upper Columbia Working Group for Responsible Stewardship (Working Group) to answer these questions. With answers to these questions in hand, our Working Group would like to work with you, the State of Washington, other stakeholders and involved industries to resolve the issues surrounding the Upper Columbia River.

The Working Group will be involving a Washington state university to design and where possible conduct the actual studies. Through member and industry contributions, the Working Group is arranging for sufficient funds to complete these studies. We will ensure that the work will be done in a credible and professional manner. The Working Group will commit to a timeline to complete its work. Under our schedule as currently outlined, a Technical Team will be convened by the end of May, study designs will be developed within 6 weeks, study designs will be approved within 9 weeks and studies will be in the field within 12 weeks. We recognize that is an ambitious schedule but we know our constituents want answers to the key questions as soon as reasonably possible.

The Superfund process, in some circumstances, can be a useful mechanism, but it is not a means for quickly answering or resolving the questions our constituents have a right to timely answers about. It is also not suited to the conditions encountered here. In this case, if used based on currently-available information it is likely to serve as a mechanism for effectively stigmatizing a large and beautiful resource and for negatively impacting the lives of a generation of residents. We propose an approach for studying the current impact of the Columbia River and Lake Roosevelt on those who make use of it and live there. We feel strongly that getting timely answers to their questions is critical. The local communities should have answers to these questions before we commit ourselves to designating hundreds of miles of the river and lake as a Superfund site. Listing will raise numerous questions and engender a great deal of conflict. The process that we propose at this point is a viable alternative and will yield information that will answer questions that are both pertinent and are of priority to residents of the Upper Columbia Region. Our proposal will build on the attached framework.

We strongly encourage you to defer your listing decision. We promise to forward you our fully fleshed out proposal in the next few weeks. We would be happy to discuss our approach with you in more detail. Please contact Stevens County Commissioner Merrill Ott at 509-684-3751 if you have any immediate questions. Commissioner Ott is serving as our "unofficial" spokesperson until we formally organize and select officers. Our communities understand that the Environmental Protection Agency has its process and we respect that, but these are our communities and before we begin a process that could last more than a decade we want these basic questions answered. The consequences of your decision reach into the lives of all of our citizens. Please give us time to do this work.

{Signature by Commissioner or Commissioners}

Draft Solicitation Letter

Dear -----,

Commissioners of Stevens, Lincoln, Ferry, Pend Oreille, Grant and Okanagon Counties have recently formed the "Upper Columbia Working Group for Responsible Stewardship" to ensure that local control drives the health and human safety review of Lake Roosevelt.

As you may know, the Environmental Protection Agency completed in October of 2002, an Expanded Site Designation Report on Lake Roosevelt. The next step in the process could be registration on the National Priority List and subsequent Superfund designation.

Residents of our counties do not feel this is the most effective approach to study and remedy environmental issues related to Lake Roosevelt. In fact, the head of EPA Region 10 appears to agree. In a recent address to the Lake Roosevelt Forum, John Iani stated he would welcome an alternative, credible, cooperative approach to Superfund listing for Lake Roosevelt. We agree and intend to lead an effort to provide a viable alternative that will conduct credible, independent studies focused on human health and safety issues.

As an interested party in this matter, we invite your participation in our effort. Your input will be appreciated and very beneficial to our effort. We have scheduled an organizational meeting for May --- 2003 (meeting details) and welcome your participation.

Meeting subjects will include; goals and objectives, governance, budget, funding, schedule, and scope of studies. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Merrill Ott, Stevens County Commissioner - (509) 684-3751.

Sincerely,

Steering Committee
Upper Columbia Working Group for Responsible Stewardship