



Spokane River Newsletter

Vol. 2
Issue 3
Winter 2012

Welcome



Hello, my name is Steve Esch, and I'm a Senior Operations Engineer for Avista. My job is to monitor and

forecast river flows, as well as to help coordinate work and maintenance activities at our dams located on the Spokane River. I work closely with Avista's environmental and operations staff so that we operate our dams efficiently and responsibly. We're looking out for the environment, while maximizing the dams' ability to produce reliable power for our customers.

Because river flows and lake levels depend on Mother Nature and affect habitat, recreation, property owners and Avista's customers, every day brings new challenges. I enjoy my job because there is always something new and different to evaluate or improve upon.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of the Spokane River Newsletter and learn something new about the projects we work on every day.

- Steve Esch

Year in review 2011



When you see someone working outside to take care of wildlife habit, build recreation sites or restore natural areas, you probably wouldn't expect that person to be an employee of your utility company. But in 2011, Avista was in the field nearly every day taking care of the resources in and around the Spokane River. By protecting our environment and operating our dams responsibly, Avista can continue to generate clean, reliable and cost-effective hydroelectric power for our customers.

In an industry that moves at a quick pace, a year's worth of work is a lot to digest. We combed through our archives to find some of the best moments of 2011. We hope you enjoy this time of reflection before we get ready to do it again in 2012.

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Winter river flows and Coeur d'Alene Lake levels



People commonly think floods occur in the spring. But did you know many of the highest levels recorded for Coeur d'Alene Lake have occurred in the winter? For example, on Christmas day in 1933 the lake reached an all-time peak of roughly eleven feet over its summer level.

Coeur d'Alene Lake is a natural lake with an outlet that naturally restricts its outflow. The primary sources

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Spokane River Faces - Dave Lamb



- Raised in New York State
- Moved to Spokane in 1980
- Masters Degree in Lake Management from Washington State University

Dedication, perseverance, and eternal optimism are traits that can be hard to find in one individual. That's not the case with Dave Lamb, Lake Ecologist for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.

Dave is the Tribe's lake management lead and has an important role in controlling aquatic weeds and shoreline erosion. Prior to Avista receiving its new Spokane River Project License, Dave was instrumental in mapping and controlling the invasive aquatic weed, Eurasian Watermilfoil, throughout Coeur d'Alene Lake.

The control of aquatic weeds in the lake has been a team effort between Avista, the Tribe and other agencies. Dave was also the Tribe's lead on the lower lake and St. Joe River erosion inventory and assessment as part of our cooperative effort with the Tribe to control shoreline erosion.

"I have never seen someone who enjoys his work in natural resources and lake management more than Dave," said Spokane River License Manager, Speed Fitzhugh. "We are extremely fortunate to work with Dave on the projects that help protect our area resources."

"I feel blessed to live in an area rich with lakes, rivers and mountains, and to work for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe in protecting and restoring natural habitats in their homeland." said Lamb.

Winter river flows and Coeur d'Alene Lake levels - continued from page 1

of water into the lake are the St. Joe, St. Maries and Coeur d'Alene rivers. The water then flows through the outlet to create the Spokane River.

Avista's Post Falls Hydroelectric Dam is on the Spokane River, nine miles downstream of the lake's outlet. The dam affects Coeur d'Alene Lake elevation for about half of the year. During winter and spring, lake levels are controlled entirely by the natural outlet restriction and inflows.

The winter months are generally the wet season in our region. Fluctuating temperatures, rain that occurs on top of snow, or extended heavy rain can increase flows rapidly, which in turn can result in quickly-rising river and lake elevations.

Avista's goal each year is to draw Coeur d'Alene Lake down six to seven feet below the summer level by early January. This allows Post Falls Dam to generate electricity while providing capacity in the lake for later precipitation and runoff. Natural inflows usually exceed our turbine capacity early in the year, letting Coeur d'Alene Lake and the Spokane River find their naturally occurring levels with no influence by the dam. This free flow condition typically continues through spring run-off until late May, June or early July.

River and lake levels can change quickly. We want you to stay safe, so always use caution on the water and comply with all posted notices and closures, especially in the vicinity of dams.

Avista has a 24-hour telephone information line that provides notification of anticipated elevation changes on Coeur d'Alene Lake, Lake Spokane and the Spokane River. In Idaho, call (208) 769-1357, in Washington call (509) 495-8043.



The Settlement Agreement between Avista and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe provided funding for the Tribe to acquire over 360 acres for wetland mitigation along Upper Hangman Creek in 2011.



Before work could begin on the Aesthetic Flows Project, crews worked to collect and transport fish safely downstream.



Avista acquired property along the Spokane River below Post Falls Dam as part of our FERC licensing conditions. The site is a popular area for river recreation.



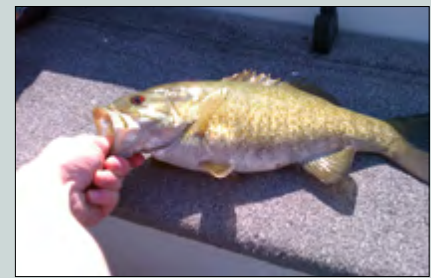
The Aesthetic Flows Project at Upper Falls Dam in downtown Spokane was completed. Beginning in the late 1800's, developers in Spokane cut into the bedrock to divert water during dry times. The Aesthetic Flows Project helps return the river's channels to a more natural state.



A diver works on Lake Spokane to remove flowering rush, a common noxious weed.



High river flows cause large amounts of rock, gravel and other materials to accumulate at the Monroe Street Dam. Removing the rock and placing it downstream helps keep the dams running efficiently and provides the material to support downstream habitat.



Lake Spokane angler survey results are in for 2011

In 2011, Avista completed the first year of its five-year angler survey on Lake Spokane (also known as Long Lake). The study is designed to help us learn how anglers fish and what type of fish they catch in Lake Spokane. This information will help guide future fisheries enhancement programs on the lake.

Surveys of anglers and property owners were conducted at the lake and through an online survey from March to November.

Project staff conducted 31 interviews and counted 362 anglers overall.

Results indicated that the majority of anglers, most of whom are from Spokane and Lincoln Counties, target Smallmouth Bass and are satisfied with the lake's fishery.

If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you'd like to receive it in your own inbox, please e-mail spokanerivernews@avistacorp.com. To learn more about the Spokane River Project, visit www.avistautilities.com keyword search Spokane River Project.



Ice Anglers - stay safe!

Ice fishing offers a great opportunity to enjoy our region all year long. To help keep your trip safe and fun, follow these tips before you head out:

- Understand basic ice safety and rescue training, and know the early signs and treatment of hypothermia.
- Check conditions and tell someone where you plan to fish and when you'll return.
- Carry safety equipment like spikes, ice-fishing picks and rope.
- Do not drive on ice, always park in designated parking areas.

While you are out on the ice:

- Go with a partner and walk separately to and from fishing spots in case one of you falls through the ice.
- Remember that moving water weakens ice by wearing it away from underneath. Avoid ice on moving water and where a river or stream enters a lake, pond or reservoir.
- Watch for areas of open water or thin ice where the ice has cracked and/or heaved from freezing.
- Remember, unsafe ice frequently occurs early and late in the season, and during warmer weather.

Avista wants you to safely enjoy outdoor recreation throughout the year. For more information, visit [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) or [Idaho Department of Fish and Game](#).

Work. Play. Live.



The system pulls air into the water as it travels through the powerhouse turbines. The aerated water is then discharged into the river. As shown in the photo above, valves allow plant operators to control the volume of air into the turbines to maximize its effectiveness.

Long Lake Dam Aeration Project

When algae and plants in lakes and rivers die and decompose, they remove oxygen from the water. Dissolved oxygen is necessary for good water quality. In late summer and early fall our area lakes and rivers can become low in dissolved oxygen and may not meet Washington's water quality standards.

As part of our work to protect our natural resources, Avista has been testing a draft tube aeration system that helps increase dissolved oxygen in the water downstream of Long Lake Dam.

Last year's test results indicate a draft tube aeration system may be a good long-term method of increasing dissolved oxygen and improving water quality below Long Lake Dam. We will be finalizing our evaluation of this system in cooperation with the Spokane Tribe and the Department of Ecology.



For more information visit www.avistautilities.com keyword search: Spokane River Project. Have a story idea for the newsletter? Call 509.495.4486 or e-mail it to spokanerivernews@avistacorp.com.

Avista Corp. is an energy company involved in the production, transmission and distribution of energy as well as other energy-related businesses. Avista Utilities is our operating division that provides electric service to 358,000 customers and natural gas to 317,000 customers. Our service territory covers 30,000 square miles in eastern Washington, northern Idaho and parts of southern and eastern Oregon, with a population of 1.5 million. Avista's primary, non-regulated subsidiary is Ecova, an energy and sustainability management company with more than 500 multi-site commercial and utility customers, representing more than 450,000 sites. Our stock is traded under the ticker symbol "AVA." For more information about Avista, please visit www.avistacorp.com.

This newsletter contains forward-looking statements regarding the company's current expectations. Forward-looking statements are all statements other than historical facts. Such statements speak only as of the date of the newsletter and are subject to a variety of risks and uncertainties, many of which are beyond the company's control, which could cause actual results to differ materially from the expectations. These risks and uncertainties include, in addition to those discussed herein, all of the factors discussed in the company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended Dec. 31, 2010 and the Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ending September 30, 2011.