

Upper Columbia River Beach Sediment Sampling to Begin in September 2009

FACT SHEET



Region 10

September 2009

In September, sediments will be collected from five beaches along the Upper Columbia River (UCR). This is part of a larger, multi-year study of contamination along the UCR to determine the potential risks to people and the environment. An additional 29 beaches will be sampled during the 2010 spring drawdown.

When will the sampling occur?

Sampling will take place during daylight hours in early to mid September.

How were the sampling locations chosen?

Thirty-four beaches were identified during public meetings and by staff from the National Park Service, Washington State Department of Ecology, the Colville Confederated Tribes, and the Spokane Tribe.

How many samples will be taken?

Field crews will collect sediment samples from 60 different locations between the water's edge and the upper end of each beach.

Who is doing the sampling?

The sampling will be conducted by Teck American Incorporated (Teck) with oversight from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Previous Sampling

In 2005, EPA collected and analyzed sediment samples from fifteen Upper Columbia River beaches to evaluate potential recreational risks. [http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/UCR/Technical+Documents/\\$FILE/Draft%20UCR%20Beach-Screen-RA.pdf](http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/UCR/Technical+Documents/$FILE/Draft%20UCR%20Beach-Screen-RA.pdf). The study concluded the beaches are safe to use for recreational activities. Additional data collection in 2009 and 2010 is needed to:

- 1) Sample beaches that were missed in 2005
- 2) Re-evaluate the three northernmost beaches identified in 2005
- 3) Provide better measures to assess risks for recreation, residential, and tribal beach use.

Beaches to be sampled in September:

- Black Sand Beach
- Upper Columbia RV Park
- Dalles Orchard Beach
- Onion Creek Beach
- Northport Beach/Boat Launch

Who else will be present during the sampling?

Each field crew will be accompanied by cultural resource observers from the Colville Confederated Tribes, the Spokane Tribe, and/or the National Park Service. The observers will help to minimize cultural impacts.

What are the samples being tested for?

The sediment samples will be tested for heavy metals including arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury and zinc and other contaminants.

What will be done with the results?

The test results will help EPA evaluate whether or not the sediments pose an unacceptable risk to people spending time on the beaches.

We hope to share the results and findings with everyone on the Upper Columbia River e-mail list or mailing list, and post them on the EPA Upper Columbia River Website (listed on back) by late 2010.

How can I get on the UCR e-mail list?

To be added to EPA's e-mail list, please send a request to Jeanne O'Dell at odell.jeanne@epa.gov.

Citizens for a Clean Columbia sends out newsletters and member alerts to their e-mail list. You can sign up for this list by clicking on the "action alerts" link on their website:

<http://cleancolumbia.org>

Where can I learn more?

Visit the project web site:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/upperc>

Information Repositories:

Visit one of the Information Repositories listed below to find information about EPA's work on the Upper Columbia River, including full copies of technical documents. Be sure to call ahead for hours.

Northport: Northport Town Hall
315 Summit St.
(509) 732-4450

Colville: Colville Public Library
195 S. Oak St.
(509) 684-6620

Inchelium: Inchelium Tribal Resource Center
12 Community Loop
(509) 634-2791

Nespelem: Colville Confederated Tribes Office of Environmental Trust
Building #2,
(509) 634-2413

Grand Coulee: Grand Coulee Library,
225 Federal St., (509) 633-0972

Wellpinit: Spokane Tribe Department of Natural Resources
6290 B Ford-Wellpinit Road
(509) 258-7709, extension 13

Spokane: Spokane Library
906 W. Main
(509) 444-5336, ext. 5404

Upper Columbia River Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS)

Under the June 2006 Settlement Agreement between EPA and Teck, Teck is required to complete a portion of the RI/FS with EPA oversight and approval. Teck is responsible for conducting an ecological risk assessment for the site, and EPA is responsible for completing a human health risk assessment for the site. EPA will work closely with local tribes and other partners to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of potential risks to human health, such as eating fish, food gathering, cultural practices, extended beach use, and wind-blown dust.

During the RI/FS process, EPA will oversee all work, including validating and interpreting data collected by Teck and their technical consultants.

Who can I call if I have questions?

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If you need materials in an alternative format, please contact Caryn Sengupta. TTY users please call the Federal Relay Service: 800-877-8339