

Notes from Calls and Emails with USFWS, Avista, Spokane Tribe

Ann Gannam, USFWS 2012 Report Author (3/16/15 call)

“We looked at PCBs in fish feed and fish tissues, but we didn’t look at the effluent. We found some contamination in rainbow trout stocked for recreation. We did a survey before the 2012 report: in 2004 a guy named Hites found that fish food is really contaminated, though his methodology wasn’t great.

In region 8 we don’t raise fish for human consumption—our fish are raised as smolts that go out to the ocean. Adults came back with contaminants (higher levels than those on feed); females brought PCBs et al back to the system. Fish returning up Columbia (Warm Springs) had higher levels than fish returning up shorter river runs (Quilcene, Quinalt). Most of the contaminants are in the fish meal (top coated with) the fish oil. Feed companies do sample their feed and the oils must be certified at a certain level before they get sold. FWS has an office in Spokane that has some contaminant folks.

In older hatcheries, paint or caulking can leach PCBs. FWS hatcheries are pretty old but agency has worked to replace paint/caulk.

Jay Davis (the chemist on the 2012 report) says the fish feed companies “have been cleaning up their act as far as we can tell” since the studies emerged. Steered me to Ann Gannam and/or Alec Bald.

From Tim Vores (via Bryce Robbert, emails)

According to the Spokane River License, FERC requires the stocking of catchable sized (6-8 in) sterile rainbow trout annually into the Spokane River for angling opportunity. Stocking occurs at:

- 9,000 fish are stocked into the Nine Mile Reservoir near the Plese Flats recreation area (Article 405)
- 6,000 fish are stocked into the Upper Falls Reservoir near the Avista Headquarters (Article 405)
- 155,000 fish are stocked into Lake Spokane near the town of Tum Tum, WA (Article 406)

Prior to that, we stocked:

- 3,000 catchable sized rainbow trout into Nine Mile Reservoir and
- 2,000 fish into Upper Falls Reservoir annually.

The source was Trout Lodge Inc, Soap Lake, WA and the locations were the same as the 2009 license locations. This stocking was done each year prior to 2009, the earliest I remember was 1996-97.

From Spokane Tribe (Brian Crossley, emails):

“As you may already know there are two hatcheries on Tshimikain Creek on the Rez. I do know there are PCB's in fish food because it is primarily fish meal and they have been working on developing alternative fish foods without much success. Looking at the PCB levels in fish- the hatchery trout are relatively low in PCB concentrations compared to other fish in the same water body and not receiving "fish food".

“I would like to attend however I'm tied up on the 25th on the west side and will not be able to attend.”