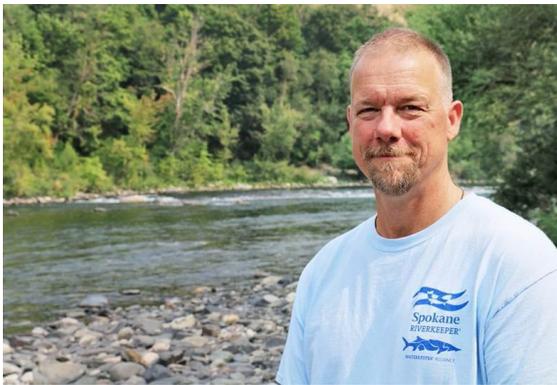


In this issue: Water Quality Work, Standing Firm on Toxics, Sediment in the River, EWU Partnership, River Litter Pick up, Water Reporter App



News and information from the Spokane Riverkeeper

A word from the Spokane Riverkeeper



This has been a very big year for the Spokane Riverkeeper. We've collected more water quality data and patrolled more river miles and we've picked up more litter with more enthusiastic volunteers than ever before. We are continuing to press for tighter standards for toxic pollution, and we have

won better protections from coal train discharges. Our work protecting shorelines and streams from polluted runoff continues to grow through our "Clean Streams, Healthy Shores" initiative, and we are working behind the scenes to provide conservation strategies for our native fish. Of course, those are just a start. Read all about it below.

Water Quality Round up:

Sediment Crisis:

Last winter and spring, sediment from damaged shorelines clogged Hangman Creek and blew into the Spokane River. When the flows subsided in the summer, we found that the bed of the Spokane River was covered with sands and silt. Sediment clogging our creeks and rivers is pollution. It runs off of damaged lands far upstream in Hangman Creek and dumps into the Spokane

River below Peaceful Valley. Protecting and restoring stream-side vegetation (aka riparian buffers) could prevent this pollution by filtering pollutants before they get to our Spokane River. We are very worried what unchecked run off of sediment will do to Spokane's native redband trout and other fish populations. These prized trout spawn in gravel and cobble on the bottom of the Spokane River during April-May and fine sediment can suffocate their embryos. This pollution could have multiple direct and indirect impacts.



1 Photo Courtesy of Cutboard Studios



Summer 2016



Summer 2017

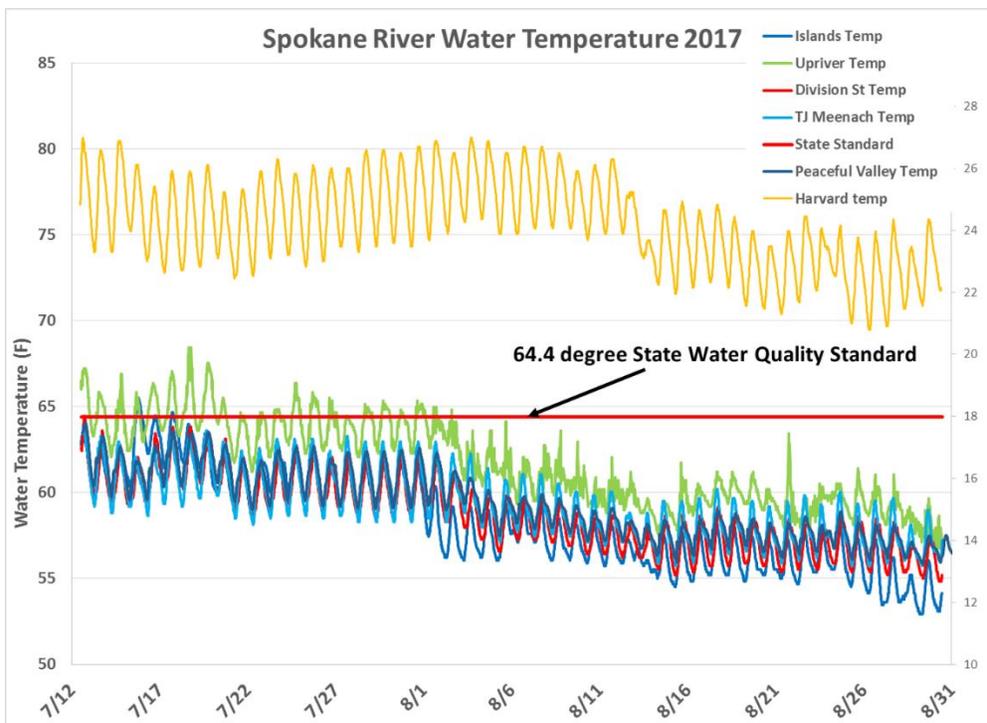
Above: GoPro footage of the Spokane River bed taken by Cutboard Studios below the confluence of Hangman Creek. The photos are pre and post run off from 2016 and 2017 taken in the same location.

The section of the Spokane River impacted by Hangman Creek has some prime trout spawning habitat. Additionally, these sediments may impact structure that trout and other fish need to hide and forage. These sediments carry nasty nutrients like phosphorus that promote algae growth and deplete oxygen that fish need to breathe. Look for more information and more work to protect shorelines and raise awareness in 2018!

[This last spring we released our 2016 Water Condition Report Card.](#)

[Press Conference - Spring of 2017](#)

This was a 2016 report card presenting our data combined with that of the Washington Department of Ecology's data, to assess the health of water in our watershed. Hangman Creek was the focus and received a failing grade for most parameters.



Our on-going temperature studies continue and we will be releasing results later this winter. Many reaches of Hangman Creek and the upper Spokane River were very unhealthy while our Middle Spokane River remains cool due to the critical aquifer in-flows that feed the river.

Check out this action- packed video of Jule Schultz, Spokane River Science Lead, on river patrol sampling the Cochran Basin storm water outfall! [Watch here.](#)

Introducing: Spoken River

We said goodbye to “Dirty Martini’s for Clean Water” and welcomed a new yearly benefit, “Spoken River”. Authors Maya Jewell Zeller, Shawn Vestal, and Jack Nesbit all read selections of river related works for the benefit of the Spokane Riverkeeper's work and your



River. It was a roaring success, with over 200 attendees and \$27,000 raised. We also debuted our newest film by Hamilton Studios, [“Keeping up with the Keeper”](#) (pictured). So if you are after some comic relief from the current world of fighting for clean water - take a look. We hope it makes you smile!



Bill Abrahamse of Spokane Falls Trout Unlimited received this year's Mike Chappell River Hero Award. Bill has fought to protect our native redband trout for many years. Bill's work championing clean water and fish protection makes him a true river hero. Thanks Bill!

BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORS!

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Spokane Tribe of Indians

Lake Roosevelt Wine Company

River City Brewing

Numerica Credit Union

Mountain Gear

Kizuri



Media Round Up

If you need an opinion on the Spokane River, you call the Spokane Riverkeeper. In the previous few months we've appeared in the [Journal of Business](#), [KXLY](#), [KXLY again](#), [KREM](#), [Spokesman-Review](#), [Spokesman-Review again](#), and [again](#), the [Inlander](#), and *The Drake* (flyfishing magazine) to name a few (image courtesy of Journal of Business). We appeared in the [University District Magazine](#), [Put your Paddle](#) In and don't miss our "Lorax" cameo in the excellent [Downtown Spokane Partnership video](#) either!

Protecting Our River From Toxins!

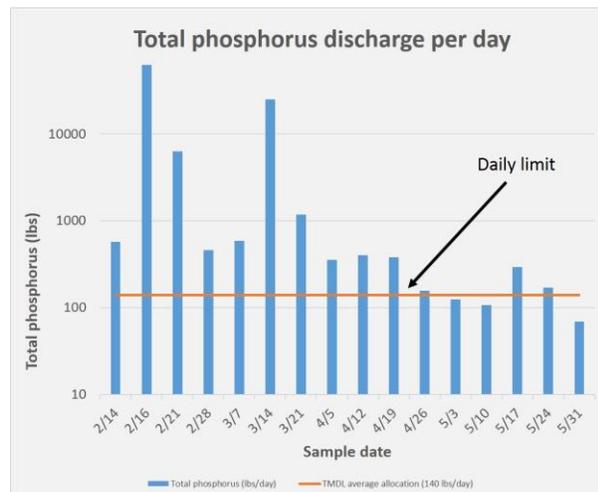
Toxics from historic industrial wastes and current wastewater in the form of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) continue to be found in the Spokane River, contaminating fish. Last year, the EPA acted to reduce the allowable limit of PCBs in Washington's rivers (and fish) to protect Washington State's vulnerable populations who consume a great deal of fish. This is called a water quality

standard (WQS). Local industrial dischargers are lobbying hard to ease these standards. **We work every day to protect the Spokane River and we will not allow these stringent standards to be changed or walked back.** Any effort on the part of any pollution discharger to weaken standards that have been put in place by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for public health and safety will be met with a robust response from the Spokane Riverkeeper. Read more about it [here!](#)

EWU Partnership and Water Quality

The high water this spring brought all sorts of issues to our attention. This year we partnered with Eastern Washington University on a science project that found huge amounts of phosphorous running out of Hangman Creek. Phosphorus creates algal blooms that reduce dissolved oxygen levels that fish need to breath. The

floods also brought tons of sediment which now covers the bed of the Spokane River, impacting native trout and invertebrates. We continue to monitor water temperature in Hangman Creek and Spokane River. Look for our upcoming water quality report card for more information on this issue.



River Garbage Wrap Up

Thanks to the over **400 volunteers** that helped us clean up over **7,500 pounds** of litter in and along the banks of the Spokane River. We hosted over **30 cleanup events** this year and ran the Boats for the Spokane River Clean up! Financial support from our partners at the City of Spokane and Department



of Ecology make this work possible. We appreciate you all - the public volunteers and the partners who love your river and are a critical link this work. We couldn't do this work without you!

Water Reporter

We need your help to keep an eye on the Spokane River and its watershed. Luckily we have a new tool for you to use to report pollution or tell



us you love the Spokane River: **Water Reporter**. A free app for your smartphone, Water Reporter is Instagram for water advocates. If you love the Spokane River, download Water Reporter. Simply snap a photo of water in the Spokane River watershed and post it on the app. The more eyes we have on the river, the better. Check it out [here](#).

Drips and Drops

It's hard to capture everything we do in a short newsletter, but we wanted to let you know of some other things we're up to. With partners, we are helping organize an effort to build a redband trout conservation strategic plan and we are involved with the Spokane Indians Baseball Team as they roll out the Redband Rally program. We spoke at neighborhood councils and block parties, led panel discussions at the 2017 Spokane River Forum, taught students of every age about the river, outreached to the public on the great CSO work that the City of Spokane is doing, advocated for better river access (specifically at TJ Meenach and Glover Field), led river poetry walks, and joined Ribby the Redband (with other trout lovers) at Spokane Indians Baseball games.

In Memory...



Finally, we would like to dedicate this issue of the Merganser Newsletter to the life and work of Washington Department of Wildlife Habitat Biologist, Karin Divens, 1968-2017. Karin was a dedicated biologist, and passionate advocate for wildlife and our natural world. We will deeply miss her.
