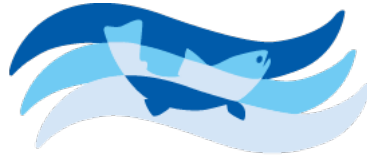




# The Merganser

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S P O K A N E  
R I V E R K E E P E R

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From all of us here at the Spokane Riverkeeper, Happy Holidays! May 2022 see you happy and healthy and may our river flow strong, cold, safe, and clean!



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## Spokane Riverkeeper's 2021 Holiday Update

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### A Word from Your Riverkeeper.

It is all about coming home. Salmon once called our rivers home and were the heart and soul of our region. Chinook salmon weighing in at 110 pounds called "June Hogs" once returned here from the Pacific Ocean. This year, as your Spokane Riverkeeper, I will be continuing to discuss and emphasize the importance of clean, cold water and the maintenance of river flows through the lens of chinook salmon recovery and in support of Upper Columbia Basin Tribal efforts to recover salmon to our rivers:



- We will continue to press the city to pass a drought response plan (we were key in working on the Water Conservation Collaborative Work Group in developing recommendations) that uses river flow to trigger water conservation actions and

- keeps precious water in the river for native trout and future salmon.
- We will continue to work hard to ensure those who discharge PCBs - which accumulate in your Spokane and Little Spokane River fish, are reduced by negotiating tough pollution permits, and returning the WA State Water Quality Standard to 7 Picograms/Liter for PCBs.
- We will be continuing to work toward the goals set out in the Hangman Creek Settlement Agreement - the Washington Water Pollution Control Act is upheld and riparian habitats are recovered in our basin, and across Washington State.
- We will continue to be at the table negotiating for new Agricultural Best Practices that reduce pollution with stakeholders at the Dept. of Ecology.
- We will continue to comment on and negotiate any, and all water use and water rights applications (such as the pending Airway Heights application) in the basin that may compromise future water for salmon.
- (Stay tuned for follow-ups that connect our core work to the future maintenance and recovery of all native fish)

It is important for our supporters to understand these connections between our program work and our advocacy, and to understand that we continue to coordinate with experts working directly on salmon recovery issues as well as partner NGOs in our watershed supporting these efforts. The intersection of River protection and salmon recovery cannot be overstated. As recently as the early 20th century, salmon runs were a pillar of your River, the indigenous communities who lived with them, and the Rivers that depended on their bodies for sustenance. Upon their return home, they will again support the future of our Rivers and our communities. [READ MORE](#)

**Learn more about Spokane River salmon recovery - Watch here.**



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## Welcome Riverkeeper Katie!

We have a new team member here at Riverkeeper Managing Director, Katie Thompson! Katie joins us from the Community Colleges of Spokane and will be charged with running the operations, and the development of our organization. Katie will be remodeling our supporter and River Partner programming and making sure things are running smoothly. We are very excited to have her and we encourage you to give her a shout and say hello!



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## Community Science Updates



The 2021 Sediment Study was bigger than ever. So big, in fact, we didn't have enough volunteer slots for everyone. This year we have doubled the number of sampling events by dividing each day into an "AM" and "PM" slot. So sign up for a sampling [date here](#) and sign up for a [training](#) (either virtual or in person).

We have published our report detailing the results of our study on our blog. Check it out below.



### **2021 Community Science Turbidity/Sediment Study -...**

The Spokane Riverkeeper partnered with Spokane Falls Trout Unlimited and local community scientists for a fourth year, to measure the effect of Hangman Creek's annual sediment plume on water clarity (turbidity) in the Spokane River. During the...

[Read more](#)

[www.spokaneriverkeeper.org](http://www.spokaneriverkeeper.org)

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## **New Interpretive Sign Above Hangman Creek Mouth**

Looking for a sign that Hangman Creek is polluted and that solutions are being worked on? Look no further! Thanks to teamwork between the Washington State Department of Ecology, Spokane Riverkeeper, the Spokane Tribe, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Spokane Falls Trout Unlimited and Redband Rally (with facilitation from the Friends Of the Centennial Trail), there is now an interpretive sign in Kendall Yards explaining the annual sediment pollution that is all too common in our river.

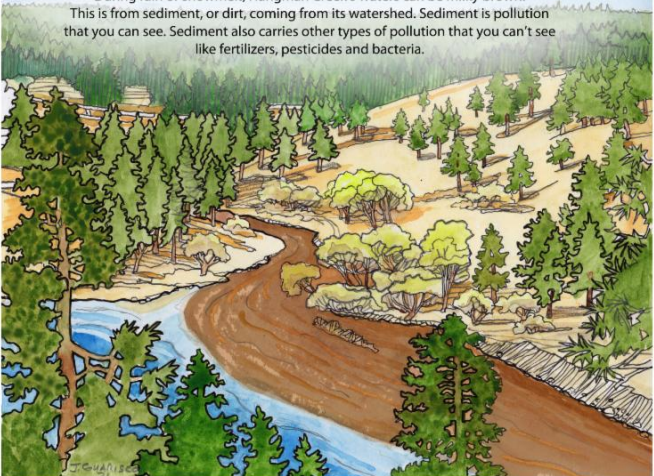





## Watershed Awareness: Hangman Creek


### Can you see the brown water?

There are many types of water pollution, most of which we can't see. During rain or snowmelt, Hangman Creek's waters can be milky brown. This is from sediment, or dirt, coming from its watershed. Sediment is pollution that you can see. Sediment also carries other types of pollution that you can't see like fertilizers, pesticides and bacteria.





A healthy, functioning stream has riparian, or streamside, vegetation. Riparian areas shade the water, keeping it cool, and provide woody debris, food, and shelter for fish and wildlife. A major goal of restoration is planting trees and shrubs that stabilize stream banks and intercept runoff and pollution from adjacent land use.




Hangman Creek, also known as Latah Creek, lies in the territories of the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Tribes. The creek once teemed with native salmon and trout. Both Tribes relied on the salmon that came and went each season. Tribal people harvested a thousand Chinook salmon a day at the mouth of the creek. Adult salmon made their way upstream more than 60 miles to spawn. Urbanization, dams, agriculture and deforestation have taken a toll on water quality, riparian and aquatic habitats, and the salmon are gone.

The watershed was once dominated by forests and prairies, but now it is mostly farmland. Land use changes by humans resulted in streambank erosion, pollution and increased flash flooding. At times, you can see the brown water from Hangman Creek flowing into the Spokane River from where you stand. These flows contain heavy sediment from erosion which can lead to algae blooms and other problems in the Spokane River and Lake Spokane.

Columbia Basin Redband Trout, a subspecies of Rainbow Trout, were once abundant in the Hangman Creek Watershed. Today, they thrive only in a few headwater streams.

Protecting and restoring the Hangman Creek watershed is important to the Upper Columbia Plateau Tribes, local, state and federal agencies, landowners, and conservation organizations. By improving water quality and habitat, the watershed will support fish, wildlife, and people for generations to come.



## A River Cleanup Record, over 25,000 pounds of litter!



### 2021 River Cleanup Summary - Spokane Riverkeeper

A record year for river clean ups on the Spokane River! The stats speak for themselves. \*Cleanups: 64 \* Locations: 28 \* Volunteers: 1030 \* Pounds of litter: 25,340 \* Miles of river cleaned: 115 \*# of groups: 43 Thank you to all who participated, ...



[Read more](#)

[www.spokaneriverkeeper.org](http://www.spokaneriverkeeper.org)

## Thank you to our river cleanup partners!



### Action Alert! Sign on to Spokane's Sustainability Plan



On October 25<sup>th</sup>, the Spokane City Council passed the [Sustainability Action Plan](#) 6 to 1! Multiple community volunteers and city staff committed over two years to create a plan that protects our natural resources and incorporates many essential actions for the Spokane River. Now it is time for the City Council to move this strategic plan into action by passing a strengthened Water Conservation Plan and a long overdue Drought Response Plan for 2022. This summer we witnessed the impacts of climate change with the severe drought that dropped average river flows in July to 33% of normal in comparison to the last 129 years. As a city, we need a unified front to reduce our impact on the river. Spokane Riverkeeper is asking for your support of a plan that includes 25% reduction in city pumping from the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer. We should not be competing with the river for cool aquifer water that is necessary for redband trout

and [future salmon reintroduction](#). We are also recommending community wide actions that reduce our water usage during drought and critical low flow periods in the summer. Please sign on to our [advocacy letter](#) asking the City Council to pass these measures crucial to sustaining our Spokane River. See the Sandifur Bridge Photo-point here:



It's Your River. We Protect It.

## Hot, So Hot! 2021 Water Temperature Report

Interested in what the record high air temperatures did to our water temperature? Read about it below.



### **2021 Water Temperature Report - Spokane Riverkeeper**

This report summarizes how a warming planet is affecting our river, its tributaries, and ecosystems. We discuss the policies intended to maintain healthy river temperatures, how these policies should be implemented, and how our community can make ...

[Read more](#)

[www.spokaneriverkeeper.org](http://www.spokaneriverkeeper.org)

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## Thank You Chastity Kolb, Super-intern!

The previous seven months we have been blessed to have Chastity Kolb in our office, working on our water temperature and sustainability responses for her graduate degree through Oregon State University. She has handled everything we have thrown at her including drought response planning with the City of Spokane, municipal water law, and field temperature studies. Chastity allowed us to amplify our programs here at Spokane Riverkeeper. She's currently finishing up her master's degree and looking for employment! Contact her at [clkolb81@gmail.com](mailto:clkolb81@gmail.com) if you'd like to talk jobs.



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PODCAST EPISODE

### Our Aquifer Is Life - The connection between our river, our drinking water and our aquifer.

The Spoken River Podcast

Oct 14 · 56 min 19 sec

## Don't Miss our Latest Podcast - Spoken River (Spotify and Apple)

Our ongoing Podcast is now available, and if you haven't listened yet, give it a try! Lots of interesting topics and perspectives that give voice to the Spokane River.

Find it [HERE](#)

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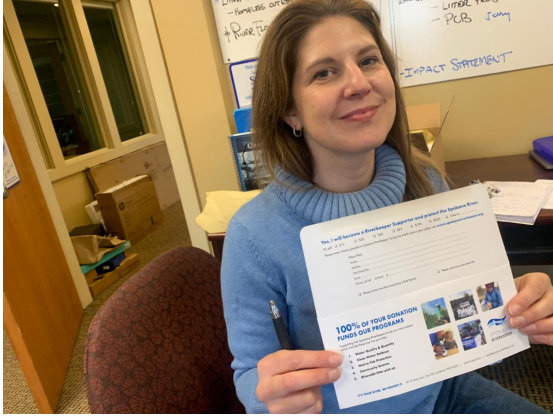
## Drips and Drops

- Our Spoken River fundraiser was a huge success, with films from Jeff Ferguson, Cutboard Studio, and hosted by Hamilton Studio. Watch it all [here](#). Thanks to all of you who contributed and to you all who came out and supported our work! See the video [HERE](#)
- Please comment on this historic opportunity! The EPA is planning to develop a new clean-up plan (called a TMDL) for the Spokane River! Tell them you love the idea because you love our Spokane River and the Little Spokane: For more information [HERE](#)
- We continue to [use the clean water act](#) to police those who pollute our waters.
- Check out this [fun video](#) that represents some of the wild things we find along the River when picking up litter



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Jerry White, Jr  
Executive Director  
Spokane Riverkeeper

Jule Schultz  
Program Lead  
Spokane Riverkeeper

Katie Thompson  
Managing Director  
Spokane Riverkeeper

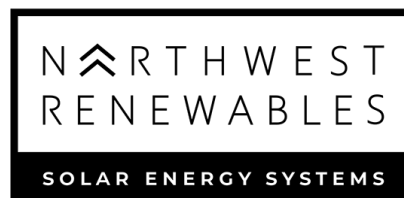


Thank you for supporting the effort to keep Spokane River and its tributaries clean for generations to come.

Your Spokane Riverkeeper Team,

Jerry White Jr.  
Jule Schultz  
Katie Thompson  
SRK Board

Thank you to our Sponsors



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Spokane Tribe  
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**JERRY WHITE, SR. AND  
LINDA MOULDER**  
CLEAN RIVER ACTIVIST



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**I'M A KEEPER!**

**FLEMING FAMILY**  
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**I'M A KEEPER!**

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**Please Support Your River - Donate  
Today!**

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