

Non-Native Northern Pike in Box Canyon Reservoir, Pend Oreille River, Washington

Spokane Public Meeting - February 15, 2012
Newport Public Meeting - February 16, 2012



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Kalispel Tribe Natural Resources Department



Meeting Outline

Meeting Purpose: Inform public on northern pike suppression plans for the Pend Oreille River, which are designed to control their number and minimize their impacts on native fish.

Presentation:

- 2011 Survey Results, Target Population Level, and Suppression Plan for Northern Pike

Question and Answer Poster Session:

- 5 stations detailing key components of northern pike management on the Pend Oreille River

Take Written Public Comment on Ways to Improve Pike Suppression Plan

Problem Statement

Recent WDFW and KNRD surveys have documented a rapid increase in the number of northern pike in the Pend Oreille River, and a reduction in forage fish such as native minnows, whitefish and suckers, as well as non-native sport fish, such as largemouth bass.

Left unchecked, northern pike could severely impact other fish, including native westslope cutthroat and bull trout, and undermine efforts to restore native fish populations in the river system. Native salmon, steelhead and other species could also be at risk if pike migrated downstream into the Columbia River.



Presentation Outline

- Management Goals and Why
- Engaging the Public
- 2011 Survey Results
- Target Population Level for Northern Pike
- Pike Suppression Plans for 2012

Management and Control of Northern Pike in Box Canyon Reservoir (Pend Oreille River), Washington

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WDFW and KNRD Management Goals

- Reduce numbers of northern pike in Box Canyon Reservoir.
- Minimize impact of northern pike to native species.
- Prevent/reduce spread of northern pike to other waters.



Why?

- The Northern pike population is expanding and cannot be controlled without active management.
- Negative impacts to other fish species, including both native and non-native fish.
- Likelihood of downstream movement into the Columbia River.
- Illegal introductions to other waters could result in severe negative impacts to other fisheries across the state.
- Tiger muskellunge already provide a well-managed and successful trophy esocid fishing opportunity in Washington, with little negative impact to other species.

Engaging the Public Since April 2011

Took Public Comment on Possible Control Measures

Angling

- Increase Angler Participation, Angler Education, Fishing Derbies or Tournaments, Reward Fishery

Possible Removal Techniques

- Netting, Trapping, Selective Area Rotenone Treatments

Discussed that required effort to control northern pike abundance would likely be a combination of angler catch and additional removal.

Engaging the Public Since April 2011

WDFW Northern Pike Webpage Development

- Problem Scope
- Data Summaries
- Public Presentations
- Angler Information

http://wdfw.wa.gov/ais/esox_lusius

2011 Surveys

Spring Pike Index Netting Survey – SPIN

- April 2011
- Measures Pike Relative Abundance Annually

Standardized Warmwater Surveys

- May 2011
- Monitors Changes in Fish Community Periodically

Pilot Removal Project

- April – June 2011
- Efficacy Evaluation of Gill Netting as a Mechanical Removal Technique
- Investigated Timing and Feasibility

2011 Survey Results

Spring Pike Index Netting Survey (SPIN) – (Poster Station 2)

- Northern Pike Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) \geq 2010 @ 13.2 NP/Net
- Northern Pike Population Remains Overabundant

Standardized Warmwater Survey – (Poster Station 3)

- Significant declines in Relative Abundance of most species since 2004

Gill-netting Pilot Study – (Poster Station 4)

- Conclusion: Likely an Efficient and Effective Suppression Technique
- Gill netting has been successfully employed as a pike suppression technique in other western states

Where we are Today

2012 and Beyond

Target Population Level

(Poster Station 5)

Northern Pike Management Goals

- Meet the native species conservation goals for Box Canyon Reservoir
- Stop the spread of northern pike in Washington

87% Reduction in the Number of Northern Pike in BCR

Reduction and Control Plan

(Poster Station 5)

Three Pronged Approach

Maximize Angler Exploitation

1. Sport Harvest
2. Fishing Derbies

Additional Control

3. Gill Netting

Poster Stations

1. Creel Survey
2. Standardized Warmwater Surveys
3. Spring Pike Index Netting Surveys
4. Pilot Removal Study
5. Target Population Level and Control Plan