

Public Meetings on Northern Pike in Box Canyon and the Pend Oreille River

In response to interest by the general public for information and an opportunity to comment on control options for the pike population in Box Canyon Reservoir and the Pend Oreille River, two public meetings were held in April, 2011 (the 19th and 20th in Newport and Spokane, respectively). They were facilitated by staff from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Kalispel Tribe Natural Resource Department (KNRD). A total of 46 members of the public attended the Newport meeting, with a comparable number at the Spokane meeting. Similar questions and comments were heard at both meetings and eight email comments were received by WDFW after the meetings. A summary of the comments/questions received include:

- 1) Increase outreach efforts promoting and explaining why anglers should harvest more northern pike. Many anglers currently practice only catch-and-release angling;
 - 2) To help promote more sport harvest of pike, provide more education / information on fishing techniques, gear tips, cleaning and filleting instructions, recipes and cooking tips. Additional angling information should include locations on Box Canyon Reservoir for both boat and shore anglers, with maps and access sites;
 - 3) Provide more information on WDFW / KNRD biological surveys and provide summaries of information collected. There is support for a dedicated web page where constituents can access more information;
 - 4) There was both support for and against the use a reward fishery to promote removal of pike;
 - 5) Concerns were voiced about the total elimination of northern pike, which would result in the loss of fishing opportunity. WDFW staff distinguished between the management goal of effective control and total elimination or eradication, which is a practical impossibility ;
 - 6) There was a desire by several attendees to find a balance between necessary control measures and maintenance of a northern pike fishing opportunity. The local economic benefit of the pike fishery was also highlighted.
 - 7) There were some questions directed at what, if anything, Idaho was doing to address pike control within the Pend Oreille system in Idaho. Currently Idaho Fish and Game is not actively pursuing pike control measures;
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Disposition of pike collected during April – June, 2011, via Spring Pike Index Netting (SPIN) and Pilot Removal Project

Approximately 900 northern pike were utilized for human consumption. The majority of which (600+) were donated to the local Pend Oreille County food bank. A couple hundred fish were distributed locally to Kalispel Tribal members, sampling crews, and other locals interested in trying northern pike (outreach / education component). Northern pike not fit for human consumption were disposed of out of public sight, on private Kalispel Indian Reservation property, well away from any public access.