



For immediate release

Contact: Phil Fenner, 360-399-6331; philf@northcascades.org

Washington conservationists sue Trump administration, aiming to block plans to build road in the middle of federally-protected Stehekin River

'This ill-conceived, destructive boondoggle is delaying reasonable alternative plans that will protect homes and provide much-needed access sooner'

The [North Cascades Conservation Council](#) (NCCC) on Tuesday sued the National Park Service and the Trump administration, seeking to protect the Stehekin River in the North Cascades National Park Service Complex from federal plans that would permanently damage the river, destroy habitat and aquatic life, and put downstream homeowners at risk.

[The legal complaint, filed in the Federal District Court for the Western District of Washington, can be read here.](#) It seeks to get the court to order the Trump administration to obey the law and rescind its river-damaging plans.

Two weeks ago the National Park Service (NPS), a part of the US Department of Interior, announced it had issued a permit to Chelan County to build a road in the middle of the Stehekin River. The Park Service said construction crews will use sheet-piling, artificial barriers, and dredging to rechannel the river and build a 350-foot part of Company Creek Road that was washed out in last December's floods. The NPS plans to have this work done in the middle of Stehekin's fall Kokanee Salmon spawning season, at a cost of about \$1.5 million in state and federal dollars.

In advancing its road-in-the-river plans, the NPS rejected appeals from Stehekin property owners and others to rebuild the road on land adjacent to the planned construction site in an existing makeshift roadbed.

The entire Stehekin River lies within federally protected land - the North Cascades National Park Service Complex. As the lawsuit notes, the federal government is mandated by law "to conserve

the scenery, natural and historic objects, and wildlife . . . in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

John J. Reynolds, who served as Superintendent of the North Cascades National Park Service Complex from 1984 to 1988 and later as Deputy Director of the National Park Service from 1993 to 1996, stated: “During my time as superintendent, we worked hard to protect the Stehekin River because its natural processes are the heart of the valley. Rebuilding a road in its active channel risks exactly the kind of harm the National Park Service is supposed to prevent. I urge the Park Service to step back, follow its own policies, and choose an approach that keeps the river—and the valley it shapes—intact for future generations.”

“By proposing this destructive road-in-the-river plan, the federal government is failing in its mission to protect our public lands,” said NCCC President Phil Fenner. “It’s just another example of the Trump administration’s complete disregard for our public welfare and environmental protection.”

Fenner noted that NCCC includes members whose Stehekin homes were rendered inaccessible by last December’s floods. “Our members and many other Stehekin property owners want regular access to their homes, but they do not want this destructive road-in-the-river,” Fenner said.

Fenner continued: “The NCCC supports rebuilding Company Creek Road so that all residents within the Stehekin Valley are safe and have access to their homes. For weeks after last December’s flooding - which harmed residents, damaged homes, and even endangered the lives of some - the National Park Service shamefully did nothing to address the issue. They were silent. Now, fully nine months later, the federal government wants to rush in and build a road in the river that will cause irreparable harm to its ecosystem and the valley. Moreover, it will further endanger downstream residents who will be at heightened risk of future flooding because of the scale of dredging and re-channeling that the NPS proposes to do.”

Fenner reiterated the NCCC’s call for the NPS to rescind its road-in-the-river plans, and instead complete the road in the existing land-side roadbed. “This ill-conceived, destructive boondoggle is delaying reasonable alternative plans that will protect homes and provide much-needed access sooner,” Fenner said.

He noted that there already is a makeshift road on land connecting the two disjointed sections of Company Creek Road, and fortifying this makeshift road can provide access and protection to all Stehekin homeowners. “The land-side option is sensible, less expensive than what the NPS is proposing, and will not damage the river,” he noted.

The NCCC lawsuit names as defendants the current North Cascades National Park Superintendent, the head of the National Park Service, and the Trump-appointed Secretary of the Interior Department, Doug Burgum. NCCC is represented by the firm of Bricklin and Newman, in Seattle, WA.



PROPOSED CONDITIONS
SCALE: 1" = 50'

LEGEND:

- APPROXIMATE AREA OF PROPOSED DEWATERING (Yellow hatched)
- AREA OF PROPOSED ROCK REVETMENT (Blue hatched)
- PLACED FILL OF EXCAVATED STREAMBED MATERIAL (Pink grid)
- PROPOSED EXCAVATION (Red hatched)

NOTES:

- THE CONTRACTOR SHALL PERFORM CHANNEL EXCAVATION WITHIN THE MAINSTEM TO RESTORE THE SAME COVERAGE AREA THAT STEHEN KIVER HAS PRIOR TO ROADWAY CONSTRUCTION.
- EXCAVATED MATERIALS SHALL BE PLACED AND CONTOURED ON THE GRAVEL BAR WITHIN THE STEHEN KIVER, AS DIRECTED BY THE CONTRACTING AGENCY OR ENGINEER.
- THE WORK AREA WILL BE ISOLATED TO THE EXTENT NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE ROADWORK. FINAL ISOLATION MEASURES ARE TO BE DETERMINED BY THE CONTRACTOR, AND APPROVED BY THE CONTRACTING AGENCY.
- THE RECOMMENDED CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCE IS AS FOLLOWS:
STEP 1. EXCAVATE BYPASS CHANNEL.
STEP 2. INSTALL SHEET PILE TO TEMPORARILY DIVERT STEHEN KIVER THROUGH THE BYPASS CHANNEL.
STEP 3. CONSTRUCT ROAD PRESH AND REVENTMENT, AND EXCAVATE MAINSTEM GRAVEL BAR.
STEP 4. REMOVE SHEET PILE.
STEP 5. RESTORE ROCK BARS TO ORIGINAL CONDITION, SEE SHEET 6.

ADDITIONAL DEWATERING / BYPASS IMPACTS FURTHER DOWNSTREAM

EXISTING SIDE CHANNEL WITH MANY REDDS AND FISH HOLDING

SPAWNING AND HOLDING PRESENT MAIN CHANNEL

SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT HOLDING AND SPAWING IN THIS ENTIRE AREA

HOW WILL BYPASS CHANNEL AFFECT UPSTREAM MIGRATION WITH FLOW AND NOISE/VIBRATION

SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT HOLDING AND SPAWING IN THIS ENTIRE AREA

TEMPORARY STREAM BYPASS, SEE NOTE 1

PROPOSED CONDITIONS PROFILE (SHEET 5)

SIDECAST EXCAVATED MATERIAL, SEE NOTE 2

EXISTING ROAD

PROPOSED ROAD ALIGNMENT

EXTENT OF PROPOSED ROCK REVETMENT

EXTENT OF PROPOSED NATIVE MATERIAL

JAMES & IRVINE COURTNEY

REED COURTNEY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PROPOSED ROADWAY

PROPOSED NATIVE MATERIAL

PROPOSED ROCK REVETMENT

PROPOSED EXCAVATION

PLACED FILL OF EXCAVATED STREAMBED MATERIAL

APPROXIMATE AREA OF PROPOSED DEWATERING

AREA OF PROPOSED ROCK REVETMENT

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