

2016 CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS

PAKOOTAS for US REPRESENTATIVE,
WASHINGTON STATE'S 5TH DISTRICT

MUMM for SPOKANE COUNTY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER ENDORSES INCUMBENTS BILLIG, ORMSBY, AND RICCELLI



Joseph Pakootas, candidate for the 5th District US House seat, and Candace Mumm, candidate for the Spokane County Commission, have received the enthusiastic endorsement of the Sierra Club in the current election cycle.

Pakootas is again challenging conservative incumbent Cathy McMorris Rodgers, having received nearly 40% of the vote in his 2014 effort. Joe

is a champion of the environment and sustainable environmental action. In 2006, Pakootas, as chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation, initiated a landmark lawsuit against Teck Cominco that is forcing the Superfund cleanup of Lake Roosevelt and the Columbia River after decades of Teck's dumping of millions of tons of heavy metal contaminants.

As a tribal leader, Joe worked to ensure sustainable growth in development projects. As chairman of the tribal consortium Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT), he instituted an Integrated Resource Management Plan used by all tribal departments to evaluate the full impact, including environmental impact, of proposed projects and activities. This is now a model used by tribes across the United States.

While CEO of the Colville Confederated Tribes, Pakootas implemented sustainable forest management practices and he has pledged himself to use such evaluative tools and practices in considering all infrastructure and public works projects proposed in Congress. He pledges to hold energy companies accountable for the full cost of fossil fuel use, and to promote sustainable alternative energy initiatives.

Candace Mumm is a progressive candidate whose previous experience includes president of Spokane's Plan Commission and Spokane City Council member. She is committed to protecting the water quality and adequate flow of the Spokane River, and has been a strong advocate for updating the city's Water System Plan so that it can be a true planning document for water conservation and for restricting the retail water service area.

Mumm says growth management, i.e. smart growth and infill rather than sprawl, would be a top priority for her as a county commissioner.

She thinks such growth management should be connected to water and sewer capital planning so as to protect open spaces and conserve water resources. She is a strong supporter of public transit planning in order to link people to housing, their workplace, and healthcare services. She also supports the move to electric buses for the city's public transit. As a city council member she has worked to find ways to prohibit oil and coal shipment by rail through downtown Spokane or near hospitals, schools, or the Spokane River.

Third district state legislature candidates Andy Billig, Marcus Riccelli, and Timm Ormsby were endorsed for reelection by the Washington Chapter of Sierra Club on the basis of the clear progressive and strong positive environmental records they have established during their time in the Washington legislature.

These are the Sierra Club's kind of candidates, and the club encourages your vote and your full and enthusiastic support. Contact their campaigns for volunteer opportunities:
Joe Pakootas - <http://www.pakootasforcongress.com/>
Candace Mumm - <http://www.candacemumm.com/>



CLOSING THE WATER FRONTIER: RIVER CURRENTS

By Tom Soeldner & John Osborn

For thousands of years tribes and their ancestors have lived and flourished with rivers and with the life that depends on clean, flowing water. Then in 200 years forces of “Manifest Destiny” converged on the Spokane region with wrenching impacts to rivers. Now, step by step, we are closing the water frontier, redefining modern societal relationships with these rivers, and each other.

Three rivers are the focus of our advocacy: (1) restoring the Spokane River, (2) removing the four lower Snake River dams, and (3) modernizing the Columbia River Treaty. Here are updates.

H2KNOW PROJECT - HELP SAVE THE SPOKANE RIVER: STOP WASTING WATER

With water levels dropping below 700 cubic feet per second (cfs), we again called on our neighbors and Spokane City water managers to turn down spigots, and turn off sprinklers. With the Center for Environmental Law and Policy (CELP), we established a community-based water conservation project (<http://www.celp.org/h2know/>) to help the region recognize the intimate relationship between the Aquifer and Spokane River, and the need to conserve water to help protect the Spokane River.

“Think about our river and aquifer as one,” said John Roskelley, former Spokane County Commissioner with the statewide Center for Environmental Law & Policy. “The water we use from the aquifer is water lost to the river for fish and wildlife habitat. Remember water CPR: conserve, protect, reuse. Water is our most important resource—let’s not waste it.”

Each of us can take five actions that will conserve water and help the Spokane River:

5 actions to conserve water and help the Spokane River:

- 1 REDUCE OUTDOOR WATERING (ESPECIALLY STOP OVER-WATERING LAWN GRASS)
- 2 REPLACE LAWN WITH LOW-WATER PLANTS
- 3 FIX BROKEN OR CLOGGED PIPES AND SPRINKLER HEADS
- 4 FIX LEAKS IN ALL PLUMBING FIXTURES
- 5 INSTALL WATER-EFFICIENT DEVICES (SUCH AS LOW FLOW TOILETS AND SHOWER HEADS)

“Our water bills don’t begin to reflect the true cost of water,” said Tom Soeldner who co-chairs our local Upper Columbia River Group. “The real water bill for this region is being paid for by the fish, wildlife, and people whose jobs depend on the Spokane River.”

The Inland Northwest is notable for its hot, dry summers. Water used by 600,000 people in the Spokane-Coeur d’Alene region comes from the Spokane-Rathdrum Aquifer, which also supplies the Spokane River. Large municipal wells close to the River,

such as the City of Spokane’s Well Electric facility, can have an immediate depleting impact on river flows.

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“FREE THE SNAKE” FROM DINOSAUR DAMS: BOATERS LAUNCH FLOTILLA TO RESTORE SALMON

On September 17th, hundreds of boaters rallied on the Snake River to call for the removal of four dinosaur dams on the lower Snake River. Featuring massive floating banners, Free the Snake Flotilla participants highlighted the single best action federal agencies can take to restore dwindling wild salmon populations in the Columbia and Snake rivers: breach the four lower Snake River dams. This would boost the regional economy and re-open a pathway to more than 5,000 miles of high quality habitat for endangered wild salmon and steelhead.

Federally endangered salmon and steelhead have perished by the thousands in recent years due to inhospitable conditions created by four dams on the lower Snake River that together supply only about three percent of regional electricity. The dams are aging, costly to maintain, and no longer necessary in a region that’s experiencing an energy surplus and an uptick in wind and solar-powered generation.

In coming months, federal agencies will invite the public to weigh in on a scoping process initiated after a federal judge ruled that dam operators’ previous attempts to protect salmon were ineffective, inadequate, and unrealistic considering mounting climate impacts. The Free the Snake Flotilla (<http://www.freethesnake.com/>) has launched a campaign to illustrate the best path forward.

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COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY: ON TO REVELSTOKE, B.C.

One year after Pope Francis spoke to Congress, we continue the regional dialogue about ethical dimensions of the human relationship with water. This work is set in the context of modernizing the Columbia River Treaty. The treaty, ratified in 1964, is the legal instrument by which the United States and Canada jointly exploit the Columbia River for hydropower generation and flood-risk management. Led by tribes and First Nations, an international effort is underway to modernizing the treaty, including adding “Ecosystem Function” as a third, co-equal primary treaty purpose.

Modeled on South Africa’s “*Truth and Reconciliation*” public meetings, the “*One River, Ethics Matter*” conference series explores the moral dimensions and impacts

River Pastoral Letter and tools used by hospital ethics committees to structure the discussion.

Gonzaga University hosted the first conference in Spokane in May 2014, focusing on Grand Coulee Dam’s impacts on the Upper Columbia River and the opportunity to provide salmon passage at the dam. The Gonzaga conference also issued the *Declaration on Ethics & Modernizing the Columbia River Treaty*.

In October of 2015, the University of Portland hosted the second “*One River, Ethics Matter*” conference focused on flood risk management, climate change, justice, and stewardship.

In March of 2016, Boise State University hosted the third conference focused on the Hells Canyon Complex of dams and the opportunity to restore salmon to the Upper Snake River.

On May 13, 2017, Revelstoke, B.C. will host the fourth conference focusing on the “Treaty dams” in British Columbia, the failure to consult and listen, and the devastation.

International water conflicts are a growing global risk in the face of climate change. “*One River, Ethics Matter*” offers a water ethic as foundation for modernizing the Columbia River Treaty.

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of the dam-building era with a focus on tribes, First Nations, salmon and the river. The conference series uses the *Columbia*

OUR FORESTS *continued from back page*

Forest Service to scientific concerns raised by the public—who are, after all, the owners of the Colville National Forest. With the A-to-Z process, public comments were foreclosed before all studies were even completed.

Mill Creek supports few native trout due to combined impacts from past logging, road erosion, and livestock grazing along streams—the kind of impacts that would be studied in an EIS. Shockingly, when Vaagen’s consultants surveyed over 6 miles of streams with over 600 natural pools, they found only 29 fish. Yet the concerns over further degradation from more sediment

were dismissed by noting that conditions were even worse elsewhere in the Forest!

Other species at risk from the A-to-Z project are carnivores such as wolverine, fisher, Canada lynx and even grizzly bears, all rare or extirpated from most of the Forest. These are not trifling concerns, which is why we have laws protecting fish and wildlife in our national forests. The A-to-Z plan by the collaborative group has no explicit goal for recovering species, opting instead for perpetual logging couched as “restoration.”

Jeff Juel is National Forest Chair of the Upper Columbia River Group of the Sierra Club, as well as a member of the Alliance for the Wild Rockies, which is challenging the Mill Creek A-to-Z timber sale.

UPPER COLUMBIA RIVER GROUP

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Upper Columbia
River Group

we need TECH SUPPORT

The UCR Group is looking for someone to help us keep our website up-to-date and attractive. We need a person (or persons) who loves the natural world, is committed to Sierra Club’s mission, and is proficient in web-based technology (or is eager and willing to learn). We already have a great webmaster who is ready to help train and colleagues to work with in gathering content. We just need someone to keep on top of the news and bring it to our members via the web in a winsome way. Is that you?

Contact Tom Soeldner/
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PRIVATIZING OUR FORESTS

By Jeff Juel

The political game of privatizing our national forests is now in full swing. Long-time Forest Service Supervisor Gloria Flora, now the Executive Director of the collaborative Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (NEWFC), was recently quoted on the front page of the Colville Statesman-Examiner, belittling the concerns raised in litigation over the controversial A-to-Z logging project in the Colville National Forest. The U.S. District Court of Eastern Washington will decide if logging stops at least temporarily while the lawsuit proceeds.

NEWFC came up with the novel idea of turning a large area of our National Forest over to a private contractor for “restoration.” Vaagen Brothers Lumber—a NEWFC member—subsequently obtained exclusive rights to log the Mill Creek watershed on the Colville National Forest for a decade. Vaagen then paid private consultants to conduct the environmental specialist analysis normally done by Forest Service specialists. And the price paid for the public’s trees was determined behind closed doors by Vaagen and the Forest Supervisor, as opposed to the normal competitive bidding process.

Unsurprisingly, the industry-funded studies concluded 8000+ logging trucks removing trees from thousands of acres of forest over dozens of miles of poorly maintained roads would have no significant effect on fish and wildlife. Therefore, no Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for a decade’s worth of industrial logging.

The flawed premise here, also championed by Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, is that local collaboration can supplant federal laws mandating a public process that flows from preparation of an EIS. Our laws provide the avenue for citizens all over the country—not just local collaborators—to influence national forest management. An EIS requires written responses by the

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UPPER COLUMBIA RIVER GROUP

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OUTINGS



[MEETUP.COM/EXPLORING-THE-INLAND-NORTHWEST-WITH-SIERRA-CLUB/](https://www.meetup.com/Exploring-the-Inland-Northwest-with-Sierra-Club/)

Most of our summer outings were spent on Mt. Spokane. The cooler mountain weather makes it the perfect place to hike when the city is 90+ degrees. In past years we would spend time at the cross country area picking Huckleberries. However, that wasn’t really an option this year with the road and trail closures due to the summer road construction on the mountain. Hopefully, by the time you read this, construction will be close to finished and the road and trails reopened.

This Fall we will continue to offer hikes as long as the weather holds up. We’re planning to go back up to Mt. Spokane in addition to the fall favorites of Iller Creek and Liberty Lake. Make sure you sign up on our Meetup site “*Exploring the Inland Northwest with the Sierra Club*” (<https://www.meetup.com/Exploring-the-Inland-Northwest-with-Sierra-Club/>) so that you may receive a notification every time we schedule an outing.

And as always Happy Trails! *By Carolyn Leon*