

From: [Bonnie Lupton](#)
To: [Navigable Waterways](#)
Subject: Re: Protect the Spokane River — Opposition to Waterstone Encroachment #L95S6181
Date: Monday, August 18, 2025 1:46:06 AM

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I'm wishing you great success..
I reworked my letter you may like this version better.

Idaho Department of Lands
Navigable Waters Division

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to oppose the Estates at Waterstone Encroachment Application (#L95S6181) on the Spokane River near Post Falls.

This is not merely another permit—it is a decision about whether a living river will remain the inheritance of the people or be carved away for private gain.

The Spokane River is our heartline. At Q'emiln Park, families launch their boats. Children wade into the shallows with laughter on their lips. Anglers cast lines where the light bends over the water. Kayakers press forward against its current. From the Centennial Trail to Avista's recreation sites, it is shared ground, binding neighbor to neighbor, generation to generation.

For me, it is more than community—it is blood and memory. This summer my daughter and granddaughter traveled across an ocean to see me. Each morning my daughter swam two miles along the shoreline, calling it “wild swimming.” She said she had never known anything like it. That is what makes this river holy in its way—it is still wild, still real, still ours.

Each new dock is not just “one more.” It is another cut into something already fragile. It multiplies congestion, throws greater wakes against the shore, eats away at the banks, threatens fish and fowl, and endangers the safety of those who trust the river to hold them. The costs do not fall on the developers. They fall on the people—and on the river itself.

Idaho’s law could not be clearer. Under the Public Trust Doctrine, the State holds the beds and banks of its navigable waters, including the Spokane River, in trust for all its citizens. The courts of this state have said it again and again: no private encroachment can unreasonably interfere with the public’s rights to navigate, to fish, to recreate, and to find renewal in the beauty of the waters. This is not a courtesy. It is a legal and moral duty. To betray it is to betray the people.

Accordingly, I support:

- A pause on new encroachment permits until the river’s true carrying capacity is known.
- Stronger marine patrols to safeguard lives as traffic grows.
- Independent studies on erosion, habitat, and long-term impacts.
- Decisions that place public trust above private profit.
- A public hearing so that the voices of those who live here are heard before damage cannot be undone.

This river is not a commodity. It is a trust, held in your hands on behalf of us all. When you decide its future, you are not weighing paperwork—you are determining whether the Spokane River will remain a living gift or be diminished into memory.

I ask you: pause. Protect this river. Honor the law, the trust, and the generations yet to come who deserve to know its strength, its wildness, its

grace.

Respectfully,

Bonnie J. Lupton

212 E 1st Ave, Apt 11

Post Falls, ID 83854-7157

bonniejlupton@me.com

On Aug 17, 2025, at 11:49 PM, Bonnie Lupton <bonniejlupton@me.com> wrote:

You're welcome to use my letter. I'm off to bed, but why don't we connect tomorrow and we'll try to set up a time to meet good night Bonnie.

On Aug 17, 2025, at 11:42 PM, Bonnie Lupton
<bonniejlupton@me.com> wrote:

Begin forwarded message:

From: Bonnie Lupton <bonniejlupton@me.com>
Date: August 17, 2025 at 9:33:09 PM PDT
To: navigablewaters@idl.idaho.gov
**Subject: Protect the Spokane River — Opposition to
Waterstone Encroachment #L95S6181**

Subject: Please Protect the Spokane River —
Opposition to Waterstone
Encroachment #L95S6181

To: navigablewaters@idl.idaho.gov

Idaho Department of Lands
Navigable Waters Division

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to oppose the Estates at Waterstone Encroachment Application (#L95S6181) on the Spokane River near Post Falls.

This is more than another permit on paper. This is about whether our leaders are willing to protect a public river for the many—or open it up piece by piece for the profit of a few.

In Post Falls, the Spokane River is our heartline. Families launch boats at Q'emiln Park, children wade into the shallows, kayakers and anglers share the same current. Access points like the Centennial Trail and Avista's recreation sites connect us all to the

water. It is shared space, and it binds our community together.

For me, this river is also personal. This summer my daughter and granddaughter traveled all the way from the UK to visit me. My daughter spent her mornings swimming nearly two miles along the shoreline. She called it “wild swimming,” and she said she’d never experienced anything like it. That’s what makes this river so special—it’s still wild, still real, still ours. Please don’t take that away from us.

Every new dock and expansion doesn’t just add “one more.” It multiplies risk: more congestion, more wakes, more erosion, more stress on habitat and safety. That burden doesn’t fall on the developers—it falls on the people, and on the river itself.

I urge you to pause and ask: Whose interest is really being served?

The builders will move on once they’ve cashed their checks. But the citizens of Idaho will live with the consequences

forever.

Accordingly, I support:

- A pause on new encroachment permits until the river's true carrying capacity is studied.
- Stronger marine patrols to protect safety as boat traffic grows.
- Independent studies on shoreline erosion, habitat health, and long-term impacts.
- Decisions that put people over profit, because public waters belong to the public.
- A public hearing so local voices are heard before irreversible damage is done.

This river is not simply a resource—it is a trust. And when you sit in judgment over its future, you are not just granting a permit. You are shaping what this community, and future generations, will inherit.

I urge you: please protect the Spokane River. Protect it for the citizens who live here now, and for those not yet born who deserve to know it as more than a story.

Respectfully,

Bonnie J. Lupton

212 E 1st Ave, Apt 11

Post Falls, ID 83854-7157

bonniejlupton@me.com

From: Eric Hirst
To: [Navigable Waterways](#)
Subject: The Estates at Waterstone, #L95S6181
Date: Monday, August 18, 2025 8:48:31 AM

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Please consider the amount of additional traffic these premits would cause on an already very busy river. On top of the 414 proposal to add 200+ boats and the lack of any regular patrolling for excessive wake, excessive speed and just plain inattentive driving. There are very definite safety considerations on this river already and adding more boats will only make it worse. Many of us that live on or near the river are quite concerned and don't want to see a tragic accident happen. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

From: Erica Sheppard
To: [Navigable Waterways](#)
Subject: Concerns Regarding Permit for Additional Boat Slips on the Spokane River: Greensferry Rd (Permit # TBD)
Date: Wednesday, August 13, 2025 12:54:52 PM

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August 13, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed permit for additional boat slips being added off of Greensferry Road on the Spokane River (permit number TBD). As a lifelong Idaho resident and current resident on the Spokane River, I have witnessed significant changes in the river's usage and the increasing strain on both its environment and safety.

Safety:

The Spokane River is already experiencing congestion, and the addition of new boat slips will worsen safety risks. The understaffed Marine Deputy Department has limited capacity to enforce safety regulations, and I have observed many violations, including excessive speed, lack of life jackets, and improper towing practices. More boats will increase the likelihood of accidents and injuries.

Environmental Impact:

The river's shoreline is already suffering from erosion, exacerbated by wake sizes averaging 3-4 feet. This is damaging the riverbed and natural habitats of animals and fish. Additionally, the historical mining activities near Coeur d'Alene Lake may have left harmful chemicals in the riverbed, which could be stirred up by larger wakes, posing health risks to both humans and wildlife.

Property Damage:

Many riverfront property owners, including my family, have already faced significant costs due to shoreline erosion caused by increasing wake sizes. Adding more boat slips will only exacerbate this issue.

Before approving the permit, I urge the Department of Lands to conduct studies on the river's capacity, environmental health, and the impact of boat wakes. This data is essential to ensure that the river can safely accommodate additional boat traffic without further harm to the community and environment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Erica Sheppard
Spokane River Resident

From: [Katelyn Scott](#)
To: [Navigable Waterways](#)
Subject: Spokane River Marina Permits
Date: Thursday, August 14, 2025 9:57:41 AM
Attachments: [Spokane Riverkeeper Comments re Marinas.pdf](#)

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Greetings:

On behalf of Spokane Riverkeeper, please find the attached written comments on the permits for Atlas/River's Edge (Permit #L95S6163A) and Greensferry. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,



Katelyn Scott
Water Protector
(she/her/hers)
Spokane Riverkeeper
katy@spokaneriverkeeper.org
509.464.7614 - office
509.638.5331 - mobile
spokaneriverkeeper.org



August 14, 2025

VIA EMAIL: navigablewaterways@idl.idaho.gov

Dear Idaho Department of Lands:

On behalf of Spokane Riverkeeper, I submit the following written comments on the permits for Atlas/River's Edge (Permit #L95S6163A) and Greensferry. Spokane Riverkeeper is a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the health of the Spokane River watershed. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and urge the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) to deny these permits.

We oppose the proposed addition of over 223 boat slips to the Spokane River. Such a large expansion raises serious concerns about water quality, shoreline stability, public safety, and the overall ecological health of the river. Spokane Riverkeeper supports responsible, well-managed boating and recognizes that the river is a valued place for recreation of all kinds. Our concern is not with boating as an activity, but with the scale of this proposed expansion and the cumulative impact it would add to an already stressed river system. In a waterway with known heavy metals contamination and limited channel width, large increases in boat traffic—especially from high-wake vessels—pose a clear threat to water quality, habitat stability, and safe public use.

The Spokane River's contamination legacy and legal protections

The Spokane River is a vital social and cultural asset for the entire region. The river supports a wide variety of uses including diverse recreation, fisheries, and wildlife habitat. It also carries a legacy of heavy metals contamination—arsenic, cadmium, lead, and zinc, originating from mining in the Coeur d'Alene Basin. While much of this contamination settled at the bottom of Lake Coeur d'Alene, fine metal-laden particles continue to flow downstream into the Spokane River.

These metals accumulate in sediments along the riverbed, shorelines, and even in high-water marks above summer levels. The primary source of dissolved metals remains the upper Coeur d'Alene Basin (US EPA 2015). The Spokane River in this section is on the EPA's 303(d) impaired waters list for lead and zinc, meaning it already fails to meet water quality standards required under the Clean Water Act to protect human health and aquatic life. Idaho's Department of Environmental Quality has recognized this impairment since 1994.



The Spokane River Metals Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)¹ relies on these metals staying settled and undisturbed in the sediments. Disturbance of contaminated sediments undermines this strategy and risks violating water quality protections.

How increased boat traffic worsens contamination

Increased boat traffic—especially from large wake boats—disturbs contaminated sediments, releasing lead, arsenic, cadmium, and zinc into the water. Once re-suspended, these toxic metals travel downstream, threatening fish, wildlife, and the health of communities that rely on the Spokane River for drinking water, fishing, and recreation. This single effect alone risks undoing decades of water quality progress and directly conflicts with state and federal Clean Water Act obligations.

Studies on similar waterways show that wake boats can resuspend sediments in waters as deep as 26 feet, and can significantly increase the size of waves reaching the shoreline.² Wake boats in surf mode are particularly egregious, and can make waves that are about twice as tall as waves from ski boats at the same distance from shore. Because wave energy increases faster than height, those waves actually carry about four times more energy. To get a wake boat's surf-mode wave down to the same size and energy as a ski boat's wave at 100 feet, you'd have to be more than 500 feet from shore. This matches what other studies have found.

On the Spokane River, these large, high-energy waves have little space to dissipate before hitting the shore. This concentrated energy accelerates shoreline erosion, washing away soil and vegetation that stabilize the banks and protect habitat. In such confined channels, waves can also rebound off opposite banks, amplifying their destructive power. In the Spokane River, where both the shoreline and riverbed are contaminated with heavy metals from historic mining, this erosion and disturbance carry additional risks.

Erosion of these soils to surface waters is an ongoing source of metals-contaminated sediment to surface water (Stratus 2000). Downstream beach sites are at risk of continued contamination from the resuspension of sediment caused by wake boats. In 2022 and 2018 monitoring, Washington's Department of Ecology found ongoing metals deposition and increased concentrations of arsenic, lead, cadmium, and zinc at downstream recreational sites, with the

¹ Spokane River Metals TMDL: Lead and Zinc, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (2022) <https://www2.deq.idaho.gov/admin/LEIA/api/document/download/16540>

² Riesgraf, Andrew; Marr, Jeffrey; Herb, William; Lueker, Matthew; Kozarek, Jessica. A Field Study of Recreational Powerboat Hydrodynamics and their Impacts on the Water Column and Lakebed. (2025). Retrieved from the University Digital Conservancy, <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/274184>; Terra Vigilis Environmental Services Group. (2022). Water quality and wave impact study: phase 2 report. https://www.safewakes.org/_files/ugd/2936a3_e64f2cd98fcb49c9b060fa11a959fbd0.pdf; Terra Vigilis Environmental Services Group. (2024). Lake Waramaug Shallow Water Environment Wave Impact Study, Final Report.



highest amounts found near the Washington-Idaho border³. This contamination is likely from upstream sources, including increased erosion and stir from wake boat traffic in the upper river.

Impacts to Safety, Recreation, and Habitat

The proposed expansion of marina boat slips on the Spokane River threatens to exacerbate water quality degradation, shoreline erosion, public safety risks, and the loss of diverse recreational opportunities. The re-suspension of contaminated sediments has the potential to impact designated uses on the entire upper river. It not only degrades water quality locally but also impacts downstream users and ecosystems as contaminants are carried further along the river. These pollutants threaten aquatic life and pose ongoing risks to human health, including those who rely on the river for drinking water, fishing, and recreation.

Aquatic Health Impacts: Water quality must be maintained to protect the most sensitive beneficial use and in this case aquatic life is the most sensitive use. Metals are toxic to aquatic life, and extremely low levels of some metals can adversely affect some fish species, as well as their food sources. A study conducted by Vinodhini and Narayanan, focused on the effects heavy metals have on marine life, more specifically on the effects of heavy metal bioaccumulation in fish. The study indicated, increased exposure to heavy metals causes serious and fatal health effects in fish. Ultimately, heavy metals cause a plethora of problems to the river ecosystem due to the bioaccumulation of heavy metals in organism. Not only would heavy metals effect fish, but the whole ecosystem including humans would be negatively affected.

Drinking Water Risks: The river is a major contributor to the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer that is a sole source of potable water for hundreds of thousands of people. Increased releases of metals from sediments in the River could have untold impacts on aquifer groundwater quality. Proper management of these sediments to prevent increased releases of metals is necessary to control for the potential for metals contamination of the aquifer and ensure protection of the downstream in the River by preventing the release of hazardous substances into surface waters. This is an important issue for the downstream stakeholders.

Recreational Impacts: Increased turbidity and contamination also diminish the quality of recreational experiences downstream, affecting swimmers, anglers, and paddlers who seek clean, safe water. The growth of wake boat traffic also threatens to displace non-motorized recreation. High wakes create hazardous conditions for swimmers, paddlers, anglers, and others seeking quiet, low-impact river use, effectively eliminating some forms of traditional river enjoyment. This growing motorized use directly conflicts with the Spokane River's designated uses protected under the Clean Water Act, which include recreation and the protection of aquatic life. When the river becomes unsafe or inaccessible for these uses due to excessive wake boat activity

³ Spokane River Shoreline Metals Sites Periodic Review, WDOE (2022)
<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/116415>



and congestion, it fails to meet water quality standards and designated use protections intended to preserve the river's ecological and recreational values.

Additionally, expanding marina facilities tends to increase no-wake zones to protect shorelines, which compresses motorized boat traffic into smaller river sections. Greater traffic volume:

- Increases potential for collision risks between motorized and non-motorized craft;
- Compresses boaters into narrower travel lanes, raising the likelihood of shoreline contact;
- Creates hazardous conditions for swimmers, paddlers, and anglers; and
- Heightens the potential for accidents in congested areas such as bends, docks, and marina entrances.

Increased congestion also amplifies environmental harm: more boats in confined areas create more wakes in less space, resulting in higher erosion rates and more sediment disturbance per shoreline mile. In this way, unchecked boat traffic undermines the progress made toward meeting water quality standards and compromises the health and enjoyment of the river for all communities along its course.

Recreational Carrying Capacity Study Needed

The proposed expansion of marina facilities on the Spokane River would increase boat traffic, accelerate shoreline erosion, increase metals re-suspension, and undermine decades of work to restore water quality. Given the contamination legacy, the river's narrow channel, and its legal protections, Idaho Department of Lands should pause any new permits until a thorough, science-based study is conducted, specifically to evaluate the cumulative impacts of wake boats and increased motorized traffic on the upper Spokane River's ecology, water quality, and recreational uses.

This study must determine the river's maximum carrying capacity and evaluate the cumulative impacts of existing and proposed boat traffic. Research on similar river systems⁴ has demonstrated the importance of understanding how increased recreational use affects water quality, safety, and habitat health. The study should address critical issues including:

- Water quality impacts from increased boat activity, including downstream impacts
- Shoreline erosion and habitat disruption
- Public safety and navigation hazards
- Impacts on recreational uses and overall river health

⁴ Ecoscape Environmental Consultants Ltd. & Larratt Aquatic Consulting Ltd., Lake Windermere Recreational Impact and Sediment Quality Assessment (2024)
<https://www.lakeambassadors.ca/lwawp/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Lake-Windermere-Recreational-Carrying-Capacity-Study-Public-Release-Version.pdf>



Together. For the River.

Only with a clear understanding of these effects can informed decisions be made that protect this vital resource for current users and future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Katelyn Scott, Esq.,
Water Protector

From: [Paula Smyly](#)
To: [Navigable Waterways](#)
Subject: Fwd: Spokane River
Date: Monday, August 18, 2025 6:56:45 AM

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Paula Smyly** <paulajeansmyly@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Aug 18, 2025 at 5:48 AM
Subject: Spokane River
To: Paula Smyly <paulajeansmyly@gmail.com>

The Estates at Waterstone, #L95S6181 - Located east of Greensferry near Ponderosa

"I support Concerned Citizens and the attention they have brought to the Spokane River! The best interest of citizens and the condition of the river is NOT being considered by our leaders.

Our opposition STARTS with boats and docks, but ENDS with upholding The Public Trust Doctrine: ensuring our state agencies are following the laws, providing safety, and choosing the ecological health of the river so future generations can enjoy it!

Accordingly, I support:

- a PAUSE on the permits being issued - "...when is enough, ENOUGH?" - Mattare, 7/30/25 KC mtg
- SAFETY by increasing marine sheriff patrols
- STUDIES of the maximum carrying capacity of the river
- RESEARCH because more boat traffic means more wakes, more erosion, and more stress on shorelines and aquatic life
- Decisions based on PEOPLE over PROFIT by out-of-state investors; stop PROFIT over PEOPLE!
- TRANSPARENCY for local residents. We want a say in how our Spokane River is being managed

I support calling for a public hearing in order to hear from local citizens.

Thank you."

From: Terri Shields
To: [Navigable Waterways](#)
Subject: The Estates at Waterstone, #L95S6181 - Located east of Greensferry near Ponderosa
Date: Monday, August 18, 2025 1:27:58 AM

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I oppose the encroachment especially with the passing of the PF Hospitality LLC case, which should be reevaluated. More studies need to be done to see what the capacity for boats on the river can be. If businesses apply for a large amount of boat slips and since there are no current studies on what the boat capacity of the river is, they shouldn't be granted the full amount of boat slips. Better yet, there should be a pause on granting large business marina types of boat slips being added to the river without a study on what the river capacity is.

Once that is determined divide the amount of slips left that the river can manage safely between the applicants and the possibly future applicants. The river is for the public to enjoy and cannot be enjoyed if the river is overcrowded. This could be why there aren't as many boats on the river this year. In the last ten years the river has seen increased usage with boats, paddle boards, canoes, kayaks etc. The safety of the public has been compromised.

I have been on the river since 1968 and have seen a lot of changes. It doesn't seem to matter what the residents think or know. We all know big money talks. But is it worth the price of safety and increased contamination of the river we know and love?

Sincerely,

Terri Shields

From: xjking24@yahoo.com
To: [Navigable Waterways](#)
Subject: "Opposition to L95S6163A"
Date: Sunday, August 17, 2025 9:30:35 PM

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Open my shared document:

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Sent from my iPad