

Chelan PUD meeting - results/status of studies related to relicensing of Rock Island Dam

November 6, 2025

Oral comments provided by Bruce McCammon (NCWAS)

Feasibility Assessment of Water Reintroduction to the Horan Natural Area Study

This is the last event in a multi-year effort to influence opportunities to enhance cultural history awareness, recreational quality, and ecological conditions in the Horan.

The Horan is a unique situation in the PUD's recreational portfolio. As a natural area, it stands apart from the boat ramps, ball fields, and bathrooms of the PUD's many developed parks.

It is different and requires a different management approach to maintain the limited sense of wildness within the Wenatchee valley.

The Confluence Park South, aka the Horan, is called out specifically in the existing 1989 FERC license and the Exhibit R

- **Exhibit R, p 10**

"Confluence South contains extensive wetlands and riparian areas. Its function as a natural area should be preserved"

P 21

- Wetlands and riparian areas are valuable habitats for waterfowl and other species"
- "... preserve its function as a natural area and allow for educational interpretations".

- Article 412 of the 1989 FERC license gives the PUD permission to construct or install projects that are "consistent with the purposes of protecting and enhancing the scenic, recreational, other environmental values of the project."

- While construction of ponds was not a license requirement, a liberal interpretation of this permission allowed the PUD to dig the ponds, thereby permanently altering the surface and groundwater hydrology of the Wenatchee River delta, site of today's Horan.

But the license goes farther

- Article 412b of the 1989 license states that the uses and occupancies granted by the permission "...are maintained in good repair and comply with state and local health and safety requirements."

And here we are today.

Recreational use of the Horan is visibly increasing over time. The public has repeatedly expressed their support for maintaining the Wild character of the area with its beauty and

diversity, including ponds that provide aesthetic and ecological enhancement of their experience while in the area. The Horan has become a birding destination for people, some traveling great distances to simply walk through and enjoy the area.

So, we find it disappointing that maintaining the investment the PUD made in 1990 by digging the ponds has been limited to reliance on natural groundwater fluctuation, intermittent surface flow through private lands where the owner is unwilling to allow needed channel maintenance, and the introduction of storm water runoff.

None of these options will provide water in quantities or duration that will restore the previous aquatic and riparian conditions of the ponds.

The once beautiful ponds that enhanced every visitor's recreational experience and produced high value aquatic and riparian habitat are doomed to atrophy with age.

A case could and should be made that the PUD is renegeing on the license's requirement to maintain their investments in facilities and conditions within the project area.

It's a shame , really, that the PUD is walking away from a situation they created. Doing so eliminates the possibility for the PUD to wear a white hat as responsible custodians of this unique area.

Perhaps, since the area is an environmental and management anomaly for both the PUD and State Parks, the Horan should be sold or transferred to another agency or group that has the background and desire to manage the area for its potential.

----- End of Oral Comments -----

You can view or download the full PUD report here: [Full Study Report link](#)

chelanpudrelicensing.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/ChelanPUDRelicensing/EbonKlrhbAtHnzPdi_mbzPy4BoTYkO_pUYrLyTrGILA7zYg

If you want to make comments directly to FERC, click here: [eComment _ \(FERC online\)](#)

<https://ferconline.ferc.gov/QuickComment.aspx>

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