

Caution urged in river usage as Albeni Falls Dam continues high-flow operations
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SEATTLE -- River users near Albeni Falls Dam are reminded that high flow conditions exist and boaters are advised to avoid the area downstream of Priest River on the Pend Oreille during these high spring flows. These conditions are expected to exist throughout the Memorial Day weekend and into the month of June.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which operates Albeni Falls Dam, opened up the spill gates on May 16 and began passing as much of the Pend Oreille River flow as possible. Currently the inflows are 106,000 cubic feet per second and the dam's outflow is 73,000 cfs, increasing to above 90,000 cfs next week. Outflow is determined by a natural lake restriction above the dam. As the lake rises, outflows increase. The river flows at high velocity upstream of the dam and flows turbulently downstream. These conditions could easily result in disaster for boaters approaching too close to the dam.

The Corps kept the lake at its winter elevation later than usual to provide room for the late snowmelt. This operation has given the Corps greater flexibility to manage for downstream conditions and rate of lake refill. Lake Pend Oreille is expected to reach its summer pool range of 2062.0 to 2062.5 feet no later than the 4th of July.

Current lake levels and yearly average lake elevations are available at any time online at: <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/nws/hh/basins/pend.html> .-