



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Walla Walla District
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News Release

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Boaters reminded to use caution, avoid collisions on rivers

Walla Walla, Wash. – Warm weather is here and it's time to load up the boat and head out for the water. You're all set to go. The vehicle and trailer hitch are all checked out, the lights work, gas tank and hoses are in great shape. Life preservers for everybody are on board, there's even a brand new anchor rope and that 150-horsepower outboard you gave yourself at Christmas. Time to get it in the water and crank it up and see what it'll do.

Not so fast! That's not exactly a great idea right now, according to an official at an area dam operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"We want folks to have a safe and fun recreation experience out on the area's lakes and rivers. But our first concern is the safety part," said Scott Sutliff, operations manager at Ice Harbor Dam, near the TriCities. "One of the big safety concerns out there right now is debris in the Snake and Columbia rivers. Seasonal runoff in the mountains and spring rains are bringing a lot of material down the waterway such as logs and other floating or subsurface items that can be a hazard to recreational waterway users."

The coming weekend will be a good time to be especially cautious, according to Sutliff. Other dam operators upstream such as Lower Monumental near Kahlotus, Little Goose near Starbuck, and Lower Granite near Pomeroy (all in Washington), have reported seeing seasonally normal amounts of material heading downstream. Having objects in the water is not new but it never hurts to remember that late spring and early summer are times for boaters to be well aware of their surroundings at all times.

Partially submerged or floating objects in the water can damage boats and personal watercraft and people could get hurt. Take it a little slower, watch carefully and travel safely to make your recreational experience on area lakes and rivers a good one.

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