

Planners give green light to carp

◆ Construction begins as DOE reviews approval

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State fish and wildlife officials hope a new fish screen and nursery will help boost Moses Lake's lagging fish industry.

Though some neighbors oppose the project, construction will begin within the next

few days. The barrier will block carp from passing through the Central Washington Railroad trestle spanning upper Pelican Horn, Fish and Wildlife Biologist Jeff Korth said.

The Moses Lake Planning Commission last night approved a one-year Shoreline Conditional Use Permit, allowing the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to construct a fish screen there.

The fish screen will keep adult carp out

of a proposed fish nursery area north of the railroad trestle in Pelican Horn. Once it is in place, the department will stock the upper horn with crappie and bluegill and release them into the lake.

The barrier will help improve warmwater fishing in Moses Lake, Korth said.

"At one time we had good fishing in Moses Lake ...," Korth said.

He estimated the Moses Lake area has lost \$14 million during the last eight years

because of the decline in fisheries.

This project is an attempt to turn those numbers around, he said.

But many neighborhood residents owning shoreline property in that part of the horn testified last night that they oppose locating the project in their backyards.

One fear was that keeping out adult carp will lead to an escalation of aquatic weed growth similar to the problem in Parker Horn.

Carp: These unwanted fish are targeted

From front page

Carp in Moses Lake are a European strain that tear up weed beds and leave bare lake bottom, but don't eat the weeds like other types of carp, he said.

The state agency — which is working with a local volunteer group to try to restore warmwater fisheries — wants to prevent adult carp and other adult fish from eating the young crappie and bluegill whose numbers have declined dramatically in Moses Lake.

Under the right conditions, carp can grow up to 40 inches and weigh up to 60 pounds. They thrive in warm, standing or slow-moving water and compete with the other fish for food and space.

Fish and Wildlife personnel have been removing carp from Basin lakes to encourage growth of other species.

Aquatic plants provide good cover and food for young fish and can be a positive asset, Korth said.

Residents also said boats won't be able to pass freely beneath the trestle because the screen protrudes one foot above the full water mark. There is less than three feet of clearance between the water and the bridge when the lake is full, Korth said. When the screen is installed, small boats and canoes will have to be carried over the barrier and launched into the water on the other side.

Some feared more fishing and traffic in their area of the lake. Oth-

ers thought they wouldn't be able to water ski. Another fear was that they thought the project would result in lower property values.

Planning commissioners, however, found no evidence to support these claims.

Fish and Wildlife will begin constructing the screen within the next several days, before the water rises more, Korth said.

The agency is racing the rising water level. If it doesn't get the barrier in in the next couple of days, it won't get in, Korth said.

The state Department of Ecology will review the permit.

It has 30 days to approve or deny the permit. If it is denied, the permit will go to a Shoreline Hearings Board.