

Lake Chelan Collaborative AIS Subcommittee Meeting #3 Summary

JUNE 3, 2026, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

CHELAN FIRE STATION, 232 E WAPATO AVENUE + CALL-IN OPTION

Attendees: In person: Elle Robinson (CCNRD); Stephen Lesky (CCNRD); Brian Patterson (Lake Chelan Conservancy Board); Gretchen Muller (Cascadia); Anna Galipeau (LCRI); Nate Hough-Snee (Meadow Run Environmental); Justin Bush WDFW (AIS); Kelsey Mach (Geosyntec); John Olson (Resident); Nick Knauss (WDFW); Phil Long (LCRI)

Online: Sarah Peck (Chelan PUD); Gina Hoff (USBR); Alex White (Chelan PUD); Clay Patmont (LCRI/Anchor); Jessica Hartman (Geosyntec)

Action Items:

1. Provide feedback via email to Nate (nate@natehough-snee.org) and Kelsey (kelsey.mach@aspectconsulting.com) on Watercraft Inspection Program Plan and by June 19th, 2026. Let us know if additional time is needed.
2. Review AIS Management Plan draft in July-August in anticipation of September meeting.

Decisions Made: No decisions made this meeting

Upcoming Events

- AIS Subcommittee Meeting #4 September 23, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
- AIS Inspection Program Plan Open House #2 (Chelan) – TBA

Meeting Summary:

Nate Hough-Snee (Meadow Run Environmental) and Gretchen Muller (Cascadia) led the meeting. The group received a demonstration from WDFW featuring a mussel detection dog and heard an update on the AIS Subcommittee workplan, deliverables, schedule, and upcoming milestones.

Discussion centered on the purpose and justification for the AIS watercraft inspection program, with an emphasis on evaluating options for a mandatory program. WDFW noted that a mandatory program would need to be codified to allow for enforcement and shared that model language is available to support that effort.

Stephen Lesky shared that there is strong public interest in expanding the inspection program. The group also discussed potential funding sources for a mandatory program. Justin Bush noted that state funding depends on legislative appropriations and remains uncertain, while Stephen reported that the National Park Service is reviewing the County's request for two years of funding that could help support implementation.

The group also considered the effectiveness of existing inspection stations statewide. Brian Patterson asked how the program can assess whether current stations are intercepting all high-risk watercraft. In response, participants noted that no inspection network will capture every boat, that additional inspection

locations would improve protection, and that inspections are not fail-safe. Stephen noted that he tracks data on boats arriving at Lake Chelan that have already been inspected, although those data have not yet been summarized. WDFW added that some travel routes from known infested areas, including parts of the San Joaquin region, do not currently pass through existing WDFW inspection stations.

Participants discussed seasonal considerations for a inspection locations, noting that fishing activity increases boat traffic at the State park in the winter. The group also discussed outreach to public boating groups. In response to a question from John Olson, the project team confirmed that outreach is included in the draft inspection plan and is also being advanced through the broader Lake Chelan Watershed planning effort.

Several participants commented that the draft cost estimates for the mandatory inspection program may be low. Nate clarified that the current estimates reflect a basic program concept that could be expanded. Clay Patmont suggested that a cost-benefit analysis would strengthen the case for implementation by comparing the cost of prevention with the potential cost of managing an AIS introduction. While Lake Chelan-specific cost data are limited, the group noted that regional examples may be available to help illustrate those tradeoffs. Participants also noted that an AIS introduction would likely require a mandatory decontamination and containment response.

The meeting concluded with discussion of possible locations for a mandatory inspection program. The AIS Subcommittee was asked to provide feedback on the draft AIS Watercraft Inspection Plan. Participants were also reminded about the June 4 field visit to one of the County's watercraft inspection stations. The next subcommittee meeting, scheduled for September 23, will be the final AIS Subcommittee meeting and will focus on development of the Lake Chelan AIS Management Plan.