

Riverboats

in the Lewis Clark Valley

A vibrant and growing segment of the region's visitor industry



American Cruise Lines vessel at Port of Clarkston.

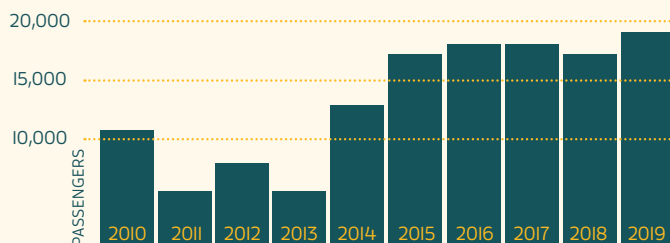
Riverboat cruises have been sailing to the Lewis Clark Valley for over 40 years. These vessels bring thousands of visitors to the region annually, benefiting a wide variety of local businesses such as restaurants, shops, hotels, tour operators, and transportation providers. A recent study, commissioned by the Ports of Clarkston and Lewiston, helped quantify the impacts of this important industry and identify how the region can best accommodate — and benefit from — projected future growth.

Riverboat Traffic

Most Columbia/Snake River cruises sail one-way between Portland, OR/Vancouver, WA and Clarkston, WA with four to six additional port calls along the way. The season lasts April to November. Over the last decade, passenger traffic at the Port of Clarkston has fluctuated from a low of about 4,000 in 2013 to 19,000 in 2019. (Note that passenger volume would have reached approximately 21,000 without the unexpected closure of the Bonneville Lock in 2019.) Over the last decade, riverboats brought nearly 130,000 visitors to the area.

Clarkston Riverboat Passenger Traffic 2010-2019

Total Passengers 2010-2019
129,000



Sources: Port of Clarkston and cruise lines.

Lewis Clark Valley Cruise Activity, 2019

In 2019, Clarkston welcomed 19,000 passengers on 72 separate port calls. The seven vessels brought 335 crew members who returned every week. Cruise vessels tend to stay in Clarkston roughly 24 to 48 hours, allowing enough time for disembarkation of one group and embarkation of the next group.

7 Vessels
72 Port Calls
19,000 Passengers
335 Crew Members

The Columbia/Snake River cruise market represents 30% of nationwide river cruise capacity, second only to the Mississippi River at 60%.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC QUEST

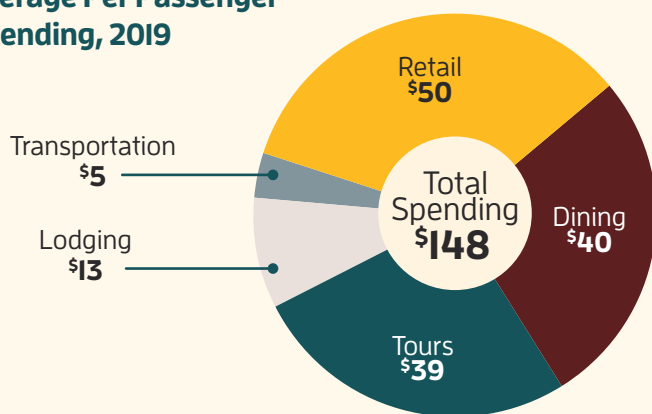
Lindblad/National Geographic vessel at Port of Clarkston.

Passenger Activities and Spending

Popular passenger activities include jetboat tours of Hells Canyon and bus tours that include stops at local museums, historical sites, and shopping areas. Many passengers choose to overnight in area hotels before or after their cruise, allowing more time to explore.

Riverboat passengers spent an average of \$148 per person in 2019 including \$50 on retail, \$40 on dining, \$39 on tours, \$13 on lodging, and \$5 on transportation. Total spending associated with the cruise industry (including spending by passengers, crew members, and cruise lines) is estimated at \$3.5 million.

Average Per Passenger Spending, 2019



Economic Impacts

Cruise industry spending in the region is estimated to account for 50 direct jobs at the peak of the visitor season and nearly \$1.0 million in payroll in 2019. Total impacts, including indirect impacts, is estimated at a peak of 70 jobs in the visitor season and \$1.4 million in payroll. Including passenger, cruise line, crew spending and multiplier effects, total economic output supported by the riverboat industry in Lewis Clark Valley in 2019 is estimated at \$4.0 million.

Lewis Clark Valley Cruise Industry Impacts, 2019

50	Direct Jobs
\$994,000	Direct Payroll
70	Total Jobs
\$1,365,000	Total Payroll
\$4 million	Output



Hells Canyon jetboat tour.

Outlook and Next Steps

Despite the impacts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the outlook for U.S. river cruising remains very positive. Passenger capacity is projected to grow by 80% between 2021 and 2027. As stated by the Cruise Line Industry Association's 2021 River Market Report, "Close-to-home cruising combined with small ships, affluent and educated passengers and exciting new capacity, plus marketing muscle, should lead to a healthy future for domestic U.S. cruising." Cruise traffic to the Lewis Clark Valley is also anticipating growth: between 2019 and 2022, passenger capacity is projected to increase by 76% based on additional vessels and a lengthened season.

A Needs Assessment conducted as part of this study recommends a range of steps to accommodate the anticipated growth and maximize economic impact. These include strategies to increase passenger overnights, promote tours and packages to cruise lines, coordinate with other Columbia/Snake ports, and upgrade vessel infrastructure, among others. The region is in an ideal position to capitalize on the opportunities represented by this growing industry.



American Queen Steamboat Co. vessel at the Port of Clarkston.