

THE *Confluence*

Finding 'Harmony' on the River

**One Woman's Journey from Housekeeping
to the Captain's Chair**

Captain Andrea Mickelson
on American Cruise Lines'
American Harmony.

Port of **LEWISTON**

SUMMER 2025



A New Sunrise Every Day

Captain Andrea Mickelson never tires of the breathtaking view from her "office." The landscape is constantly evolving as she traverses the winding Columbia and Snake rivers aboard the *American Harmony*, a majestic vessel in the American Cruise Lines fleet. The rolling ocean of the west coast, misty mountain vistas, rugged desert landscapes ... each day offers a fresh and unique experience.

"I get a new sunset, a new sunrise every day," said Mickelson, 47. "Each voyage has something that I know, but with some new element to make it special."

For the last 25 years, Mickelson has navigated the Columbia-Snake River system, taking on roles from cleaning rooms to captaining vessels. While her journey to a maritime career wasn't planned, her path, much like the twists and turns of the river system, unfolded in a way that feels entirely natural.

"I'm happy doing what I'm doing, everything I get to see," she said. "The best part is I'm never far from home."

Mickelson, the eldest of seven, grew up in Yacolt, a small town in Clark County, Washington flanked by the Columbia River on two sides. Her parents, Andy and Nora, instilled a belief in their children that they could achieve anything.

Although she was unsure of her career aspirations during childhood, considering options like nursing and aviation, she learned of a housekeeping opportunity with the American West Steamboat Company while working in construction after high school.

"I applied on a whim," Mickelson admits. "I thought, hey, I can clean rooms."

The position definitely took some getting used to. As

someone who loved where she lived and thrived in a close family and church community, the four weeks on/two weeks off schedule was lonely. "In 2000, I didn't have a cell phone," she said. "I was extremely homesick."

But Mickelson persevered, and by 2001 was a deckhand, tying up lines, assisting with docking, and performing maintenance tasks. She later moved up to Second Mate and then Chief Mate, completing extensive licensing requirements along the way. By 2008, she completed the requirements to become a full maritime captain.

"I knew I could do it. I just kept learning," she said of achieving her captain's license. "My Dad always said I could do anything. He was my first call."

With the exception of a brief stint on a Pacific Ocean vessel, Mickelson has spent her entire maritime career on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. She loves the diverse landscapes, seasons, and unique character of each region.

"I enjoy showing off my state to passengers, especially those who have never been here," said Mickelson. "I love the Hood River and Astoria area, but the east side of the state has its own special beauty." In addition to her love of the waterways, Mickelson enjoys exploring every port of call on the journey. "Every port has its special thing," she said. "Whether it's amazing food, or cupcakes, a great cup of coffee – I'll find it."

She appreciates her position – and the nice Captain's quarters that comes with it – and what it took to get there. Mickelson can be found helping out on the deck from time to time, grateful for every experience.

"I'm lucky, and really anyone can do it," she said.

"What's most important is staying true to who you are and knowing how you can contribute."





(L-R) Port Commissioners Jerry Klemm and Mike Thomason, ACL Director of Government Relations Kristin Meira, Commissioner Joe Anderson, ACL President & CEO Charles Robertson, Port General Manager Scott Corbitt, and Chamber Board Chair Tobe Finch.

RIBBON CUTTING

at the
Confluence Riverfront



The Port of Lewiston and American Cruise Lines celebrated Idaho's only cruise boat dock on August 12 with a ribbon-cutting at the Confluence Riverfront. River stakeholders from across the Northwest, along with local officials, community members, and representatives from American Cruise Lines, gathered by the Clearwater River, where the impressive American Song was moored.

"We love cruising the Columbia and Snake Rivers and it is a special honor to be here today to celebrate the opening of the first cruise dock in Idaho," said Charles B. Robertson, President & CEO of American Cruise Lines. "The project exemplifies collaborative partnerships with economic, community, and recreational benefits. It also signifies American's ongoing commitment to exploring more of this beautiful region via the finest U.S.-built riverboats."

The event is a culmination of a historic partnership between the country's largest river cruise line the Port of Lewiston to bring the cruising industry to Idaho.

"This facility is built for our cruise boat guests as well as for our local community members," said Port of Lewiston General Manager Scott Corbitt. "Our partnership with American Cruise Lines made the creation of Cruise Idaho possible. The future of the Confluence Riverfront is bright and full of potential."

The ribbon-cutting ceremony featured American Cruise Lines leadership, Port Commissioners, local officials, and members of the Nez Perce Tribe, who performed a cultural invocation led by Nez Perce Tourism CEO Stacia Morfin.

"This new Port facility, nestled at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers, is more than just a place to dock, it is a gateway to the region's vibrant culture and rich history," said City of Lewiston Mayor Dan Johnson. "Here history comes to life."

The dock, funded in part by an allocation from Idaho Gov. Brad Little in 2023, signifies an expanded commitment from American Cruise Lines, driven by customer demand for the Pacific Northwest route.

"The future is bright," said Port Commissioner Joe Anderson at the event. "The experience of our cruise boat passengers will be further enhanced, while at the same time providing a great place for our local community."



The Eddy



Scott Corbitt
Port of Lewiston
General Manager

The eddy that is the continued fight to preserve the Lower Snake River dams has swirled and spun its way to a bend in the river. The dams now have the full support of the Executive Branch of the US Government, which is moving back into the role of lead defendant in the lawsuit filed by the Six overreigns and environmental organizations over the findings of the 2020

Environmental Impact Statement regarding operation of the dams. The President's action has given the dam advocates much-needed momentum to push ahead.

This action comes after countless hours of advocacy on behalf of the dams, from trips to Washington, D.C. by the Dam Heroes to educating stakeholders on the ramifications of losing the dams to working with advocacy leaders, like Neal Maunu, Michelle Hennings, and Clark Mather, among others, on crafting just the right words to just the right ears. This positive step is a testament to hard work and persistence.

But this issue is far from resolved. The most likely pathway for this matter flows back to the courtroom. While an old litigator like me appreciates a compelling courtroom drama, it seldom yields the full satisfaction that the parties seek. The best part of court is that the process is designed for decision making based on evidence, i.e., facts and data. In theory, the politics that controlled so much of the last phase of the matter should be excluded. Bonus for us.

The courtroom could also help to refine the standards at the heart of the conflict. The Sovereigns started to cite to new standards and conclusions after the unsigned NOAA Rebuilding Interior Columbia Basin Salmon and Steelhead report was published in September of 2022; new standards for management of endangered species to "healthy and harvestable" levels, unproven theories for salmonoid return numbers such "delayed mortality", a complete disregard of the ocean's conditions as a root cause of fish return, and a clearly intentional disinterestedness in the impacts of their proposal on places like Lewiston and Clarkston. Their citation to such a misleading document must be prevented.

At the end of the day, our efforts must be focused on preservation of the dams that enable our lifestyle and economy. No one should take these pillars for granted. We should avoid the complacency of "it can't happen here" that causes us to let down our guard. Now is the time to take advantage of our positive position to navigate this eddy and sail with the current at our stern.

Transforming the Region with Fiber Optics



Pivot Tech



The Port is moving forward with two fiber optic projects that will help to transform the connectivity of North Central Idaho and Nez Perce County.

First, the Port has awarded Crown Utilities the construction contract to build 92 miles of fiber optic backbone from Moscow to Lewiston, and Lewiston to Grangeville. This regional backbone project is receiving funding through a federal Economic Development Administration grant, a State of Idaho grant, and Port of Lewiston funds.

Second, the Port has announced a strategic partnership with Pivot Tech Development to establish a fiber optic network that will transition to full community ownership after the performance bonds are satisfied. Confluence Fiber Communications, a newly established nonprofit

organization, will oversee network construction and operations with community-focused governance.

The coordinated infrastructure development addresses both local connectivity needs and regional digital requirements, positioning North Central Idaho as a comprehensively connected region. Construction will begin this month with an anticipated completion in December 2026.

Economic impacts include local job creation, enhanced business attraction capabilities, expanded remote work opportunities, and improved educational access. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of this year with the first services offered soon thereafter. City-wide coverage is expected within 30 months of the start date, all without Port costs or tax dollars.

BREAKING NEWS AND UPDATES



Idaho Power Headed to Port

Idaho Power, the Port's newest arrival, is moving full speed ahead with their new 5,400-square-foot facility, which will be located just east of Nez Perce County Jail. The building will house jet boats used by the utility company to monitor fish and their habitats along the Snake River. Above is a rendering of the future facility.

Congratulations to LC Amateur Hockey!



We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the LC Amateur Hockey Association, our long-time tenants at the Port, on being named one of the 2025 Capital Grant Winners by the DeAtley Family Foundation. The generous \$100,000 grant will help this nonprofit continue delivering exceptional ice-based programs to our youth and community. We are proud to have LC Amateur Hockey in our Port, and are thrilled to see their dedication and hard work recognized and supported. A sincere thank you to the DeAtley Family Foundation for their kindness and generosity.



Port of LEWISTON

IDAHO'S SEAPORT

OUR VISION

The Port of Lewiston is a respected leader contributing to the region's economic growth and vitality: a model of excellence for transportation, international trade, and job creation.

COMMISSIONERS



Pictured left to right: **Mike Thomason**, President; **Jerry Klemm**, Vice President; **Joseph Anderson**, Secretary/Treasurer

OUR TEAM

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Port Commissioner Joe Anderson, Communications Coordinator Mary Iacobelli, and General Manager Scott Corbitt during a recent advocacy trip in Washington, D.C.

Advocacy Efforts Yield Major Victory for River Commerce

On June 12, 2025, President Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum revoking an executive action from the prior administration that paved a path to breaching the Lower Snake River Dams. The Memorandum has led to the US Government withdrawing from the December 14, 2023 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Federal government and the Six Sovereigns: the states of Washington and Oregon; and the Umatilla, Warm Springs, Yakima, and Nez Perce Tribes.

The President's reasons for withdrawing from the MOU cover the spectrum of our reasons for fighting so hard to preserve the dams: American energy dominance, irrigation for farmers, river commerce on the expanse of Marine Highway M-84, and recreational and lifestyle opportunities in places like Lewiston.

While the President's action is a positive step for dams, the fight is not over. The Sovereigns will likely move the dispute back into the courtroom where they are contesting the direction set in the 2020 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision evaluating the impact of the dams on various resources, including fish populations. That EIS, drafted over a five-year period at a cost of over \$55 million, considered more than 400,000 comments before concluding that the dams need to stay in place.

Whichever direction we see this fight go, continued public support for the dams and the services they provide is critical to the preservation of our lifestyles and economies.