

King County files lawsuit against Kingdome insurer



SEATTLE (AP) — King County has filed a federal lawsuit against its Kingdome insurance carrier, complaining that Allendale Mutual has refused to respond to damage claims.

The lawsuit filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court does not mention a dollar amount, but an accompanying filing paper says the county is seeking "in excess of \$15 million."

The county contends Allendale Mutual Insurance Co. of Johnston, R.I., has breached its contract by failing to respond to queries about coverage since July 21, two days after acoustical ceiling tiles fell into the stadium stands. The Kingdome was closed until last weekend for repairs that could cost as much as \$50 million.

The county is asking the court to decide liability after a 16-letter exchange and an insurance representative's "unwarranted, deceptive and frivolous" contention that he needs more information to make a decision, the lawsuit says.

An Oct. 5 letter from Allendale said no determination of coverage had been made, according to the lawsuit.

"Obviously Allendale is being very cautious," said Dick Holmquist, a chief civil deputy prosecutor.

The county says its policy with Allendale — in effect from April 12, 1993, to April 1, 1996 — covers all risk of physical loss or damage to property.

County Executive Gary Locke, who filed the lawsuit, said the action "is a prudent business measure which will remove uncertainty regarding coverage."

In the lawsuit, the county says its policy covers the costs of permanent and temporary repairs, protecting the dome from further damage, lost profits and rental income.

The costs of removing debris, replacing damaged material, maintaining business operations, and staffing and support for tenants' use of other facilities also are cited, as well as costs incurred by changes in building codes since the Kingdome was built.

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Hells Canyon limits powerboats on river

BAKER CITY (AP) — Powerboats will be banned from a 21-mile stretch of the Snake River through the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area for three days a week under the new management plan unveiled Wednesday.

The ban will be in effect Monday through Wednesday, July 4 through Labor Day, throughout the 10- to 15-year life of the new plan, said Bob Richmond, supervisor of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

The limitation is the first on the Snake River inside the recreation area. It prohibits powerboats on the river from Wild Sheep rapids to Kirkwood Ranch, covering about two-thirds of the scenic river route.

The three-day-a-week restriction is an effort to give both powerboat users and rafters equal time on the river, "not a first step by the Forest Service to ban powerboats in Hells Canyon," Richmond said.

"The floating community wanted a quiet time, particularly on the wild river," he said. "I think it is equitable and will meet their needs."

Under the new plan, backpackers and hikers taken to trailheads by powerboat must obtain a free permit before leaving the U. S. Forest Service visitors center below Hells Canyon Dam.

Permits also will be required for trail users between Pittsburg Landing and Kirkwood Ranch. Numbers will be limited if the

Forest Service decides hikers and camping are adversely affecting the area.

Picnic tables will be prohibited along the wild section, except at Sheep Creek Ranch and Kirkwood Ranch.

River users, except commercial powerboat operators, are limited to 24 people per group year-round.

Camping stays will be limited to three days and two nights from the Memorial Day weekend through Sept. 10 in the wild river section.

Otherwise, stays will be limited to 14 days and 13 nights.

The new recreation management plan is subject to appeal through Dec. 27.

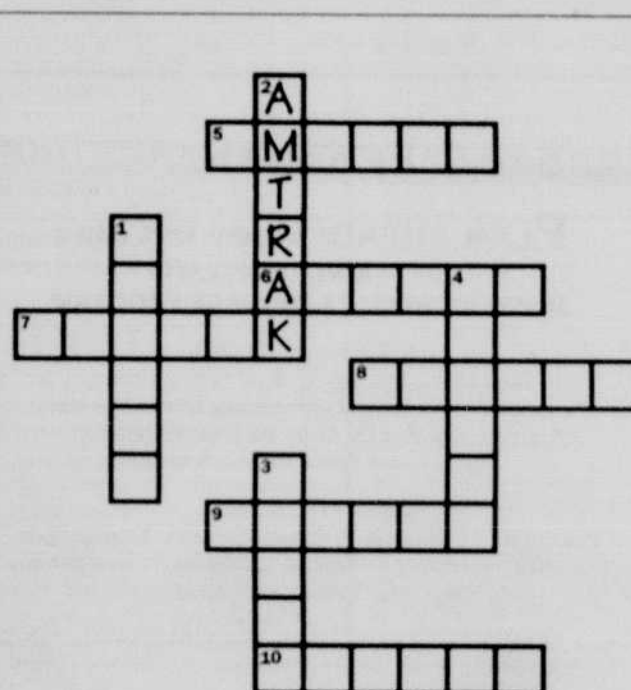
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