

Lake Pend Oreille, Pend Oreille River, Priest Lake and Priest River Commission Meeting MINUTES  
October 23rd, 2014 from 5 pm until 8pm  
Panhandle State Bank  
414 Church St, Sandpoint, Idaho

Commissioner's present: Ford Elsaesser, Brent Baker, Doug Conde, Craig Hill, Linda Mitchell, Ben Conard, Erin Mader (Coordinator), Molly McCahon (temp Coordinator)

34 members of the public provided public comment.

153 members of the public signed in for no-comment.

There were 200 people witnessed in attendance.

5:08 pm – Commence meeting

Ford Elsaesser welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Lakes Commission Board members, ACOE representatives; Beth Coffey, Lieutenant Andrew Park (late), Joel Fenolio, and Scott Lawrence, BPA representatives; Rich Pendergrass, Bill Maslen, and John Williams, Senator Keough, Bill Booth (Northwest Power and Conservation Council), Katie Brodie ( Governor Otter's office).

Ford provided an explanation of the format for the meeting. There will be brief presentations by BPA and Corp representatives and then we will take public comment according to the sign-up sheet. The Lakes Commission has had its most active year. Special thanks to Governor Otter and staff for expediting meetings with various agencies in particular, BPA and Corp, to address the concerns of the local community about lake levels and management and the lake overall. Senator Keough has been a key ally. She got the commission started when there was effort to bring lake level up for Kokanee in the mid 1900s. Commission was ultimately her brain child. Thank you to Bill Booth for being the mediator between the various agencies and helping us advocate our positions.

We have a lot to do. Our goal is to assist with decisions on the beneficial use of the lake and support the stakeholders of the lake. The Lakes Commission has been addressing lake level issues for many years, but has never received public input to this extent. We have made progress...there will be a significant announcement by BPA tonight, but we still have work to do. Continuing to work with Corp to maximize the levels in the fall and also the spring. We are having meaningful conversations about spring. Original goal in 90s was to assist IDFG to bring Kokanee back and the good news is they are back. We would like to give thanks to the Alliance and Ralph Sletager who has done a great job of bringing important issues to the table. It has always been important to have a private not for profit advocacy group to advocate for the lake, whether that is marina owners, people who have a house on the lake or simply just like to look at it

As for the rest of the Commission, we will be making comments after public testimony.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Linda moved to approve the 9/16/14 minutes. Brent seconded the motion, *the motion carried.*

## Agency presentations

**Rick Pendergrass –BPA, Manager-Power and Operations Planning Group and Co-chair for Columbia River Treaty-USA.** Introduced fellow BPA representatives; **Peter Cogswell – Acting Chief of Public Affairs, Bill Maslen Director of Fish and Wildlife.** Interested in hearing the concerns of the public on the operations of LPO and Albeni Fall Dam. Thanked Senator Keough and Bill Booth. Again, here to listen. Will be working with the governor's office and the Lakes Commission. As far as the Columbia River Treaty, the US sent recommendations in December of 2013. Those recommendations were received by the interagency team who will be evaluating them. Recommendations have been in Washington DC for 10 months and unsure when a response will be provided. As far as the Kalispell MOA – based on feedback from Governor Otter, we approached the Kalispell Tribe about future drafts. We negotiated an agreement that removes future drafts and adds habitat work for bull trout. Not finalized yet but went out for signature yesterday, and will likely be signed within a few days. Bill Maslen was instrumental in pulling this negotiation together. We have taken some steps that will be better for all. Bill Maslen states that BPA Fish and Wildlife Program is responsible for 31 federal dams. Albeni Falls is one of those dams. Our program is about protecting and mitigating for fish and wildlife in relation to these dams.

**Beth Coffey – Chief of Operation for Seattle Districts.** Lieutenant Parks still a couple minutes late. See if we can't get some resolution on a lot of different issues that are out there in the community. Particularly in reference to changes on how we are established lake level for Kokanee in the fall, back then. As to what it will look like in Sept... there has been a lot of dialog. More outreach with public and we will continue that. We will have a spring operations meeting and a fall operations meeting in August. So we will continue those types of meetings. Also to continue dialog we have been having with the Lakes Commission this last year. Looking at ways to hold more water in September-with the MOA no longer on the table we will no longer draw down pre labor day. Those things are off the table. Will look at Keeping the pool until Labor Day to 2062.5/2062' to hold more water before we go into active drawdown in October. Hopefully we can get to a conclusion to that in the next month or so. Using this year as an example to see how to proceed. We have a multi-purpose facility.... not just recreation but flood risk both upstream and downstream, power, and navigation as a mission with AFD. Have to find a balance between competing needs. Listening to your concerns will help us find that balance.

**Ford** introduces Chip Corsi. Chip has been very helpful to us on a multitude of references in order to maximize one benefit from other.

Ford announces we will be taking public testimony. First person will come up to micro phone. 2<sup>nd</sup> person will be on deck. So we can keep the process moving. 3 minute on testimony. Erin Mader time keeper.

### **Lieutenant Andrew Y. Park – Deputy Commander for Corp of Engineers Seattle District**

Thank everyone for inviting us here, to understand public concerns. Partnerships between other organizations within the community are important.

### **Ford announces the public comment period will begin.**

Please see Appendix A for Public Testimony Summary

## Closing remarks

**Ford:** Observed that there is heavy boat traffic on CDA Lake through September. Due to the uncertainty around lake levels on LPO, people take their boats out by Labor Day because they assume the season will be over then. That should remind us of the importance that the shoulder season can have to our lake and economy here.

**Andrew Y. Park, lieutenant colonel, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:** Thank you for the remarks - we will take them back to leadership. Please note that one of our primary concerns is minimizing hazards to life, health and safety.

**Beth Coffey:** Over the last 5 years there has been higher inflows and snow make it difficult to refill sooner in the Spring. Our drawdown to 2056 in April is required for spring flooding. In the last five years, we have had higher flows with higher precipitation and late snow. We are targeting late June for the Hope gauge to be at 2062 to 2062.5. We are looking at September options and will work with the Lakes Commission to improve information on lake levels.

Per the request to have the lake at summer pool by Memorial Day, we have to make sure we are protecting property and lives both upstream and downstream. Memorial Day does put us in a position of increasing flood risk to downstream communities.

We are trying to increase our communication with the communities. We are planning spring and fall operational update meetings, posting lake levels to our website, and we appreciate the feedback on giving you more control.

**Bill Maslen:** Taking the temperature studies and drawdown option out of the MOA is a permanent change to the agreement that lasts through 2022. It is in the process of amendment and signing. We will post when signed.

**Rick Pendergrass:** I grew up in a small community that relied on recreation, and I understand the issue well. We will take these concerns seriously. This was a great opportunity to hear the community.

**Linda Mitchell:** I know this may not be popular with most, but 6 months is not reasonable. Let's work on not going down to 2051'. We need scientific studies on the impacts of this operation.

**Brent Baker:** "We've heard a common theme here tonight. Is there anyone here who doesn't agree? You've heard the voice of this community."

**Craig Hill:** Thank you all for being here tonight

**Ben Conard:** Advises that the best solutions are reached when all stakeholders can come to the table.

**Ford closing:** Clark Fork Delta an important project. I also want to make it clear that simply because this community is opposed to the federal MOA with the Kalispell Tribe, we are not at odds with the Tribe. The Kalispell Tribe has values that are in alliance with our own.

There will be a Lakes Commission meeting scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in December and an update will be provided at that meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 PM.  
Respectfully submitted by Molly McCahon

Approved by:

Lakes Commission Chair

Date

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