

Lake Pend Oreille, Pend Oreille River, Priest Lake and Priest River Commission Meeting MINUTES  
June 29, 2016 9:10 am until 12:00 pm

Commissioner's present: Ford Elsaesser, Craig Hill, Linda Mitchell, Jason Flory (USFWS), Mike Henley (for Marc Brinkmeyer), Erin Mader (Coordinator), Molly McCahon (Asst. Coordinator)

46 in audience

- Linda moved to approve the 3/31/16 minutes. Craig seconded the motion, *the motion carried*.

### **Presentations**

*Tom Woolf, Idaho Department of Agriculture, gave an update on aquatic invasive species in and around Idaho.*

Tom started by reviewing the watercraft inspection programs. There are 16 roadside stations running this year. They are all open from dusk until dawn. The state is receiving more support from the border guards. The State is also contracting with local enforcement to catch blow by boats at the inspection stations. There have been over 27,500 inspections so far with 620 boats having been in Quagga/zebra mussel infested waters in the last thirty days. Thirteen mussel infested boats have been found with four in the northern region.

Tom spoke about the Asian clams infestation taking hold in Pend Oreille. He explained that the trial treatment using NaOH under mats was not successful. Clam veligers have been identified off of Anderson Point. Idaho has contracted with the U of I for some more intensive surveying of the lake. Young Asian clams have defined ridges on their shells unlike the native pea clams.

Tom gave an update on the Eurasian milfoil program. He said that there have been treatments at Priest, Cocolalla, and Hayden Lakes. Pend Oreille is being surveyed this week. Divers are working in Priest Lake all summer. Tom went over the difficulty of identifying and treating the hybrid milfoil that has developed. He said that genetic testing has shown that sexual reproduction is far more common than previously thought creating many different strains of milfoil. Research is underway to find effective treatment options for the different strains.

Tom gave an update on flowering rush. Flowering rush continues to expand in Pend Oreille. The dry ground treatments that the County did on flowering rush are showing impact. Diquat is being investigated for in-water treatment of flowering rush.

Tom explained that plankton samples are being collected in waterways all around Idaho looking for mussel larvae. To this date there has been no infestation identified in Idaho or in the entire Columbia River system. He also described some of the Department of Agriculture invasive species outreach campaigns. There is a new "Knock It Off" campaign that targets sportsmen to clean off their cars and equipment before and after recreating in the forest. He also showed the new look of the Clean, Drain, Dry campaign. He described the "Don't Let It Loose" campaign which spreads the word not to release

aquariums and pets into the wild. Many of our invasive species started from aquarium and terrarium releases.

Questions following Tom's presentation led to these points.

- Wake boat ballast tanks are a major threat for transporting invasive species. They never completely dry out and they are not set up to handle bleach or other cleaning agents without potential damage. Research is underway to develop a type of filter for the tanks, but at this time there is no protection in this arena.
- Department of Agriculture does not have mandate to force a hot water wash of a boat if they do not have living mussels on them. Therefore some boats have been in infested waters recently and still opt to not have the hot water wash.
- Bleach does kill veligers, but not necessarily adults.

*Milton Ollerton, Bonner County Planning Director, spoke about the recent and upcoming changes to County land use and building codes.*

Milton introduced himself as the new Bonner County Planning Director. He recently moved here from Arizona. Milton explained that the biggest complaint that Bonner County has received from citizens is paying for the Panhandle Health Department sign-off on County Building Location Permits (BLP). The Bonner County Commissioners elected to remove this requirement from the BLP to eliminate their oversight and to save the taxpayers \$125 dollars.

Milton then described the proposed changes about subdivisions in Title 12 of Bonner County Code. He explained that Idaho allows counties to define "subdivision." Until now a subdivision has been one division of property which requires an expensive and extensive process involving involving sanitary restrictions, road construction, public notification and a decision from the Planning and Zoning Commission. The proposed change would allow up to four divisions (Minor Land Division) which will still require a plat map and sign off from the County departments, but it will not include public notice or comment lessening the cost to the landowner and county. This will also not require the sanitary review or road development. Divisions of five to ten (Minor Subdivision) follow the current Short Plat procedure including notice of neighbors and agencies and a thirty day comment period. Public hearings are not required and final decisions will be made by the Board of Commissioners. More than ten divisions (Major Subdivision) will follow current subdivision rules including public notice and public hearings. Milton stated that all divisions must still abide by zoning regulations. He stated that no other changes were being evaluated at this point.

Milton believed that this process will reduce the expense and the time required to complete land divisions. He estimated that a Minor Land Division should only take days to weeks to complete and a Minor Subdivision would probably take about six months.

Questions and comments following Milton's presentation led to these points:

- Dale Peck, Panhandle Health District (PHD), clarified that PHD is not a State entity, but it is an entity serving the Commissioners of the five northern counties. Dale explained that the PHD sign-off on the BLP was to assist the County in determining whether buildings could have impact on the drain field or back up drain field previous to building. He also clarified that the BLP is only for buildings not generating additional waste. If a building is generating waste and needs a septic permit then they apply for that permit and do not get charged or go through the BLP process.

*Steve Klatt, Bonner County Parks and Waterways Director, gave an update on the studies at Priest Lake focused mostly on the Priest Lake Thorofare project.*

Steve estimated that the Request for Proposals will go out for the Thorofare project by the end of July. He spoke about Dave Derrick who is a potomologist who consulted on the Thorofare project. Dave put together fifteen different construction scenarios to model to find the most effective construct to fill the place of the breakwater. Steve explained that in the 1980s 250 feet were added to the breakwater which exacerbated the accumulation of sediment near the mouth of the channel leading to less decline and widening of the channel which leads to slower stream velocity and increased deposition. The main way to alleviate this self-exacerbating problem is to narrow the channel which will push the flow out the mouth. Dave will be retained as a continual consultant on the project. The public involvement for the project may be pushed out until next summer.

*Ford led an update and discussion about lake levels on Pend Oreille.*

An audience member stated that he thought that there was an agreement made between the Army Corps and the State to have high water from Memorial Day until October 1. Ford explained that there is not such an agreement. There is an agreement from the Corps to hold water up until the third Sunday in September and to only drop one foot by the fourth Sunday. The Corps has resisted any promises on spring levels for reasons of flood control. There was a discussion on the pros and cons of low water in the winter and the downstream concerns/desires that the Corps is trying to balance in their decision making. It was pointed out that last summer had the longest full pool on record and it is likely to be the same this summer.

*Ryan Luttman, City of Sandpoint Public Works, updated the Commission on the Sandpoint Wastewater Treatment Plant discharge permit.*

Ryan explained that the current discharge permit was granted in 2002. He said that there has been a lot of changeover in the City which has left everyone with a lot of catching up to do on the permit. The City hired JUB engineers to assist with the permit and help answer some questions. He stated that they asked JUB to answer three specific questions: Is the draft permit protective of the environment? Is the permit too onerous for the small City of Sandpoint? Can discharge capacity be removed in the future if it is granted in this cycle? The City received a \$65,000 grant to help complete their wastewater master plan.

Ryan explained that the new draft permit had three main pollutants of concern: phosphorus, ammonia, and mercury. The City has been meeting with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to gain a better understanding of the rationale behind the testing and limits for these pollutants. The City has been trying to better understand where the phosphorus numbers came from. They also believe that there needs to be additional background testing of surface water and discharge waters before a protective and reasonable ammonia limit can be set. In this permit the City was assigned fish tissue analysis. The City is questioning the effectiveness of this assignment as it is a significant and expensive undertaking that is beyond the standard requirements of a NPDES permit. The comment period for this draft permit was extended until July 5, 2016.

*Shannon Williamson, Lake Pend Oreille Waterkeeper (LPOW), gave a presentation on their Water Quality Monitoring Program (WQMP) and their Stormwater Monitoring Program (SMP).*

Shannon explained that the WQMP uses citizen scientist volunteers to collect annual water quality samples following strict, standardized protocols. At fifteen sites volunteers collect monthly water samples from June through October. The collector measures the temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, and pH of the water. The lab tests each sample for E. Coli, total coliform bacteria, phosphorus, nitrogen and total organic carbon. The data is converted into interactive graphs that you can visit on the LPOW website at [www.lpow.org](http://www.lpow.org). Shannon showed two of the charts with total phosphorus numbers at the Sandpoint wastewater outflow and at City Beach. The phosphorus levels were much higher at the wastewater discharge point.

Shannon explained that this was the first year of the Stormwater Monitoring Program (SMP). This study monitored two outflows draining to Sand Creek monthly from March through May, one from the Walmart parking lot and one from Chestnut Street (which drains the former pole treatment property). These discharges were tested for copper, zinc, lead, mercury, nitrate/nitrite, total suspended solids, total phosphorus, total organic carbon surfactants, diesel/motor oil, gasoline/BTEX, herbicide, E. Coli, total coliform bacteria, water temperature, pH, and dissolved oxygen. Both drainages had high levels of many of the pollutants as you can see on the slide below.

**Results**

	Chestnut Drainage		Walmart Drainage		
	March	April	March	April	May
Diesel (mg/L)	0	0.168	0	0.1235	0.279
bis(2-Ethylhexyl)phthalate (ug/L)	0	0.58	0.039	0.01	0.013
Pentachlorophenol (ug/L)	0.619	1.07	0.505	1.12	0.46
Nitrate/Nitrite (mg/L)	0.531	0.771	0	6	5
TP (mg/L)	0.012	0.014	0.016	0.071	0.038
TOC (mg/L)	3.45	2.73	4.93	1.91	5.98
Surfactant (mg/L)	0.027	0.027	0.039	0.032	0.042
E. Coli (1/100ml)	2	1	16	2400	3
Tot. Coliform (1/100ml)	330	240	690	2400	2400
2,4-D (ug/L)			0	0	1.18

*Ed Jochum, Bonner County Sheriff Marine Division, gave a presentation on the department.*

Ed explained that the primary goals of the Marine Division are safety, public education, and search and rescue efforts. He said that twenty-seven percent of all boatable waters in Idaho are in Bonner County which is almost four times the amount of any other county in Idaho. The division employs about 20 officers during the summer season and few stay on the entire year. The employees go through about one month of full time training. Their equipment is modern and high-tech. These days the dispatch is totally computerized so that they can see where all the boats are at all times. There are five boats on Pend Oreille, one on Priest and two personal watercrafts that move around. There is one vessel stationed at Hope throughout the year. The winter time patrol vessel may be moved to Garfield Bay if the dock extension is completed. Ed explained that the budget for the department comes from boater registrations and the gas tax. Occasionally equipment is acquired through Waterways Improvement Funds (WIF) grants.

Questions and comments following Ed's presentation led to these points:

- Recognition that the Marine Department does an excellent job protecting boaters on our waterways.
- Ed explained that No Wake violations are the most commonly reported crime on the water and there was a short discussion on how we can improve this situation.

*The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm*