

SLPOA Mission: To develop the capacity within our community to provide a sustainable lake habitat that will allow all people who live, work and play within its environment an optimal North Idaho experience.

The Brickel Creek Habitat Improvement Project *by: Karen Cowan, SLPOA Board member*



200 of the 600 feet of The Brickel Creek Habitat Improvement Project were conducted the fall of 2016. This project was supported by SLPOA, The Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Community Volunteers.

The purpose of the project was to use bioengineering techniques to correct stream and bank stability and prevent future erosion. It also improved rearing and migration of fish habitat and fencing and ground cleaning to protect the area from grazing and wildfire.

Another goal of the project was to expand a volunteer group of citizens outside of the SLPOA board to assist with lake improvement projects. By creating stakeholder involvement & community partnerships we will build capacity to accomplish continued environmental improvements for Spirit Lake.



First of 6 structures on Brickel Creek

200 of the 600 feet of Brickel Creek bank were stabilized to control erosion and sediment flow into Spirit Lake. This was accomplished by covering exposed soil with rock and logs. The rock and logs allowed for structured fish pools to be established, which also slow the flow of sediment. Then woody cover plantings of native trees and shrubs were placed along the bank. New maintenance and access gates were installed in the area, to protect it from wild and domestic grazing and fire risk was reduced by scalping the area of tall fire fuel.

Although several needed lake improvements exist, the Brickel Creek Habitat Improvement Project was highlighted because of an earlier project on Twin Lakes and available funding from the Fish and Game Department for 2016.

Next Steps for Spirit Lake Improvements

The Lakefront Property Owners Environmental Association of Spirit Lake (LPOEASL) better known as Spirit Lake Property Owners Association (SLPOA) has existed since 1973

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Location of first phase of Brickel Creek Habit Improvement Project

5,000 Chinook Salmon Added to Spirit Lake

by: Sid Wurzburg, SLPOA Board member

In September of 2016 Idaho Fish and Game planted 5,000 Chinook salmon in Spirit Lake. 2,500 lake spawning (sterile) and 2,500 creek spawning (fertile).



This is an experiment to see how each variety does in the lake and how the salmon effect the kokanee population. The fish will live 4 or 5 years and then die. The plan is to place a fish barrier at the mouth of Brickel creek the last two years to prevent any spawning and thus eliminate the salmon population if there are any problems. There are no current plans for additional salmon to be planted.

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Next Steps for Spirit Lake Improvements, *Continued*

to protect the historical and environmental resources of Spirit Lake.

This active board is currently monitoring, regulating and providing the following service projects to protect Spirit Lake environmental resources.

- **Fixing and maintaining Mill Pond leaks.**
- **Monitoring and treating invasive plant species.**
- **Monitoring and reporting of lake water quality and clarity.**
- **Managing Lake clean-up projects.**
- **Provide an active grant writing campaign to support funding improvements.**
- **Provide ongoing communication through newsletters, meetings and email, to those who live, work and play on Spirit Lake.**

Protecting Spirit Lake is also connected to the economic viability of the city and community. Local jobs, businesses and recreational enterprises are dependent on the lake's long term health. The City of Spirit Lake's revitalization efforts also depend on the communities joint efforts for preservation of the lake.

SPLOA has developed a long range plan for environmental improvements on Spirit Lake that include:

- **Ensure natural plant survival**
- **Improving the fish habitat**
- **Prevent and control potential flooding**
- **Improved water clarity and flow**
- **Sustain natural animal life environment**
- **Improved recreational opportunities**

The Brickel Creek Habitat Improvement Project that began last fall (200') addresses four of our six goals. We still have 400' to complete in 2017. Additional funding will be requested from the Idaho Fish and Game Department and Inland Northwest Community Foundation to help support the completion of this project. Community volunteers are also critical for its completion.

Other essential future projects that will be addressed are as follows:

Dam Replacement Project (Labyrinth Weir) is critical to maintaining lakeshore wetlands and the recreational and economic fabric of the community. The design must provide the passing of high water flow with head gates, maintain constant lake levels/storage and control flow/sediment movement

through the causeway opening. This project addresses all six SLPOA goals.

Causeway Improvement Project is necessary to improve the long term habitat of the Lake and Mill Pond area, restore the natural flow of sediments in the Causeway and Mill Pond and provide safe recreational opportunities. The design objectives must include; bridge access expansion or replacement to restore the natural flow of sediments, which has been restricted, through the Lake and Mill Pond, maintaining the seal on the Mill Pond, safety improvements at the boat launch and bridge and a landscape plan for the lakeshore areas. This project addresses all six SLPOA goals.

To support SLPOA goals and efforts for environmental improvements we will continue to request funding from local, state and federal organizations and volunteer support of time and funding from anyone who lives, works or plays on Spirit Lake.

Inland Empire Paper Access

by: Shelley Tschida, *Quality Services*

For those of you who enjoy spending time of the neighboring Inland Empire Paper property, be prepared for the first permit price increase in 10 years. The annual family permit is now \$80.00 and the individual annual is now \$50.00. The motorized daily permit is \$15.00 and the non-motorized permit is \$2.50.

The winter weather created a good high elevation snow-pack and high winds toppled trees in some areas so if you are planning early season by-pass of the gates by ATV or mountain bike, please be careful. Gates are scheduled to open on May 27. Idaho Department of Lands is planning a large road construction project off of the M-7 road on the Brickel Creek side of the mountain this summer so check with the gate attendants for updates on road work and logging operations. You can also stay current by liking Quality Services, Inc. on Facebook or checking our website at www.quality-service-inc.com.



Shelley Tschida, QSI

A promotional banner for Boars Nest Lake Front Bar & Grill. On the left, there is a photo of a food truck with the text "Quality Meats, Smoked to Perfection!". In the center is the Boars Nest logo, which includes a boar's head and the text "BOARS NEST LAKE FRONT BAR & GRILL". To the right of the logo is a list of menu items: Smoked Meats, Burgers, Full Liquor Bar, Draft Beer, Bottled Beer, Patio Sealing, Dockside Service, and Live Music. Below the menu items are photos of various food dishes. At the bottom right, there is contact information for Sedlmayers Spirit Lake Resort: 7712 W. Spirit Lake Road, Spirit Lake, ID 208-623-3877.

Mill Pond Hole Repair Working Great!

by: Dave Krise, SLPOA Board member

Just a little background for those who not aware of the unique aspects of Spirit Lake.

Spirit Lake is unique among the world's lakes. At least parts of it, including the Mill Pond, which depends on a "bottom seal" to retain its water. The bottom forms a seal much like a bathtub. If the seal is breached, water will run out like a draining bathtub. It will continue to drain until the currents deposit enough silt to plug the breach.

Over the years there have been several small breaches found around the lake. The Mill Pond has experienced the majority of these breaches. In most cases the holes are believed to be the result of the holes left behind from pilings that were removed or rotted away. These piling were installed by the



Dry Mill Pond after sand bag dam was in place - November 2015

Panhandle Lumber Company back in the 20's and 30's. In the past nature has filled any holes with silt being carried out of the lake.

In the 1950's, the original 900' span bridge was replaced with the current earthen dam, with it's small 30' opening. Now the majority of silt cannot get through to help fill any new holes.

In 2001 a major project was undertaken to install a fabric liner in the Mill Pond to eliminate or reduce the number of new breaches. This fix has worked over the years. In 2015 the Mill Pond nearly dried up due to a year of very little run off from Mt. Spokane and a very hot, dry summer.

In September a new, very substantial hole was discovered near the middle on the Mill Pond. Because of the drought year, once the lake level was even with the Mill Pond entrance



3 foot diameter hole in the Mill Pond - November 2015

a temporary sand bag dam was installed. With no water entering the Mill Pond the hole drained much of the remaining water allowing access for repair.

The hole had been created by water undermining the fabric liner where two seams overlapped. The hole was approximately 3' in diameter and was draining hundreds of gallons per hour.

Working with the Idaho Department of Lands we were able to get approval to repair the breach. A large area around the hole was excavated and refilled with new dirt and gravel and compacted. New fabric liner was installed over the area with 10' over laps and covered with sediment.



Frank Roberts and son show the scale

When the sand bag dam was removed the Mill Pond filled very quickly. The repair site, as well as the entire Mill Pond, is being monitored for any new holes or suspect areas.

The bottom line is we got our lake levels back and the repair is working great!

5,000 Chinook Salmon Planted in Spirit Lake

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The hope is that this will provide an opportunity to catch the large salmon, and that they will eat a lot of Kokanee, thus increasing the size of the Kokanee available to anglers.

The limit will be 2 fish over 20 inches. All smaller fish must be released. There should be a few 20 inch fish in late summer 2017,

and fish up to 28 inches the next 2 years.

Carson Watkins, the fish biologist running this program, has prepared a great article about this experiment and the history of the Spirit Lake Fishery. It is too long for this newsletter, but is a must read. It has been posted on the internet at www.spiritlake.org

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2017 in a Nutshell for IEP Timberlands By Paul Buckland, CF, Forest Resource Manager, Inland Empire Paper Company



Paul Buckland, IEP

So far this year, forestry operations at Inland Empire Paper Company (IEP) have been far from normal...Heck, I don't even know if I know what "normal" is anymore!

I'll start with the weather because that's something we can all relate to and I'll give you a forester's perspective. Last fall was pretty wet, which is a good thing for the seedlings we planted in October – they got a good watering before getting "put to bed" for the winter. The wet weather was good for mature trees as well because it relieves water-stress that puts trees at risk for opportunistic bark beetle attacks. The snowpack in the area is also well above normal this year, which is good for the vegetation, animals, and fish in the streams. That same snowpack also helps reduce wildfire risks in the summer.

It kind of sounds like "the more water the better" to a forester, right? Well...not exactly. The wet weather has caused us to suspend logging and hauling activity earlier than normal (to avoid soil compaction and road damage). This will make for a long spring breakup for our loggers and truck drivers. The recent rains in the region have caused flooding and wreaked havoc on some of our public roads (e.g. slumping, plugged culverts, and washouts). Our foresters have inspected some of IEP's road system recently and I'm happy to report no major damages. It's times like this that preventative road maintenance pays off.

Speaking of roads, I've received a few questions/comments this winter that run along the lines of "So, is IEP shutting down its timberlands to public use?"...What?!? I'm not sure how those rumors and perceptions get formed, but it couldn't be further from the truth. IEP has invested a considerable amount of time and effort to keep our timberlands available to the public. There are specific roads and areas with circumstances that compel us to restrict usage by the general public from time to time, but we're still committed to keeping our lands available to the public.

As a side note Spirit Lakers might be interested in: I attended a forestry conference last month in Spokane. One of the speakers was a wildlife biologist researching moose populations. He said that across the west and northeast US, moose populations are generally declining due to habitat loss, predation, and disease. He pointed out there was one exception to that trend, though: the inland northwest and particularly the Mount Spokane and Spirit Lake area had healthy and increasing populations of moose. A question from the audience (umm, it was me) sparked another comment from the researcher that the healthy population was due to the stable habitat and management style in the area: he called it a veritable "Moose Factory"...Now, if we can just keep those moose in the mountains and keep them from eating our home landscaping!

That's all for now. I look forward to seeing some friendly faces at the Spirit Lake annual meeting this summer!

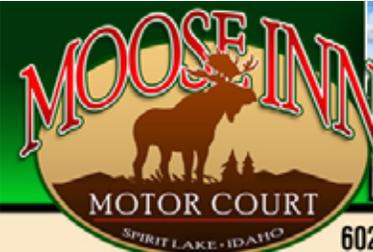
Empire Trails Update

by: Marc Kroetch, SLPOA Board member

Dave Krise just finished up the season's end map of the ALL NEW trail construction on Empire Trails in Spirit Lake. Great map, showing what we were able to accomplish this fall (a lot!), as well as what we have planned for next year. We were able to make it all the way to the first lookout earlier this week (just before the ground froze). This spot offers incredible views of the east end of the lake and beyond!

We hope everyone will enjoy the new additions to the trails and we look forward to adding even more next season! Thanks for using them, and again, thanks to Inland Empire Paper Company, Quality Services, the Spirit Lake Chamber of Commerce, and all of the great volunteers who make this a reality!





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Greetings Fellow Spirit Lake Property Owners *by: Marc Kroetch, SLPOA Board member*

We are writing you today to introduce you to the Spirit Lake Property Owners Association (SLPOA) and to up-date you on our on-going efforts to preserve, improve and protect the environment of the Spirit Lake watershed. We are a 501(c)(3) tax exempt non-profit association of individuals and groups with a common interest in Spirit Lake.

Some of our past projects include a log and dock round up to clean and clear the lake of debris which can be a hazard to navigation and a danger to the boating public. The Mill Pond restoration project which is an on-going effort to identify and repair areas where water is leaking from the lake causing dangerous low lake levels in mid summer. Brickel Creek project, together with Idaho Department of Lands and other state agencies we continually monitor the clarity of water and help to fund on going work to fight unwanted erosion of sediments into the lake.

Currently we are working on replacement of our dam at the north end of the lake and funding sources to implement the project.

We'd like to invite you to attend our annual meeting held in the Spirit Lake Community Center, August 12th. Meet your neighbors and have an opportunity to hear first hand about what we have accomplished. Coffee at 9:00 a.m. meeting starts at 10:00 a.m.

Please join us in preserving the beautiful lake that we've all come to cherish and become a member today. Membership is open to all who share our environmental concerns and contributions are tax deductible. The IRS uses our formal name "Lakefront Property Owners Environmental Association of Spirit Lake, Inc.," but we accept checks payable to SLPOA.

Please send in your membership today we need your help!

The 2017 SLPOA Board

If you would like to become more involved as a volunteer, a board member or member of SLPOA, please contact us at: spiritlakePOA@gmail.com or through our website at www.spiritlake.org



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Jerry Peterson



Dan Sullivan



Sid Wurzburg



Randy Hurst



Carol Capra

Mark your calendars and attend the Spirit Lake Property Owners Association Annual Meeting at the Spirit Lake Community Center, (9:00-10:00 Coffee and Social Hour) 10:00 am, Saturday, August 12th

***Become a "Friend of the Lake" and Join the SLPOA today!
...for only \$35 per year you can be a part of the healthy future of your lake.***

YES..... I would like to Join the Spirit Lake Property Owners Association!

YES I would like to continue receiving the "Spirit Lake Report" Newsletter!

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code _____ Phone: _____

Email _____ Comments: _____

*Please send this completed form with payment to:
SLPOA • P.O. Box 363 • Spirit Lake, ID 83869*

Historic Lake Levels

by: Sid Wurzburg, SLPOA Board member

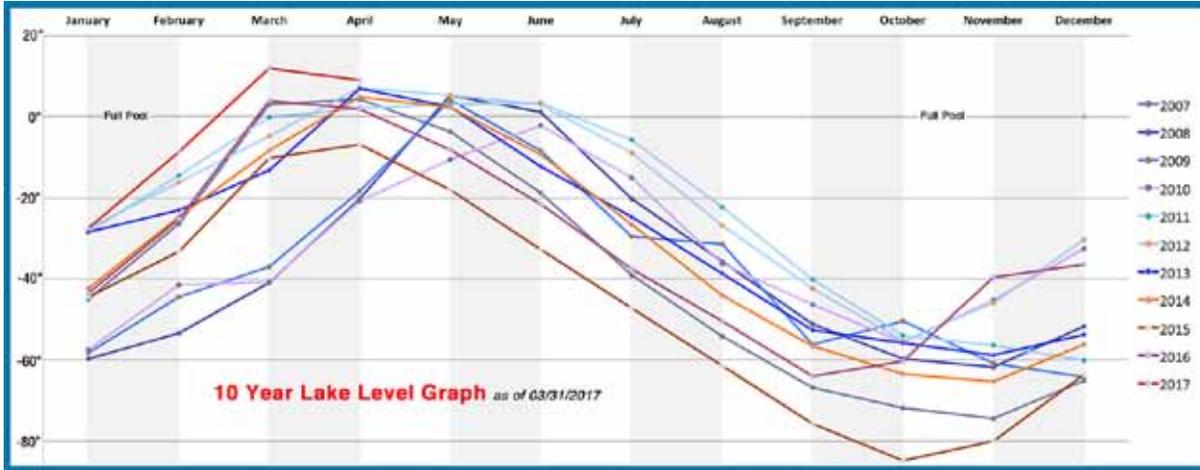
This is the highest lake level in over 30 years. Ice covered the entire lake through the end of February, except around the shore. Three and a half inches of rain the last 3 weeks of March and warm temperatures have caused a dramatic rise in the lake level, even when all boards were removed from the dam the lake rose to 12 inches over normal high water. The lake level began dropping in April



Spirit Lake emptying into Spirit Creek through the Dam/Weir - March 2017

and should continue to drop slowly if the weather forecast of light rain and cooler days and nights hold.

As of mid-April the lake has come down almost 6 inches from the unusually high level it reached. 2 boards were reinserted in the dam in order to keep the water as close to the maximum the State suggests for as late into the season as possible.



2007 -2017
Monthly Lake Levels

Become a "Friend of the Lake" and Join the SLPOA today!

