



Spirit Lake Report

Periodic Update on Spirit Lake by the **SPIRIT LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION**

July 2026 Vol.12

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.*

YOU ARE INVITED – SLPOA ANNUAL MEETING

THE 2026 ANNUAL MEETING OF SPIRIT LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 2026

**MEMBER REGISTRATION – 9:00 AM
PROGRAM AND BUSINESS MTG – 10:00 AM**

**TIMBERLAKE HIGH SCHOOL
5973 W. HWY. 54
SPIRIT LAKE, IDAHO 83869**

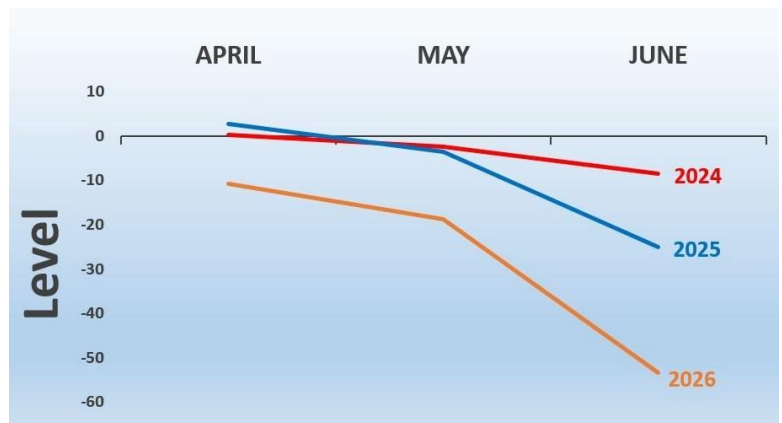
Important: You do not have to be a lakefront property owner to join SLPOA. We welcome anyone that enjoys the lake and wants to help conserve it as a valued natural resource.



**50/50 RAFFLE
REFRESHMENTS
SPIRIT LAKE MAYOR
INLAND EMPIRE PC NEW FOREST
MANAGER
KOOTENAI COUNTY DEPT OF HEALTH
US FISH AND WILDLIFE
SLPOA PROJECTS AND PROGRESS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION**

LAKE QUALITY DATA

This year has not set any records for being the hottest or coldest (so far). However, it definitely has the potential for being one of our driest! The maximum water level occurred in late April and was 11.28" below the top of the dam (our full pool level). As of July 4th, we had dropped almost 25" and were 3 ft below our full pool level. Currently the lake is dropping at just under ½ inch per day, which is approximately its normal rate for this time of the year. On the positive side, you may have noticed the extremely good water clarity of 7.7m (over 25ft) and no reported algae blooms!!!



NO TRESPASSING – PRIVATE DOCKS ARE PRIVATE

Tying up to or using a private boat dock without the owner's permission is considered **criminal trespass** in Idaho under [Idaho Code § 18-7008](#). [1, 2,]

Docks on Idaho's navigable lakes and waterways require encroachment permits from the [Idaho Department of Lands](#). These structures remain private property, and the permit space does not grant the public access to use or tie off to the dock itself. [3]



Key Things to Know

- **It is still private property:** Docks are considered privately-owned property. Using, tying up a boat or personal watercraft, or getting on a private dock without prior permission is unlawful. [4]
- **Emergencies are an exception:** An exception is made under the maritime "Safe Harbor" rule if an emergency threatens life or your vessel (e.g., severe storm, sinking). [5]
- **Navigability Rights vs. Dock Rights:** While Idaho's "Public Trust Doctrine" protects the public's right to navigate and fish on the water itself, it does not give the public the right to step onto or tie a boat to private docks. [1,6,]
- **What to do:** Make notes of incidents • If possible, take photos of vehicles, license plates, damages, etc., with your phone • If you speak to the trespasser, remain polite and ask them to leave. Note the physical description of the vehicle, individual(s), license plate number(s), date and time • DO NOT physically or verbally threaten the trespasser • DO NOT point or brandish a firearm at the trespasser. You will have committed a far more severe crime than trespass. • You CANNOT protect real or personal property with lethal force • If the trespasser(s) will not leave or you are threatened, withdraw and call the Sheriff. Let law enforcement deal with the issue. [1]

[1] <https://www.idahofb.org/media/quelpem0/trespass-brochure-web-version-updated-photos.pdf>

[2] <https://www.idahofb.org/media/b2vb14bq/trespass-brochure-web-version.pdf>

[3] <https://www.idl.idaho.gov/lakes-rivers/encroachments/>

[4] <https://www.42northlandco.com/understanding-idahos-trespass-and-fence-laws/>

[5] <https://trespass.uslegal.com/criminal-liability/>

[6] <https://www.quora.com/If-a-boat-is-tied-up-at-a-dock-or-a-pier-at-what-point-are-you-trespassing>

BOAT LAUNCHING – FEE VS NO FEE



The Spirit Lake Maine Street Sportsman's Access is controlled by **Idaho Department of Fish & Game** (IDFG). The IDFG does not typically charge launch fees. The majority of their hundreds of boating access sites are free to use because they are funded through hunting and fishing licenses, gas taxes paid by boaters, and equipment taxes. If the IDFG ramp is located within an Idaho State Park (e.g., Farragut or Lake Cascade State Parks) or a federal site, you will need to pay the park's standard **Motor Vehicle Entry Fee**.

The **Kootenai County** Annual Boat Launch Pass or daily fees are required to use the following County-managed boat launches: 1. Bayview – Lake Pend Oreille * 2. Carlin Bay – Lake Coeur d'Alene 3. Fernan Park – Fernan Lake 4. Greensferry – Spokane River 5. Harrison – Lake Coeur d'Alene 6. Hauser Lake – Hauser Lake 7. Mica Bay – Lake Coeur d'Alene 8. Spokane Point – Lake Coeur d'Alene 9. Sunup Bay – Lake Coeur d'Alene 10. Upper Twin Lakes – Twin Lakes

Other County-managed boat launches, which **do not require** a fee at this time, are: 1. **Bronze Bay – Spirit Lake** 2. Fernan East – Fernan Lake 3. Fuller's Landing – Lake Coeur d'Alene 4. Gould's Landing – Lake Coeur d'Alene 5. Harlow Point – Lake Coeur d'Alene 6. Kidd Island Bay – Lake Coeur d'Alene 7. Lower Twin Lakes – Twin Lakes 8. **Maiden Rock – Spirit Lake** 9. Neachen Bay – Lake Coeur d'Alene 10. Rockford Bay – Lake Coeur d'Alene

FIRE DANGER

The summer is one of our favorite times at the lake. However, recreation in and near the forest comes with risks. Notably, this year as in the past several, fire danger is on our minds. With low snow levels this past winter and below average rainfall going into the “fire season”, the forest is already very dry. Unfortunately, many wildfires are the result of human activity. So, please be careful and thoughtful about any potential for starting a wildfire. It can happen if it is not top of mind. We are all advised to make a plan, just in case.

General emergency readiness information is available from the federal government at <https://www.ready.gov/>

Make a Plan: Put a plan together by discussing the questions below with your family, friends or household to start your emergency plan.

1. How will I receive emergency alerts and warnings?
2. What is my shelter plan?
3. What is my evacuation route?
4. What is my family/household communication plan?
5. Do I need to update my emergency preparedness kit?



Other Information:

- Sign up for Alert! Kootenai at <https://www.kcsheriff.com/228/Alert-Kootenai>
- You can get information about active wildfires at <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/>

BRICKEL CREEK, LAKE LEVEL AND THE MILL POND

Brickel Creek

In an ongoing effort to restore Brickel Creek meadow wetland habitat and fisheries, SLPOA continues to plan and implement projects.

SLPOA recently received a grant from Idaho Fish and Game to install new plantings in various areas of the stream banks later this fall.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has been consulted and has done surveying of Brickel Creek in anticipation of adding Beaver Dam Analogs (BDAs) into areas of the stream. The intent is to slow erosion, sediment deposits into the lake, and restore fish and wildlife habitat.



The Millpond

For some who may not know the history, the Millpond developed a number of “leaks in the mid-90s due to old mill and bridge pilings that had been driven into the lake bottom and finally deteriorated. This caused the lake to lose water directly into the bedrock below.

A lining was placed in much of the millpond and was successful at nearly stopping the leakage. Unfortunately, this fix appears to be failing in some areas. Propwash and wave action has uncovered the liner in places and appears to be a source of water loss.

SLPOA is monitoring the situation and will seek permits from the Department of Lands to implement repairs as needed.

Lake Level

For the same reason that fire danger is a heightened concern this year, the water level of the lake is notably lower than usual. With a low snowpack, especially at the mid-elevations, and another early melt off, the lake never reached its peak high level. In fact, it only reached about a foot from the top of the weir.

From the peak through June the water level as retreated about ½ inch per day on average. At this rate, boats may have to come out of the lake earlier this year.





Friends of Spirit Lake
Spirit Lake Property Owners Association
PO Box 363
Spirit Lake, ID 83869

INLAND EMPIRE PAPER COMPANY IS ISSUING A NON-MOTORIZED NO FEE PERMIT

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THE PERMIT IS REQUIRED FOR ACCESS TO THE IEPC PROPERTY

All passes are available online at <https://www.axxessrec.com/permits>.



NEW **IEP Conservation Area Non-Motorized Annual Permit**

No Fee

This permit allows access to the Conservation Easement Areas **ONLY (see maps on website)** for the Individual listed on the permit for one calendar year ending December 31. This permit covers non-motorized recreational activities only. Using this permit outside of these areas will constitute immediate dismissal from the property.