State VIPs Witness Trapper Damage

THE SELKIRK-PRIEST BASIN Association in May launched its biggest challenge ever, filing suit against the state of Idaho over new logging planned in a badly degraded drainage above Upper Priest Lake.

SPBA is contesting the Lower Green Bonnet timber sale on the grounds that the Trapper Creek drainage in which it is located has been so heavily logged that further cutting poses serious threats to forest productivity, water quality and fish and wildlife habitat.

Huckleberry Plan Returns

POKANE DEVELOPER Don Barbieri has returned to the Bonner County Planning Commission with a new proposal to develop Priest Lake's remote Huckleberry Bay — and is openly pushing for a "rapid conclusion" to the permitting process.

The new plans would create two subdivisions containing 41 residential lots within a Planned Unit Development that's about half the size of the PUD rejected by the planning commissioners last March.

The plans omit the 60 waterfront con-

Rare Berry Discovered in Basin

NINETY-ONE YEARS is a long time to be missing — long enough to give up hope, in fact. And so it has been for a secretive plant known as the salmonberry, a thick- et-forming perennial last seen east of the Cascade Mountains in 1901.

The inland salmonberry has been lost to time and memory for 91 years. "Likely extirpated" is the way the Idaho Native Plant Society lists it. The diminutive berry plant was considered by the society to be "known only from historical occurrence" — a single, vague occurrence it turns out — made by a botanist named Piper at Priest Lake in 1901.

But now time has given up its nearly 100-year-old secret. Just as hope was fading, the biological re-discovery of the century has been made. The inland salmonberry has been found — at Priest Lake.

Idaho Conservation Data Center botanist Rob Bursick, who made the dis-
Chairman’s Message

SPBA Mirrors Public Opinion

The focus of public opinion and sentiment as revealed by a recent Roper Organization Poll is centering exactly where the SPBA has been focused for years — on the protection of the environment.

Indeed, events at the Earth Summit in Rio to the crystallization of public opinion in this nation reveal people everywhere are more concerned than ever regarding the deterioration of the planet. The poll taken for the Times Mirror Magazines this past March includes the findings that almost two-thirds of the American people would choose environmental protection over economic development. Those who have argued that Americans favor jobs over the environment are in error.

Specifically, the poll discovered that 63 percent of Americans want stronger, not weaker, environmental protection. About 70 percent of Americans agree that: “We can protect and conserve wildlife, natural areas and natural resources by managing these resources, while also using them for the benefit of our economy and the public.” Politicians should take note.

Members of the SPBA should recognize that most Americans share our sentiments and desire to protect and wisely use our natural resources. However, the politicians, regulatory agencies of government and their clients in the extractive industries have ducked and ignored the wishes of citizens as they have pursued a reckless policy geared to generating short-term profits over long-term sustainability and care of the environment. Across the nation grassroots organizations such as SPBA have sprung up at the local level in an attempt to counter and moderate the excesses of corporate greed, governmental collusion and indifference.

Sad to say however, recent authoritative reports are revealing what we feared was happening has happened. From satellite photos, scientists from NASA have concluded that the forests of the Northwest are so badly damaged (judged to be worse than Brazil) by excessive logging as to “have serious implications” for the diversity of plant and animal species needed to maintain a healthy biological system. The scientists further said, “It appears that much of the forest has been literally cut to pieces.”

On the heels of the NASA report is a Congressional report that finds exaggerated inventories and regeneration of forests by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management in the Pacific Northwest. The study shows dozens of examples of “phantom forests” where logged areas have not regrown and inventories are overstated. The purpose, according to U.S. Senator George Miller, D-Calif., is to justify cutting more timber than would be allowed under the government’s sustainable harvest policy.

Members and friends of SPBA can take comfort in knowing that the goals and activities of our organization are very much in concert with the values and desires of mainstream Americans as revealed by the recent Roper Poll. However, the NASA and Congressional reports serve to remind us of the seriousness and magnitude of the mismanagement of the forests in our part of the world. Citizen groups such as the SPBA are an integral part of the struggle to attain sane and defensible land use policies.

H. Bruce Brockway
SPBA Chairman

Planned Giving Can Ensure Basin Legacy Survives

In its short existence SPBA has become the dominant organization protecting the environment in the precious Selkirk-Priest Basin.

The group’s accomplishments have been possible only through the tireless efforts of a few committed individuals and financial support in the form of dues and donations from many others.

Those who seek to profit from our unique environment seem to possess unlimited resources. SPBA’s resources are meager and uncertain.

Few non-profit organizations function at such low levels of expense as does SPBA. Board commitment is such that over 90 percent of each donated dollar is directly spent to achieve our goals.

While annual dues from our members are important, these funds are simply inadequate if SPBA is to succeed in its mission. Fortunately, ways exist for you to help preserve our precious paradise. One way is to remember SPBA in your will. No legacy can be more important than to ensure that the natural beauty you have witnessed will be there for future generations.

Another way is to donate property. Have you wondered what will happen to your precious lake home after you pass away? Will your children enjoy it and maintain it as you have?

A donation of property provides significant benefits to the donor and certainly to the mission of SPBA. One type of donation would provide you major income tax deductions now and still allow you to live on your property until death. Another type would provide significant income tax deductions and totally avoid the tax on the appreciation in value of your property.

Still another type of donations would provide income tax deduction, avoid capital gain taxation on the property’s appreciation and provide you a lifetime income.

SPBA is qualified to explain these means of donating to you in confidentiality. Of course, you should also consult with your legal and financial advisors.

If you are interested, call or write SPBA's office.
CeleBasin '92
Coming Up
September 12

THE DATE is Sept. 12. The place is Elkin's Resort on Priest Lake.

And the event you don't want to miss is SPBA's CeleBasin — our third annual Celebration of the Basin.

For the uninitiated, CeleBasin mixes informational booths, food, drink, music, kids' games and a silent auction of high-quality merchandise into a fun-filled day.

This year CeleBasin plans call for a bigger and better event than the prototypes of the first two years.

In past years, SPBA has held its annual membership meeting on the day previous to the CeleBasin party and auction. This year, we're holding the annual meeting the same morning of CeleBasin, starting at 10 a.m. At noon the annual meeting will adjourn and CeleBasin fun will begin.

"CeleBasin celebrants can still just show up for the party and auction, of course, but this will make it easier for members to learn more about the group," said Chairman Bruce Brockway. "We hope more will come to the annual meeting."

CeleBasin itself is undergoing substantial improvements this year. The popular silent auction will include up to twice as many items. There will be a bigger emphasis on displays and demonstrations on environmental topics. There will be more fun and games for young kids, and more live music.

But the biggest change is the addition of keynote entertainment during the afternoon. The CeleBasin committee will be announcing the schedule of entertainment in special mailings of invitations to members in August.

If you can donate auction items, please call Chris Bessler at 208/263-3573. Otherwise, mark your calendars now for a day of fun and learning at beautiful at Priest Lake.

SPBA Awards Scholarship

FOR THE SECOND year, the SPBA has awarded a Priest River Lamanna High School graduate a sizable scholarship. Chairman Bruce Brockway handed Desireé Ann Jachetta the $1,000 scholarship at commencement June 8.

Desireé follows in the footsteps of the first SPBA scholarship recipient, Zeecha Berry, who is currently on the dean's list at the University of Idaho.

Desireé was selected from a pool of eight applicants. She plans to enroll at North Idaho College, then on to Eastern Washington University for a master's degree in business administration.

Desireé had three distinctive "careers" in high school. She maintained a B-plus average and at the same time was a cheerleader and participated in girls varsity basketball.

In addition, she worked more than 30 hours a week at her part-time job with McInnis Real Estate Agency in Priest River.

And finally, she is a horse enthusiast. She has shown quarter horses competitively for nearly eight years throughout the Northwest and Canada. This year she won two Idaho State Championships and represented Idaho at the World Championships in Tulsa, Okla. She ranked 11th in world standings in 1991.

Desireé demonstrated dedication, competence, the willingness to work hard, and a compelling need.

For students like Desireé, SPBA's scholarship award is not an expense. It is an investment in the future.

Recently, an SPBA member donated $200 to the 1993 scholarship fund. The Community Involvement Committee urges all members to consider giving to this worthwhile cause.

Anyone interested in donated is invited to write or call Executive Director Chris Bessler at 208/263-3573.

Affinity Phone Program

Help Yourself — And SPBA

TO PARAPHRASE AN OLD recruiting slogan, SPBA's Affinity Fund long-distance phone program wants you. And there's a very clear reward: substantially lower rates for long-distance calls.

How much are the savings? For example a 4.6-minute-long call at 1:10 p.m. from Priest River to Spokane (or vice versa) on Sprint Plus would cost you $3.04; on MCI, $2.11; or on AT&T Pro Wats, $3.12.

On Affinity, the call would cost you $1.53 — a savings of 27 to 51 percent over the three major carriers!

The Affinity Fund is good for SPBA members and friends, and it's good for SPBA. Those who join Affinity see a full 8 percent of their phone bill contributed back to SPBA.

To date 24 persons have joined the program, which will likely generate $50 to $80 a month for SPBA. Our goal is to sign up 10 times as many people, and make Affinity a major part of the SPBA fundraising effort.

"It's nearly a perfect program for us," said SPBA Executive Director Chris Bessler. "Not only will SPBA benefit, but the people who sign on will almost certainly see a reduction in their phone rates. I see it as something nice we can do for our members."

Phone service through Affinity is the same as any major carrier, and switching takes only about five minutes at a cost of $4 to $5. Affinity guarantees its service: They'll pay to switch you back.

If you'd like more information, call Bessler at 208/263-3573 or write: SPBA, Box 181, Coolin, ID 83821.
Goose Report
Lots of families live around Priest Lake, but this summer two families are really living on the lake. The families are Canada geese, and they were spotted several times this spring near Beaver Creek by SPBA members Barbara Schreiber, Betty Nyman and Kate and Harry Batey and others. Each family has three goslings. Forest Service biologists were pleased to hear that geese were nesting on the big lake, where there is often too little cover for the young, who can't fly until July. That makes them very vulnerable to boat traffic, so if you're boating near Beaver Creek give the geese a gander — but leave them plenty of room.

The Quota Game
A congressional report released in June on 15 national forests in Oregon, Washington, California, Idaho and Montana found exaggerated logging quotas that can't be sustained. Observed Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., who heads the House Interior Committee: “The mismanagement of these forests has been devastating.” The report found that Forest Service computer records often showed mature timber where there was actually a clearcut. On July 1, SPBA Director Barry Rosenberg testified before the House Interior Committee on a bill introduced by Idaho Congressman Larry LaRocco, the Forest Health Act. Ken Kohli of the Intermountain Forest Industry Association in Coeur d'Alene also testified: both sides expressed doubts about the bill, which would require an inventory of our country's national forests and call for salvage sales where they are needed.

The Basin's Polar Bear
In a world where anything's possible, it could be that a polar bear has wandered into the Priest Basin. More likely, though, the pure white bear which a horseback rider in the north part of the Basin reported seeing in early June was a rare partial albino black bear. Idaho Fish and Game Officer Don Carr said the rider reported spotting the bear at close range and is positive it was completely white except for a black snout. A true albino would have had pink eyes and a pink snout; Carr speculated the animal had either been in mud or was only a partial albino. He also queried the rider whether it could have been merely a very light cinnamon-colored bear. “He said no, it was snow white — like polar bear white.” Carr said during his career he has encountered other albino animals, such as squirrels, “but I don't know of another case with a black bear.”

Big Trees Facts
The largest Engelmann Spruce tree in the Priest Basin is believed to be growing on Continental Mountain. It measures 50 inches in diameter and towers 166 feet above the forest floor. The largest birch tree is on Hughes Ridge, measuring about 25 inches in diameter and rising 123 feet high. The largest aspen is in Snow Creek, at the Lower West Branch drainage. It's 114 feet tall and 28 inches in diameter. Sightlines will have more “largest tree facts” in future issues. If you know of a candidate specimen, call us!

Eagles Return
Say “Welcome Back” to some long-lost Priest Basin dignitaries! For the first time since who-knows-when a pair of American bald eagles have taken up housekeeping — and hopefully, parenthood — in the area. Yes, bald eagles are now confirmed to be nesting in the Priest Lake ecosystem! The birds are the national symbol and are currently listed as endangered species. It is a federal offense to harm or harass them. For protective purposes the location of the nest is not being publically disclosed. Bald eagle populations nationally declined dramatically during the '50s and '60s when extensive use of DDT caused serious problems with the great birds' reproductive system.

The Beauty of Biodiversity
Add yet another important product of forest biodiversity to those recently discovered that serve mankind in ways heretofore unknown. Scientists have extracted from the seed of the Asian neem tree, a species of mahogany, a natural insecticide capable of effectively controlling 170 types of insects, including locusts, aphids, weevils, mosquitoes, beetles, caterpillars and fruit flies. Among other things, the biological extract could virtually replace the chemical and synthetic bug killers now used in lawn and garden care. Called azadirachtin, the new extract joins the natural cancer-killing substances derived from the yew tree. These products that can only be found in healthy forest ecosystems — proof again, that trees hold treasures more valuable than board feet.

The Log- and Job-Export Business
While the U.S. timber industry has been heralding itself as the protector of rural jobs it continues to ship billions of board feet of unprocessed logs overseas. Apparently American jobs aren't worth the export profits. Now industry has found another way to hurt timber communities while helping itself. Big timber has convinced Washington regulators that, because Canada has banned log exports, it should be penalized for selling lumber in America by imposing a 6.5 percent duty on Canadian lumber. That raises prices and hurts the economy.
Propaganda for the Kids

'Timbear's' Materials Spur Debate in Schools

TIMBER INDUSTRY members of the Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce this spring distributed "Timbear's Unibearity" coloring books and musical cassettes to second-, third- and fourth-graders in Bonner County — kicking off a contentious debate over whether county schools should be open to propagandizing by special-interest groups.

While school officials say they saw the materials as a learning tool for Arbor Day, many parents — and SPBA directors — see it differently.

They contend the "Timbear's" stories and sing-along cassette contain misinformation on the growth rate of trees, clear cuts and other forestry issues, and contains "loaded" language that aims to reinforce timber industry goals.

The materials were approved after a meeting between Assistant Schools Superintendent Gary Parsons and the Chamber's Timber Information Specialist, Shawn Keough. The Chamber's timber industry members provided them for free.

Although Parsons didn't expect controversy, distribution of the packages by the district created numerous objections and sparked letters to editors and coverage in the local press.

SPBA filed a formal complaint with the school district on their review policies and the content of the package. The complaint asks the school district to recall the materials and disavow their content because the use of such materials in the classrooms violates the district's policy manual and stated educational philosophy.

SPBA Chairman Bruce Brockway said the "Timbear’s materials fail to assist children to acquire the scientific attitude toward living forms and natural resources or to foster an understanding of the inter-relationship existing between man and his environment — both of which are specifically called for in the district's published educational philosophy."

The methods of presentation — cartoons and songs with a big, friendly bear — are also unfair in that they employ images, symbols and songs that are manipulative and indoctrinating rather than instructive and informative to young minds.

Keough agreed the materials are "definitely pro-logging" but denied that they are propaganda. She said the "Timbear's" materials are instructive about logging equipment and what loggers do in the woods.

Keough also noted that she and members of the timber industry believe schools are distributing information biased against logging. She added the materials have been used in thousands of schools across the Northwest without complaint or controversy.

In a letter to Parsons, the Chamber's steering committee asserts the distribution of the package through the schools is appropriate because of the role the timber industry plays in the local economy, and their desire to provide the children of the county with "some of the basic concepts of forest management." To avoid future controversies of this sort the chamber has requested the district establish a citizen's committee to review all instructional materials for "balance and appropriateness" previous to adoption.

Assistant Superintendent Gary Parsons agreed with SPBA to have a teacher-administrator committee review the package to determine its instructional qualities and appropriateness. It's unclear if such a committee was ever formed.

Meanwhile, Parsons has refused to recall the "Timbear’s" package. However, he has moved to form a committee to review the process of adopting instructional material in the future.

SPBA directors plan to pursue the issue, following up on the school district's action in the matter.

Huckleberry Bay. Here we go again. The Huckleberry Bay Co. has submitted a new proposal for developing the beautiful bay on Priest Lake. There’s really little change from the plans already rejected by the county planning commission. See story page 1, and send your comments to: Bonner County Planning Commission, 127 S. First Ave., Sandpoint, ID 83864.

Selkirk Caribou. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is revising its recovery plan for the endangered woodland caribou of the Selkirk Mountains. Call toll-free 1-800-582-3421 for a copy of the plan. See story, page 9; written comments are due by Aug. 11 to: Andrew F. Robinson, Jr., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 911 N.E. 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97232-4181.

Timbear’s Propaganda. In May the timber industry flooded Bonner County schools with copies of a coloring book that uses loaded language and misinformation to present a biased view of many of the issues surrounding forest management. That administrators would allow the schools to be used for propagandizing is alarming, and district officials need to hear from citizens on the matter. See story above, and write: Assistant Superintendent Gary Parsons, Bonner County School District, 1005 N. Boyer, Sandpoint, ID 83864.
Political Inertia May Be Grizzly’s Big

Selkirk Grizzly Barely Survives

Ten years after issuance of a formal federal recovery plan for grizzly bears in the lower 48 states, the Selkirk Mountain population still dangles on the precipice of extinction.

In light of this, SPBA joined in May a broad coalition of groups concerned about the bear’s plight in asking the federal government for more meaningful protection of the struggling Selkirk grizzly.

In a May 11 letter from Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund attorney Doug Honnold, SPBA and other groups informed Secretary of Interior Manuel Lujan they intended to file suit in federal court in July if the Selkirk grizzly’s status was not upgraded from threatened to endangered.

The so-called 60-day notice of intent to file suit, required by federal law, followed a petition to upgrade the bear’s status filed more than a year earlier. By law, the government must issue findings on the petitions within one year. Its failure to do so prompted the May letter.

When the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan was issued in 1982, biologists estimated fewer than 20 bears inhabited the U.S. portion of the Selkirk. Today, biologists put the number at 12.

What happened to the Selkirk bear during the last decade is a testament to political inertia which thwarts meaningful protection for the bear.

Biologists have extensively researched the Selkirk bears since 1982. Many grizzlies thought to reside primarily in the U.S. portion of the ecosystem had radio collars fitted in the last decade to help document their movements, habitat use and cub production.

But while the collection of scientific data went on, the same problems that led to the bears’ predicament in the first place — habitat destruction and poaching — continued unabated.

Between 1982 and 1990, at least eight

Grizzlies at Night. An infrared camera captures a grizzly and two cubs. Cameras like these may provide first-ever photos of elusive Basin animals.

SPBA Seeks Nocturnal Camera

New high-tech photo-imaging equipment is being hailed by biologists as a “powerful new management tool,” and SPBA has launched a project to install several of the devices in the deepest recesses of the Basin’s forests in order to unlock its secrets.

The equipment is essentially a heat-sensing, infrared camera capable of photographing nocturnal animal activity. The camera’s shutter is released silently as sensors pick up motion and increases in heat levels within its field of vision.

Use of the new devices will enable biologists to literally compile a type of “family photo album” on species of interest, since the high quality image permits identification of animals.

SPBA Wildlife Committee member Dave Boswell says he considers procuring the cameras a top priority for the group in the next 12 months.

“Think of it,” he said. “Among other things, we’ll be able to document habitat use, seasonal distribution, migrations, recruitment and movement patterns on both a population and individual animal basis; it’s absolutely incredible!”

Boswell said in the Selkirk ecosystem the devices would first be used to gather hard data on grizzly bears, but he foresees applying the technology to get data on such other rare and secretive animals as wolverine, fisher and lynx.

“As far as I know, there are no photographs of a fisher or wolverine from the Basin. One has to be excited about the prospect of capturing these animals on film for the first time ever,” Boswell said.

“We could conduct a virtual census of the rare animals in our area; think how that could help to provide for their protection,” he added.

Boswell said SPBA will seek grant monies to purchase 20 to 30 of the devices at a cost of about $10,000-$15,000. They will probably be installed, maintained and operated in cooperation with state and federal officials.
Salmonberry
(Continued from page 1)
covery last year, has excited the entire
botanical community in Idaho by identify-
ing three populations of the long-lost
plant. All of the discoveries were made
in old growth riparian areas on the north
end of Priest Lake, within existing road-
less areas.

None of the populations are exten-
sive; the largest may be less than 200
plants growing in a half-mile stretch of
Beaver Creek.

But for biologists the find is like con-
fiming the existence of sasquatch. It also
fuels growing recog-
nition that the Priest
Basin ecosystem may
have no equal in the
lower 48 for retained
biological diversity.

"The floristic
community on the
Priest Lake Ranger
District is every bit as
unique as the faunal
community," said
federal biologist Tim Layser.

He should know. Layser spends his
workday pondering management prob-
lems facing some of America's rarest
mammals — grizzly bear, wolverine,
wolf, fisher and mountain caribou, to
name a few. Some of these are found in
only a handful of ecosystems in the con-
tiguous U.S. One of them, the caribou, is
unique to the Priest Basin.

And now there is the inland
salmonberry, the only plants of their kind
in Idaho, or the lower 48 for that matter.
One other small population was located
in north-central British Columbia in

A member of the rose family, and a
cousin of the black raspberry, the Priest
Lake salmonberry, called rubus
spectabilis, grows only near three
streams, all in the same area, in the
mature cedar-hemlock forest within the
Upper Priest Roadless Area. It attains
heights between 1-3 meters (3.9 feet)
and produces edible reddish-colored
berries surrounded by a flaming orange
fringe of quarter-inch fibers, much like a
rosette. Like its cousins, it has briskly
prickles on its lower stems.

Salmonberries are abundant on the
west coast from southern Alaska to
northern California, getting its name,
apparently, from the reddish color of
fruit and flower.

But the inland ecotype, called a
coastal disjunct, is rare, to say the least.

And, sadly, its survival is threatened.

Of the three populations discovered,
one is near a new logging road and
another is close to newly developed
campgrounds. The third seems secure, at
least as long as protections exist for
remaining roadless areas. Careless log-
ging, road maintenance, weed spraying
or development in any of the areas could
spell the end, however.

To prevent the rare plants from disap-
pearing permanently Bursick has recom-
mended that the Forest Service list the
plants as sensitive species, now that they
have been discovered.

Bursick's recommendation to the
Idaho Native Plant Society is to upgrade
the salmonberry's status statewide to a
level called "S1," meaning its survival is
"critically imperiled" in the state because
of its rarity.

SPBA is heralding the recent dis-
covers as evidence that management
emphasis in the Priest Basin should be
placed on preserving its biological diver-
sity, not timber extraction.

"For 91 years this plant was thought
to be extinct because of logging, road-
building, fire and development," SPBA's
Dave Boswell said.

"It's almost like we've been given a
second chance to make amends for our
greed and ignorance. The biological val-
ues are so high at Priest Lake, we have to
protect them — and you don't often get
second chances like this."
Priest Lake Plan Team Starts Work

EFFORTS BY the Priest Lake Management Plan Team are finally underway, with budget preparations a first item of business. Three of four meetings held this spring have focused on member education and organizational structure.

With the first appropriation due in July, the team will examine the budget for year two of the study, Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Coordinator Ed Tulloch said.

SPBA director and team member Gordon West, commented on the budget timing: “It’s a bit difficult to project the needs of the second year of a study that hasn’t even begun yet, but the bureaucratic wheels do turn slowly.”

The team has divided into smaller committees to tackle the tasks of securing additional funding, collecting existing studies and data relative to Priest Lake, and reviewing potential contractors to perform the new studies.

Also discussed was a preliminary list of objectives to consider in subsequent studies. Some items on that list are: identifying and prioritizing pollution sources; determining the present condition and carrying capacity of Priest Lake; establishing a monitoring program with specific standards; assignment of regulatory responsibility; and compilation of a history of Priest Lake relative to water use and abuse.

Each of these objectives will require the collection of raw data. Members of SPBA and the public can be of great value in the collection and research of the data. Of particular interest is the historical information, which will in part rely upon the observations of long-time users of the lake.

“I think the historical aspect will be very useful,” said West. “Anecdotal information about conditions observed by long-time residents can show trends that an intense study of two or three years can’t. I have had people say to me ‘There used to be a nice beach there’ or ‘I can remember when those rocks weren’t slimy.’”

Those observations can be matched with activities that occurred in the same time frame, providing evidence so action can be taken to correct degradation.

SPBA members are encouraged to note down observations and comments and send them to West or to Harry Bacey, SPBA’s Water Quality Committee chairman. The public is also invited to attend the team’s meetings. Call Gordon West at 448-2956 for the schedule.

Huckleberry

Continued from page 1

dominium units, store, marina, gas pumps and fire station that Barbieri’s Huckleberry Bay Co. included in the PUD refused this spring.

But SPBA officers reviewing the proposal point out the company has by no means abandoned its plans to develop the bay much more intensively.

“By cutting the acreage of the proposed PUD in half, the company appears to be taking one step farther its strategy to win piecemeal development of Huckleberry Bay,” said SPBA Executive Director Chris Bessler. “Now, instead of asking to build 100 units on 400 acres, the Barbieri group is asking to build 41 homes on 220 acres, with the very clear intent to come back later and build the condos, store and marina on the other 180 acres.

“It’s effectively the same proposal, and it has the same underlying deficiency: It’s one more step toward a major development that will destroy the natural character of Priest Lake, and it violates the Comprehensive Plan.”

In fact, in response to a letter from planning commissioner Jim Anderson questioning the company’s long-term plans for the entire 1,565 acres it owns at Huckleberry Bay, company president David Bell on April 14 wrote that he envisions developing up to a total 313 dwelling units. The units would be dispersed among as many as 40 different condominium buildings and 182 single-family lakefront and upper tier lots.

Additionally, the development would include the store, marina, gas pumps, fire station and a nine-hole golf course.

Despite articulating a vision of a development more than twice as large as the already established lakeside communities of Coolin and Nordman, in a June 16 letter to county planner Sandy Cobb, Bell urges the planning commission to consider only the subdivisions the company is now applying for. “The current proposal should be considered on its own merit, as must any future proposals,” said Bell.

He also said the PUD was downsized and the condominiums were removed “in the interest of moving the approval process forward to a rapid conclusion.”

The proposed PUD would create the Huckleberry Bay Subdivision with 14 lots on 16 acres fronting Priest Lake, plus the Ridgeview Terrace Subdivision with 27 lots on 46 acres. The remaining 157 acres in the PUD would be designated as open space, although much of that acreage would be devoted to the development’s sewage treatment system.

The 14 lakefront lots were not part of the earlier PUD proposed by the company, and they will be sited behind the 100-foot-wide public beach access Huckleberry Bay Co. is required to maintain — which raises the question of whether a lakeshore dominated by private homes will remain “public” in name only.

Despite those changes, Bessler said the PUD proposal “is simply the old PUD in new clothes.”

“All the problems we voiced with the first one remain,” he said. “There are huge problems with providing county services. It poses a major threat to the lake’s water quality. It is highly incompatible with existing uses. And most of all, it obviously contradicts the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, which aims at protecting rural areas.

“They essentially want to build the largest city on Priest Lake in one of the most remote locations in Bonner County,” Bessler said. “The county should stick to the Comprehensive Plan, and channel new development into areas where development is already occurring. Otherwise, the Comprehensive Plan isn’t worth the paper it’s written on.”

The planning commission is scheduled to consider the new application July 30, 7:30 p.m. at the Bonner County Courthouse. SPBA is once again urging the public to attend or send in comments; see The Letter Drop for details.
Agency Drafts Caribou Recovery Plan

Size of Selkirk Herd Hovers At Dangerously Low Levels

WHILE the Selkirk caribou appear to be surviving, their numbers aren't increasing, according to Idaho Fish and Game biologist Brad Compton, who heads caribou research.

Compton recently told the Spokesman-Review newspaper that the department's draft of a revised recovery plan released in late June includes moving more caribou from Canada south of the border. Members of the International Mountain Caribou Technical Committee are calling for more active and aggressive action in the recovery plan. The Selkirk caribou are the last of their species remaining in the lower 48 states.

In another caribou development, Forest Service biologist Sandy Jacobson announced snowmobile access will be limited in the Two Mouth Lakes vicinity this coming winter. Jacobson said the decision — made on a trial basis — was prompted by an incident last March when snowmobilers caused the animals to flee from one area to another. It isn't known whether the snowmobilers were purposely chasing the endangered caribou.

Snowmobile permits will be granted to groups of six people or less each month from January to April. The restricted area is north of the Sundance Burn, a highly popular area for snowmobilers. While the Two Mouth Lakes area is very remote, it does attract high-tech snowmobilers, presumably "hot-doggers."

In the first recovery plan in 1985, caribou were referred to as "among the most critically endangered mammals in the United States." Less than 25 lived in the Selkirks at the time. Transplants began in 1987; a total of 60 caribou were brought down from Canada. Today the population hovers around 50. Compton said the herd needs to reach 109 animals before it can be considered for removal from the endangered species list.

Biologists are pleased only two confirmed deaths occurred this past year. The latest death involved an adult male who died after breaking his leg in a fall. A more tragic and senseless death took place last November when a Sagle man shot a young cow that had strayed south from the herd into the Wenoco Loop area east of Priest River.

The draft plan suggests future transplants be made in the Colville Forest on the Washington side of the Selkirks. The Molybdenite Mountain and Pass Creek areas are two of the seven potential sites that caribou have not yet stayed in or migrated to since the original transplants.

Researchers originally had visions of the first caribou transplants filling the entire ecosystem. Instead they tenously hold onto a much smaller portion of the Selkirks capable of supporting a herd.

The draft recovery plan may be ordered by calling toll-free, 1-800-582-3421.

Written comments are due Aug. 11. See The Letter Drop for details on submitting written comments on the draft recovery plan.

Animal Under Study. This caribou is part of the WSU captive troupe. Volunteers are needed to collect lichen to feed the animals this winter; see below.

Captive Caribou Need Lichen-Picking Help

EVER WONDER what it's like to be a caribou foraging for food? Now is your chance to find out.

Eric Rominger, a graduate student at Washington State University in Pullman is researching the digestive tract of the woodland caribou, a rare species found in the Upper Priest Lake area, and needs to collect quantities of lichen from the area. The lichen will be fed to several captive animals and monitored accordingly.

Tim Laysa, wildlife biologist at the Priest Lake Ranger Station suggested that Rominger contact SPBA in hopes of finding volunteers to help collect the lichen on an upcoming Saturday.

"I don't have much to offer in trade," Rominger said, "except a bunch of caribou stories and an introduction to my caribou if you're ever in Pullman."

As for collecting lichen, Rominger likened it to picking cotton.

Saturday, Aug. 8 has been selected for the harvest, and volunteers will meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Priest Lake Ranger Station near Nordman.

Bring a sack lunch and expect a full day of collecting lichen. Up to 15 volunteers can carpool.

Interested persons should contact Executive Director Chris Bessler at 208/263-3573 by Aug. 1.
A judge permits Timber Sale

An Idaho judge ruled June 11 that state officials may proceed with plans to auction off the Lower Green Bonnet (LGB) Timber Sale in Upper Priest Lake's Trapper Creek drainage.

District Court Judge Craig Kosonen, denied SPBA's request for the injunction to stop the auction until the group's suit against the Idaho Land Board could be heard. He said he saw no abuse of the agency's broad management discretion.

SPBA director Gordon West expressed the group's disappointment.

"The big timber lobby's Boise lawyers did a good job obfuscating the issues and diverting the judge's focus from the merits of our case," he said.

"The judge seemed impressed with industry's argument that Lower Green Bonnet was a fairly well-designed timber sale, and because of that, he missed the point that too many sales - even well-designed ones - in too short a period all in the same drainage is improper, unsustainable and unlawful."

But in issuing his ruling Judge Kosonen specifically decried some timber cutting activities on the West Coast, suggesting that Idaho courts are ready to scrutinize activities on state lands.

"Judge Kosonen fired a warning shot across the Land Board's bow and the message was that their discretion is not limitless," West said.

"I really think the judge could have gone the other way on this decision; it was that close. If we'd had more time to present our case I think he would have seen the light because what's happening on the West Coast is no different than what's happening in Trapper Creek; in fact, it's probably worse. We just didn't have time to show it."

West said SPBA will concentrate its efforts now on preparing for full trial on the issues, which could take six months.

Co-counsels Marc McGregor and Charles "Hoey" Graham said they will begin regular meetings with SPBA Forestry Committee members, expert witnesses and support counsel as the suit progresses.

No date has yet been set for trial.

The tour proceeded to a current "logging show" near the actual timber sale. Passing by veritable mountains of slash, one official noted the obvious: "This looks like a war zone."

The group stopped by a small stream running into an excavated trench totally devoid of vegetation. Asked why there was no vegetative buffer, Jansson said there was no surface water when logging began and "This is not a stream."

Al Issacson, SPBA's expert hydrologist interrupted with "It is now." He continued: "This is a lot of the problem. The act of logging, especially in this way, creates new conditions... even new streams. The lack of vegetation, the roads, the ditches - it all adds up. In Trapper Creek it's too much."

In the mid-reaches of the drainage, Issacson identified more problems.

"See that large rock that's black on top, and clean looking below?" he asked Echohawk and Williams. "It used to be surrounded by other rocks up to the black line. Excessive runoff flows have moved those smaller rocks downstream. That's called bedload movement. When you've got enough energy in the stream to move that size of cobbles, then you've got problems."

Finally, West brought out some wood samples showing the difference between old-growth and rapidly grown second-growth. The old-growth fir board was clear and straight-grained.

"It's worth over $2 per board foot," West said. "The second growth is valued at one-sixth as much. The apparent quality is not just as a commodity. It also represents high quality habitat, clean streams, and a more resilient ecosystem because the trees grow much longer. Long-term management is a good investment - and good for the environment."
Rogers-Mosquito in Question

Contested Sale Remanded: Still No Word

"MUM" IS APPARENTLY the word at the Priest Lake Ranger District concerning district plans for the contested Rogers-Mosquito timber sale.

After SPBA and two other groups appealed the sale, arguing that the Lower West Branch drainage in which it is located has already suffered substantial damage from previous logging, the sale decision was remanded back to Priest Lake District Ranger Al Collotzi.

That action came in April, and so far, this district has not announced plans for the sale.

The appeals were filed jointly by the SPBA, Spokane Audubon Society and the Spokane Group Sierra Club.

The proposed sale calls for cutting 7.5 million board feet of timber from the Roger and Mosquito Creek drainages. Both streams are tributaries to the Lower West Branch of Priest River, which is severely degraded due to the effects of previous and current logging and roadbuilding.

The SPBA disagrees with Idaho Panhandle National Forests acting Supervisor Bill Damon’s contention that Collotzi “made a good-faith effort to satisfy the concerns of your appellant organizations.”

The Rogers-Mosquito decision fails to deal with the cumulative impacts of this sale. Past and current timber sales in the Lower West Branch drainage have wreaked havoc with wildlife habitat and water quality.

There are currently seven ongoing timber sales in the drainage in which 48 million board feet are being logged off of 2,500 acres. It has the dubious distinction of being one of the most degraded streams in the ranger district.

“It is our contention that the Lower West Branch needs time to recover from its damaged condition,” said SPBA Forestry Committee member Gordon West.

“It does not need another major timber sale. The Forest Service’s failure to deal with the cumulative impacts makes a mockery of the laws to protect Forest Service lands from being overlogged.”

In the spirit of compromise, the SPBA has offered to accept an alternative that does not propose any new roads and calls for the cutting of 2.5 million board feet.

The Forestry Committee has offered to discuss the proposed sale with the Forest Service in order to avoid yet another appeal.

As of the writing of this story, there has been no reply from the Forest Service.

Volunteers Seed Eroding Ditches on Bear Paw

O N A RAINY SATURDAY morning in June, 14 SPBA volunteers gathered at the Mosquito Creek crossing of Bear Paw Road.

Their goal: To seed and mulch the eroding ditch banks created by road maintenance done last fall. An unforeseen side-effect of reditching portions of the road was sedimentation of Mosquito Creek during spring runoff and heavy rains.

Priest Lake District Ranger Al Collotzi first notified SPBA of the problem in a letter to Chairman Bruce Brockway. In the letter, he chided SPBA for pressuring the Forest Service on environmental matters while ignoring the activities of other agencies and the private sector. Collotzi also sent a copy of the letter to the timber representative at the Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce.

When checking with the Bonner County Road Department, it was discovered that the affected road was Forest Service property. Nevertheless, the county entered a joint project to seed and mulch the unstable ditch areas with the support of commissioners Jim McNall and Dean Stevens.

Division of Environmental Quality specialists Glen Rothrock and Brian Cochran gave advice on effective mitigation measures and Steve Cote of the Soil Conservation Service recommended suitable seed varieties.

The local county road crew brought in equipment to reslope and stabilize some slumping areas, preparing the way for the seeding and mulching by SPBA volunteers.

Mother Nature also cooperated by dousing the area with several inches of badly needed rain, which dampened the seeds but not the volunteers’ spirits.

Many thanks to those who endured the downpour for this project: Tom Pfeiffer, Jerry Collins, Jim West, Mike Johanson, Claude Simpson, Don Jansen, Bob Zeiger, Bill Egolf, Harry and Kate Batey, Bruce and Rosie Brockway, and Gordon and Amy West.

A Call for Volunteers

WOULD YOU LIKE to get more involved? Carrying out volunteer projects is no small task.

If you are interested in taking an active role in SPBA projects, consider attending one of the regular Board meetings, held the first Thursday of each month in Priest River. Call Chairman Bruce Brockway at 448-1813 for details.

Or, write and remind us of your interests... and we’ll be calling you!
JOIN THE SPBA

Support the Selkirk-Priest Basin Association by becoming a member!

Our newsletter, published quarterly and funded entirely by membership contributions, keeps you informed of natural resource issues within the Priest River Basin area, and offers updates on the efforts SPBA has undertaken to promote environmental excellence. The environment belongs to us all and we belong to it. The environment gives to us all; now is the time to give something back.

Make a contribution; keep Sightlines coming regularly, and keep abreast of the conservation and environmental issues that concern you. Dues and contributions are tax deductible.

Enroll me as a member of the Selkirk-Priest Basin Association. Enclosed are my annual membership dues as checked below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Individual Dues</th>
<th>Joint Dues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Income</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To help more, I’m enclosing an additional contribution: □ $10 □ $25 □ $50 □ $100 □ $500 □ Other

Name(s) _____________________________ Date __________

Winter Address __________________________ City ______ State ______ ZIP ______

Winter Home Phone ( ) Winter Work Phone ( )

Summer Address __________________________ City ______ State ______ ZIP ______

Summer Home Phone ( ) Winter Work Phone ( )

I am available to participate actively in the following (please circle all that apply):
A. Telephoning  
B. Mailings/envelope stuffing  
C. Clerical Assistance  
D. Field Work  
E. Water Monitoring  
F. Legal Assistance  
G. Research  
H. Writing  
I. Photography  
J. Lecturing  
K. Graphics  
L. Fundraising  
M. Adopted Mile Litter Pickup  
Z. Other __________________________

I am most interested in or concerned about (please circle all that apply):

Non-Profost Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
PERMIT NO. 2
COOLIN, ID

Selkirk-Priest Basin Association
P.O. Box 181
Coolin, ID 83821