AN INTRODUCTION TO SCA’S NEW E-NEWSLETTER

SCA is moving into the 21st Century with our first E-Newsletter! The goal of SCA’s E-Newsletter is to keep our membership and community better informed on the work we are engaged in, educate the community more effectively on regional environmental issues of concern, provide a forum for you to more easily see and engage with online petitions and join our fight to conserve and protect this exquisite place for generations to come!!

We welcome your feedback, photos, tips on environmental concerns and your LOVE of this place. Achieving our mission is dependent on an educated, engaged and informed membership and community!

As a result of an in-depth strategic planning process SCA underwent in the fall of 2020 SCA is focusing our limited staff time and resources on regional surface and groundwater quality conservation and protection.

Over the last year, SCA has formalized three “Pillar” programs which include the SCA Education Program, SCA Scientific Research Program and SCA Advocacy Program. This E-Newsletter will be bringing you updates on these Pillar programs every two months.

Note that these are not comprehensive updates of all the work SCA is doing under each Pillar, just highlights on particular projects, committee work, etc. Not to worry, SCA will still be sending out our bi-yearly Sightlines Newsletter!

We look forward to sharing timely news and information with you and helping you identify ways to protect what matters to you. Together, we can advance our work to KEEP THE WILD in the Selkirk’s!

For the Wild,

SCA Staff & Board of Directors
SCA PILLAR PROGRAMS

EDUCATION
One of SCA's primary mission goals is to educate the public about environmental issues of concern that impact regional air, land, forests, wildlife and water. We work to educate the community by giving free public talks and lectures and working with regional schools and partnering agencies, groups and associations to provide supplementary hands-on environmental education for our local youth. We also work hard to keep the community up to date on regional environmental issues of concern via our newsletters, social media forums and the local press and regional media outlets. We work to cultivate an environmentally conscious community of active environmental stewards. Please visit our Instagram, Facebook and website today!

SCA is excited to announce that we have received a generous grant from the Smith Barbieri Progressive Fund to support our 2022 Education Program outreach and environmental education work. This funding will support outdoor, hands-on environmental educational field trips for Bonner, Boundary and Pend Oreille County students. SCA is currently in the planning process for our "Living Classroom" field trips and will keep you informed as this project evolves!

ADVOCACY
Citizens play a critical role in public agency oversight. SCA works to monitor the USFS, Bonner, Boundary and Pend Oreille Counties, IDEQ, IDFG, ITD, IDL and others on activities, plans, policies, projects, etc. that would negatively impact regional land, air, wildlife, forests and water. SCA works to develop and disseminate information, petitions and sign-on letters, submit technical advice and comments, protest when necessary and conduct boots on the ground clean-ups and restoration projects. The historic outcome of increased public oversight and awareness of regulatory and management agencies plans, projects, policies, etc. is BETTER land management and stewardship of publicly owned natural resources including land, air, wildlife, forests and water resources!

90% of the Priest Lake Basin is PUBLICLY OWNED LANDS!

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
SCA has two (Priest Lake and Streams) citizen science water quality monitoring programs that are collecting, scientifically credible water quality monitoring data annually at 20 sites on Priest Lake and 10 primary tributary streams feeding into Priest Lake. Our dedicated and passionate volunteers collect data on Dissolved Oxygen (DO), Nutrients (Phosphorous and Nitrogen), Temperature and Chlorophyll a. The data we have been collecting since 2008 helps to inform the public and regulatory agencies such as IDL and IDEQ about water quality issues and areas of concern. SCA also works with the University of Idaho and the Kalispel Tribe supplying them with our annual water quality monitoring data.

SCA successfully completed our 2021 monitoring season for our Priest Lake and Streams Citizen Science Water Quality Monitoring Programs (CVMP)! All sites have been sampled, samples have been processed by the lab and SCA is in the process of data entry and analysis of the results. SCA will be reporting our results in the next Sightlines Newsletter and posting on our website this spring. Please visit our website to learn more about these programs, CVMP sampling locations and water quality in our area.

SCA is always in need of volunteers to help us complete our annual sampling efforts. If you are interested in helping out please contact us or visit our website and fill out a volunteer form!

JOIN THE FUN AND WIN A MEMBERSHIP!
Calling on the Creative
Help Us Name SCA’s NEW Newsletter!
If you or someone you know has an idea please feel free to submit them by calling our office (208) 448-1110, messaging us on Facebook or Instagram, emailing sca@scawild.org or by mail at P.O. Box 1809 Priest River, ID 83856. The winner will receive a free SCA membership!
COOLIN WETLANDS

Coolin Wetlands is a large wetland ecosystem complex on the south end of Priest Lake that is currently being threatened with a major housing development. The property has been subdivided into 26 shoreline parcels. Land developments and housing construction on this 65 acre site would entail the filling in with vast amounts of sediment, ditching, draining and destruction of this important and finite wetland ecosystem.

Development would equate to the permanent loss of numerous wetland species of both flora and fauna and many ecosystem functions (which greatly benefit humans) at the south end of Priest Lake including (but not limited to) flood control, water filtration and aquifer recharge. When wetlands are filled, the water that normally occupied the site annually and during flood/rain events is rapidly diverted to neighboring properties and downstream to Priest River and regional streams causing increased erosion, especially shoreline erosion and property damage. Sewage wastewater treatment is also of concern and has the great potential to further degrade regional surface and ground water quality if not managed properly. The Coolin–Warren wetland is located over the Priest River Aquifer and plays a critical role in water filtration and recharge for the aquifer.

We need your help to prevent future development! Please visit our website www.scawild.org and click on the Library tab to read recent articles in the press on this issue as well as sign SCA's petition to stop development and watch the full January 2022 Lakes Commission presentation SCA gave on the issue!

SANDPIPER SHORES WETLANDS

Sandpiper Shores is a 72 acre wetland property on the west side of Mosquito Bay with 365 feet of shoreline at the mouth of the upper Priest Lake Thorofare. Currently, this property is listed as ‘pending’ with the site having been previously approved for a 14 lot major subdivision. The developer purchasing the site is in the final stages of site inspection with plans to develop the site.

The Sandpiper Shores - Mosquito Bay Fen wetlands are one of only three remaining large, intact, functioning wetland ecosystems still hydrologically connected to Priest Lake. The Sandpiper Shores - Mosquito Bay Fen has been identified by the Idaho Conservation Data Center for Class I protection status. Class I sites are the most outstanding, irreplaceable, wetlands of highest conservation priority and have been identified by the state for maximum protection. The Mosquito Bay Fen wetland was identified by IDFG as the top, single most important wetland in Idaho for acquisition.

The wise management of growth and development around Priest Lake must be a top priority for the Bonner County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and the Bonner County Planning Department. The BOCC are responsible for and entrusted “to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of the state”. Bonner County will be responsible for the review, issuing and oversight of many of the permits that would allow the Sandpiper Shores wetlands to be developed.

Please visit our website at Scawild.org for more information and to sign a petition for Bonner County to provide responsible development and preserve this fragile ecosystems.

CALL TO ACTION

- Stop the development of Sandpiper Shores Wetland Sign the petition here!
- Stop the development of the Coolin Wetlands, Sign the petition here!
- Join or donate to SCA

THE FUTURE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF THIS REGION GOES HAND IN HAND WITH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH!