



SIGHTLINES

Winter 2008

NEWSLETTER OF THE SELKIRK CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

CONTROL OF AQUATIC INVASIVES

By: Jerry Boggs

Aquatic invasives are a serious threat to the water quality of all lakes, rivers and streams in northern Idaho and northeastern Washington. The Pend Oreille River, Priest River, Priest Lake and Lake Pend Oreille, as well as other water bodies are presently contaminated by Eurasian water milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), an exotic originating in eastern Europe, north Africa and Asia and introduced into the Northwest as early as 1965. Other known aquatic invasives that are certain to become a problem in the future are zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) and quagga mussels (*D. bugensis*). Already found in Nevada, it seems inevitable that these mussels will be brought into the Northwest in the near future.

Members of the Selkirk Conservation Alliance (SCA), residents around any of the above waters and citizens in general, are extremely concerned about not only the degradation to water quality caused by aquatic invasives but, also, the effects on water quality resulting from the methods used to control and/or eliminate these aquatic pests. Given that Eurasian milfoil is, at the present time, the only major aquatic invasive reported in northern Idaho, the remaining discussion relates specifically to that exotic, broadleaved, plant.

There are several recognized methods (presented below) presently used in managing Eurasian milfoil infestations. It can be pulled out by the roots, along with other physical or mechanical methods; it can be destroyed using herbicides (chemicals); and, it may be controlled through the use of biological control agents. A fourth approach is to integrate these methods.

Physical controls: Eurasian milfoil can be controlled to varying degrees by hand pulling, cutting, dredging and a technique called "rotovation" in which the soil containing milfoil roots is rototilled and the resulting roots and fragments are collected into barges or containers.

Chemical controls: A variety of aquatic herbicides have been used, i.e. 2, 4-D, endothall, fluridone, triclopyr. All chemical treatments create concern in residents living along or recreating in either Priest Lake or Lake Pend Oreille. Triclopyr, which was used in Priest Lake and Pend Oreille in 2007 and 2008, is purported to be selective or species-specific, i.e. is not active against algae or other, non-broadleaved, plants. It is, however, listed as slightly "toxic" to fish and ducks. Triclopyr is of low to moderate acute toxicity in mammals, according to the website, "chemical WATCH Factsheet". Endothall, depending on concentrations and exposure duration, may be harmful to fish and aquatic insects according to the website of the Cooperative Extension Offices of Cornell University, Michigan State University, Oregon State University, and University of California at Davis (2008). 2,4-D may be slightly toxic to waterfowl, mallards, pheasants, quail, and fish (same web source). All of these herbicides degrade and/or disperse in water to a point where the water is considered safe for drinking or recreating when administered at appropriate levels and when water users avoid treated waters for prescribed times.

Biological controls: There are a number of insects that feed on milfoil in North America. However, the North American weevil (*Euhrychiopsis lecontei*) is reported to be a specialist in regard to feeding on milfoil and, in fact, appears to prefer European milfoil over the native milfoil (S.Sorby, Sightlines, Fall of 2008). It does not appear to feed on other macrophytic plants. The use of this control agent is somewhat in the experimental phase in western waters and the successful use of this agent is dependent upon having sufficient numbers of them to supplement native populations.

None of the above treatments, alone, can offer an absolutely complete management program. Physical controls have a high potential of leaving fragments in the water column which can be the basis for a new infestation. Chemical treatments can be effective at removal of milfoil but do negatively affect the quality of the water being treated and always run the risk of being improperly administered through use of the wrong dose, etc.

Continued on page 3

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Newsletter

PRIEST LAKE STATE FOREST GATES & ROADS PROJECT REPORT

Mike Conners has finished his summer survey of gate status within the Priest Lake State Forest. Some interesting information came forth. For example, the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) Master Gate-List shows 113 gates. Mike came up with a total of 137 gates, an increase of 21% (24 gates). A lot of these additional gates control access to private property and are not the responsibility of IDL; however, it does create some confusion.

Of the 113 gates listed by IDL, six (6) are identified as Grizzly gates, i.e. they exist and are closed to all traffic for the protection of grizzly bears. However, much of the Priest Lake State Forest is overlaid by Grizzly Bear Management Unit (BMU) #1 (essentially a recovery area). In addition to the 6 grizzly gates, there are an additional twenty-three (23) gates within the BMU, four (4) of which are open or were when surveyed this summer. It is the policy of IDL that the vast majority of gates are set up in such a manner that while they prevent entry by multi-passenger vehicles (cars, vans, SUVs), they are open to motorcycles and ATVs. If you take a look at the gate picture below, you will see that such vehicles can be pushed or driven under or around the gate.

This means that within the BMU, 23 gates and the roads beyond are functionally open to motorized use. In fact, 4 of the so-called "closed" grizzly gates show evidence of recent motorized use as do 17 of the other 23 gates within the EMU. Grizzly bears avoid roads and an area from 1/4 to 1/3 mile along the sides of roads. Effectively, roads decrease the amount of habitat available for grizzlies to hunt and live, thus decreasing what is considered to be the "core" habitat area necessary for grizzlies to survive. More roads equates to poorer grizzly bear habitat.



Picture taken by : Mike Connors

In late 2001, the SCA GIS (Geographic Information System) specialist, Paul Sieracki, produced the first grizzly bear security analysis for this BMU. It showed then that the "State" BMU did not meet the minimum standards required on federal lands for the long-term survival of grizzly bears. Since the Sieracki report, more complete and accurate information (Mike Conner's work) has been developed on the gates and road status within the Priest Lake State Forest that is being analyzed in a new grizzly bear security analysis that should be available in early 2009. The point of conducting this new analysis is to motivate the State and federal governments to provide effective travel management to the "State" BMU, management that will provide for the long-term retention and well being of grizzly bears and other wildlife and habitats within that area.

Continued from page I

biological agents may provide control but do not eliminate milfoil and run the risk that milfoil growth may outstrip the ability of milfoil weevils to provide effective control, a matter of timing and weevil population numbers. Most significantly, all treatments can be offset by the continued reintroduction of milfoil by visiting watercraft users.

SCA POSITION PAPER

(adopted by the SCA Board on 11/17/08)

CONTROL OF AQUATIC INVASIVES

- Given that the Selkirk Conservation Alliance (SCA) supports the protection of the high water quality presently found in the lakes and streams of northern Idaho; and,
- Given that SCA is concerned particularly that Upper Priest Lake be protected against milfoil and other exotic infestations; and,
- Given that the introduction of Eurasian water milfoil poses problems to the water quality of all northern Idaho waters; and,
- Given that each infestation presents individual site-specific attributes that may affect the success of any individual treatment type; and,
- Given that each of the presently available management options include negative aspects,
 - Physical controls tend to leave fragments which can provide the basis for milfoil re-establishment.
 - Chemical controls are perceived by many as harsh and threatening to the water body being treated and those humans who associate with it.
 - Biological controls are dependent upon a reliable source of great numbers of weevils to supplement natural populations.

Given that, without the political will to pass, implement and enforce state law that supports effective prevention of the introduction and/or reintroduction of milfoil, management will focus on control, not elimination, and the waters of north Idaho will always remain at risk.

It is, therefore, the position of the Selkirk Conservation Alliance that:

1. Gas powered boats and personal watercraft should be excluded from Upper Priest Lake
2. Each infestation must be assessed for its particular attributes, e.g. water flow, water temperatures, nearness to human use areas, etc., in determining the best management option.
3. While an overall integrated approach to management of this problem is encouraged, SCA recommends that:
 - The use of chemical treatments should be minimized and used only on infestations where no other treatment is likely to be effective.
 - The County of Bonner and the State of Idaho should provide funding to the appropriate parties and/or agencies to develop and maintain breeding nurseries for milfoil weevils and that the use of such biological control agents should be encouraged.
 - The State should pass the necessary legislation to provide funding for mandatory check points and wash stations for boats entering into the State of Idaho from any outside area.
 - The State should support research into how to effectively eliminate the adherence of exotic invasives from jet engines and transfer this acquired knowledge into an effective elimination program for jet boats coming into Idaho from any area.

The State should implement an inspection and permit system for all Idaho registered boats and out-of-state boats (or Idaho boats coming back into the State) that provides protection against invasives introduction.

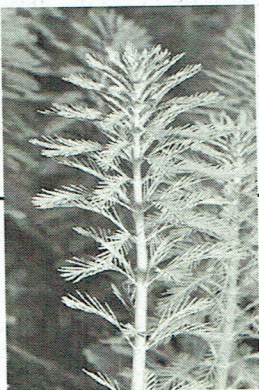
THE CONTINUING EPIC OF MILFOIL

The issue of Eurasian milfoil infestation of our lakes has become a regular article for almost every Sightlines. In terms of its impacts on the public who live at or who recreate on Priest Lake or Lake Pend Oreille, it may be the single most important issue looking for resolution.

In a previous Sightlines, SCA Board Director Sharon Sorby explained many of the details of Eurasian milfoil management and politics. The presence of Eurasian milfoil continues year after year despite serious efforts by the State and County to exterminate it. The use of chemicals (herbicides) to manage it is still very controversial. Therefore, the Board of Directors for SCA on November 17, 2008, approved the Milfoil Position Paper which is included in this sightlines.

Also on November 17th, SCA became a member of "Partners for Milfoil Control", a group comprised of the Panhandle Environmental League, Tri State Water-Quality Council, Native Plant Society, Mothers for Safe Water and Idaho Conservation League. This group is intent on demonstrating the effectiveness of using biological controls, i.e. milfoil weevils, in the control of Eurasian milfoil in our lakes. It has garnered \$65,000 already for this effort and is seeking additional funds to develop the ability locally to raise significant numbers of northwest weevils for supplementation of natural populations. In a sense, this project is experimental in that it has not been tried in the northwest. However, there are instances of wonderful success in other cold climates within the U.S., i.e. Michigan.

So, please take a look at the SCA approach on Eurasian milfoil control. If you have comments on it, send them to the Executive Director at sca@scawil.org.



Picture taken from Wikipedia Encyclopedia

WELCOME NEW SCA MEMBERS

We'd like to welcome our new members who have joined us since the fall Sightlines.

New members are (in no particular order):

Mike Connors, Susan Drumheller, Hank Haynes, Jim Harless,
Mike Jepson and Ron Rice

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Here we are, approaching the holiday season for 2008. SCA has experienced many changes during this year. For example, our previous Executive Director, Mark Sprengel, resigned in April and was replaced by me, Jerry R. Boggs. Along with the change in personnel comes a change in expertise. Mark had a long history with logging and an extensive knowledge concerning that exploitative activity and its wide-ranging impacts on natural resources. We're planning to keep Mark in the loop on logging projects to complement my abilities in other arenas of natural resources protection.

Another change is the move of our office back to Priest River, ID. You may recall that the office was moved to Sandpoint in June of 2007. It was moved on the premise that SCA would become more involved in issues emanating from the greater Sandpoint area and that SCA should enlist more Sandpoint folks in its memberships. We've been there about 1 ½ years now. In fact, some 10%+ of the SCA membership is from the greater Sandpoint region and we're planning to bring in more. SCA now has a new Director on the Board, Paul "Randy" Curliss, who is the Mayor of Dover (just west of Sandpoint) and we're actively looking for another Director from that area. During the last 1 ½ years, SCA has been involved in a number of issues on the eastern side of the Selkirks, e.g. developments at Trestle Creek and Morton Slough, milfoil infestations on Lake Pend Oreille, fish passage at Albeni Falls Dam, and other issues at Lake Pend Oreille. We intend to continue our involvement and support to issues originating in the Sandpoint region.

NORTH BALDY

By John Stewart

On October 9, a hearty group of locals including a few SCA members, ventured up onto North Baldy to, you might say, help slow the balding process. North Baldy is on the Shed roof Divide at the headwaters of Paqua and Sockwa Creeks on the Priest River side (Upper West Branch) and Mill and Middle Creeks on the Pend Oreille side.

The ridge top for about 2 miles south of the peak is a fairly unique spot in our part of the world. Though still below tree line, there is approximately 500 acres of alpine wildflower and grass meadow. Hence the "Baldy". It is a wonder to behold in the middle of July. You can wander for a couple hours, knee deep in wildflowers (cue "Sound of Music here") and if you happen to be interested in insects, you can have your fill of butterflies, bees, wasps and loads of other pollinators.

Up until the year 2000, riding ATVs was not a form of "recreation" on North Baldy. That year, one person rode an ATV to the top of the small hill, 1/2 mile south of the peak. The full extent of the trip is about 300 yards or maybe 30 seconds on the machine. Then he turned around and rode back down. The first year or two the grass was matted down as a few more machines used the track. By 2003, the 2 tracks were bare dirt and starting to erode. In 2 more years the outside track had washed 6 inches deep and so the riders moved over beginning a 3rd track. In 2007, the outside track was 10-12 inches deep, the inside track 6 inches deep and so the riders moved out into the wildflowers further creating a 4th and 5th track.

This last summer ATVs had widened the zone of destruction 12 to 15 feet out from the original 2 tracks.

With the help of Larry Melampy of the Colville National Forest, who supplied the tools, our group attempted to put a bit of a tourniquet on the flow of water and soil down the slope. Using pulaskis and shovels we dug side hill drain ditches across the tracks about every 25 yards up the hill. Larry had put up an "illegal trail" sign early in the summer and we moved some small log material onto the access points to reinforce the meaning of the sign. Our group included SCA members Meg Decker, Mark Sprengel, John Stuart and also Joe Caligaris and Fuzzy.

The number 1 law of forest sustainability is keeping erosion at a minimum. Steep country can only be healthy forest because the vegetation and soil help keep each other in place.

On the Colville Natl. Forest (CNF), we have established some extensive regulations for machine riders, which include access only to existing roads and designated trails. The assumption that people will spend \$6,000 for a machine that is designed to go "off-road" and then only ride it where any car or pick-up can go stretches the imagination. The CNF has recently made available the regulations and maps of legal routes. We shall see what the future holds.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers are becoming increasingly important in the work that SCA does. A prime example of this is the cleanup work done along local highways. Amy Daniels has, for many years, coordinated and led clean-up efforts along 2 miles of State Highway 57 between Priest River and Priest Lake, from mile post 18.5 to mile post 20.5. This fall, she had the efforts and company of Bob and Georgene Bond, Betsy Stansell, Terry Turner, Dan & Jill Murphy and Mikki Ravenscroft.

A similar 2008 project was the "western" autumn road pick-up on Friday, Nov. 21st, organized by Kate Drum. Litter pick-up took place along 2 miles of Highway 211, near Sacheen Lake, about 14 miles west of Newport. Kate's group keeps the aluminum cans separate from the real garbage and so ended up being able to recycle about 20 pounds of aluminum. Participants beside Kate were Meg Decker, Carol Mack and John Stuart.

Thanks to everyone who helped out this year and in past years.

FOR A CHANGE, SOME GOOD NEWS ON CARIBOU

The caribou issue seems to always be around. Caribou use public lands during all seasons but SCA is most actively concerned about them during hunting season and during the winter. Caribou can easily be mistaken as a deer or elk if the hunter is distant or does not have a clear field of vision. During about 8 months of the year, including winter, caribou live on relatively un-nutritious lichen. It's tough enough for caribou to survive the cold winter temperatures, especially pregnant cows. When snowmobilers cause caribou to escape their intrusive presence, it costs precious energy. This lost energy has to be replaced by searching out lichen-laden tree tops which is frequently not an easy task. Pregnant cows may abort for lack of sufficient energy. Calves may be stillborn or born too weak to survive. Now we have to worry about the fact that global warming may, over the next 100 years, cause caribou habitats to move north of the border. Wow, bad news all the time.

Finally, we have some good news to report. First of all is the news reported by Idaho Fish and Game for March of 2008 that the southern Selkirk herd has increased slightly to a minimum of 46 mountain caribou, a small increase over the last few years. Most of these caribou are found north of the international border in southern British Columbia; nevertheless, some do move down into the Panhandle and northeastern Washington. The really good news is that The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has closed a deal on purchasing the major block of habitat used by this herd and known as the Darkwoods property. Situated between the towns of Nelson, Salmo and Creston in British Columbia this parcel of about 136,000 acres will provide habitat protection for the bulk of the international southern Selkirks mountain caribou population through the protective management to be provided by NCC, and though its connection with other protected lands and wilderness management areas which, in total, provide over 250,000 acres of lands managed for the benefit of its natural values. The protected area will provide sanctuary for up to 29 sensitive species, everything from bull trout and mountain caribou to a streamside orchid called the Giant Helleborine.

In the meantime, SCA will continue its work with Advocates for the West (environmental law firm) and others to monitor snowmobile trespass in the court-declared non-motorized areas of northern Idaho and to report same to law enforcement. Last year, 3 tickets were issued to tres-

A late bit of news is that SCA is a co-plaintiff on a Letter of Intent (LOI) to sue issued by Advocates for the West to Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). The LOI is based on IDL's failure to address the problem of winter access into the "closed" area by snowmobilers coming off the northern part of Priest Lake State Forest which, as you probably know, is managed by IDL. Primarily, this 60-day notice of intent notes the continued authorization and support of IDL for trail grooming on IDL lands that contribute to negative impacts against caribou. Other co-plaintiffs are Defenders of Wildlife and Idaho Conservation League. We'll see where this goes and keep you informed.



Picture taken from Wikipedia Encyclopedia

Above and Beyond Contributions

Not all members can contribute above their membership dues and we want you to know that your dues are tremendously appreciated. However, there are some within our membership who are able to contribute and we want to acknowledge this generosity. Thank you.

Contributions Up To \$99

Anonymous, Janice Anderson, Ben & Barbara Aspen, Lois Castleberry, Robert Castleberry & Joyce Thomas, John & Ann Collier, James Conaty, Ruby Corbin, Gale Corsini, Amy Daniels & Terry Turner, Sheila Dunlop & Reginald Unterseher, Shirley & William Drummond, G. Stanley & Joan Fergin, Ken & Lani Fischman, Marie Gambles, Peter Glass, John & Laura Hammarlund, Mark Hamarlund & Jan Peterson, Dale & Kathy Harrison, Bob & Jo Anne Hungate, Richard & Mary Jane Hungate, David Heberer and Penney Gedeon, Floyd & Elenor Link, Bernadette Martell, Marie Martell, Gil McGee, Daniel & Jill Murphy, Sean O'Halloran, Karen Overbeck, Charles Pearson, Thomas Pell & Family, Theresa Potts & Family, Gary & Geri Proctor, Jean Rudolph, Jim & Kelma Short, Charles Simpson & Anne Snelgrove, David & Janet Stephenson, Bill Ulrich, Clint & Valerie Watkins, Edmund Wood & Cathy Chohlas

Contributions from \$100-\$500

Susan Allan, Beaver Creek Camp Association, Jerry & Barbara Boggs, Dave & Deb Boswell, Jules & Pinky Gindraux, Robert Harwood, Lydia & John Hungate, Mark & Kay Kabush, Leonard Lemley, Steve Lockwood & Molly O'Reilly, John Martin, George Momany, Elizabeth O'Halloran, Karin Overbeck, Sharon Sorby & Jim Miller.

Contributions from \$500-\$5000

John Abelson, James E. O'Halloran

If anyone has been missed or your name(s) is misspelled, we deeply apologize and ask you to give us a call with that reminder.

JOIN THE SCA

Please support the Selkirk Conservation Alliance
by becoming a Member

Our newsletter, funded entirely by member contributions, keeps you informed of natural resource issues within the Inland Northwest, and offers regular updates on the efforts of the SCA to promote environmental excellence. Now is the time to give to the environment that sustains us all.

Enroll me as a member of the SCA. Enclosed are my dues.

	Individual	Family
Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
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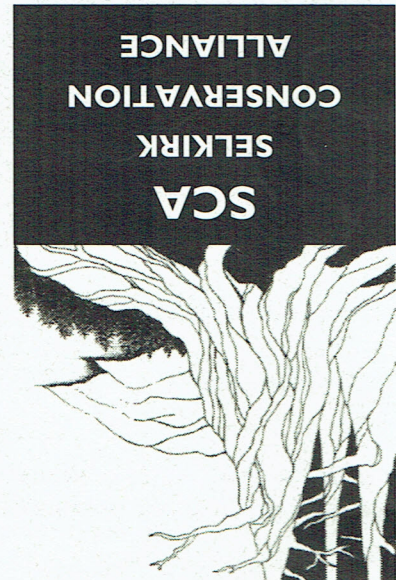
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