



# SIGHTLINES

SUMMER 2009

NEWSLETTER OF THE SELKIRK CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

## CELEBASIN 2009

### CELEBASIN 2009

Celebasin 2009 should be an interesting event for all who can come. Most interesting, perhaps, will be a demonstration by Director Randy Curless of his Border Collies in herding domestic sheep. Randy has been doing this for many years and, in fact, gives training to herding-dog owners who want to develop this unique ability to manage sheep and other animals. You'll love to see the intense desire and ability of Randy's Border Collies to do their job-it's just plain fun to watch.

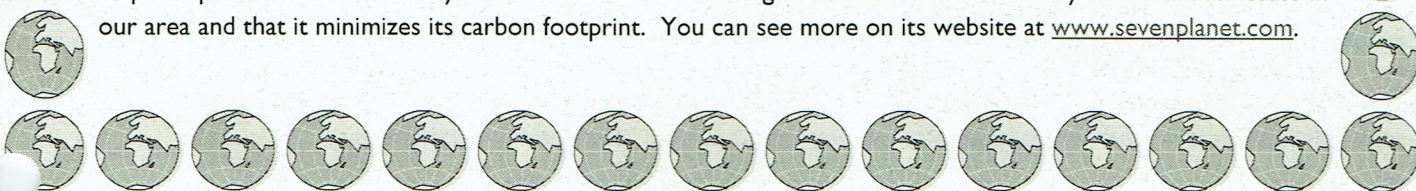
Another thing we've tried to do for this year is to bring in some upscale items for the silent and/or not so silent auction that will go on. For just one example, this year you can buy lottery tickets to acquire a jet-boat tour of the Snake River. SCA plans to have other quality items available for you to consider.

So, be looking for the SCA mailing that will announce the place and time. We recommend carpooling to Celebasin as a way for us all to minimize our carbon footprint, something you don't hear much about with SCA but, still, an effort that is worth doing.



### BEING "GREEN" IN PRIEST RIVER

It may interest you to know that we have a relatively new store in Priest River that is "green" in ways you may not have thought of. It's recommended that you visit the Seven Planet store which is on the corner of Main and High Street. The owner/manager is Gary Dickson who can explain in detail how his store and its Portland counterpart operate. Suffice it to say that Seven Planet is working with other environmentally sensitive businesses in our area and that it minimizes its carbon footprint. You can see more on its website at [www.sevenplanet.com](http://www.sevenplanet.com).





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Newsletter

**SCA'S LOSS**

Julie Goltz of the SCA Board of Directors has resigned from the Board. Julie will, however, continue to provide leadership and volunteer coordination with her husband, Kent Larson, on water quality sampling at Priest Lake. Julie and Kent have provided not only leadership and coordination on this joint project with Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality, but have also provided their own time and energy conducting the work. Also, Julie was the leading force in SCA developing its position paper on the aquatic invasive species problem (read Eurasian milfoil), especially on the minimization of chemical use. Thanks, Julie.

**SO LONG**

Just a short note to let you all know that I have resigned as Executive Director of the Selkirk Conservation Alliance. I've been involved with SCA since 2001 and will continue to staff the SCA involvement in the hydropower issues relating to bull trout and native salmon on the Pend Oreille River, at least through the remainder of this year. Grass-roots conservation organizations are absolutely critical to the protection of sensitive natural resources in this country. I hope you'll continue to support such organizations. Thanks for the opportunity to serve.

*Jerry R. Boggs*

**SCA Website Changes**

You may have noticed that the Selkirk Conservation Alliance website, [www.scawild.org](http://www.scawild.org), is looking pretty good and pretty professional. That is due to the professional capabilities and kindness of Kristie Sherrodd. Kristie came down last year from Alaska where she was working for AMSEA (Alaska Marine Safety Education Association). After working briefly for SCA, Kristie decided to return to her work with AMSEA but remained as our webmaster on a voluntary basis. Since then, Kristie has done a lot to improve the look of our website and to update information as it becomes available. We can only say a heartfelt "thank you" for her efforts.



## FOR SCA, AN ICONIC SPECIES THE CARIBOU AND WHAT'S HAPPENING

There actually are new developments with regard to the caribou issue:

1. The Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF) has updated their "closed area" map which can be viewed at: [http://www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/admin/press/sm\\_restrict/smguide\\_2008-2009.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/admin/press/sm_restrict/smguide_2008-2009.pdf)

IPNF has not, however, released their revised Winter Travel Management Plan which we are all anxious to see. How the above map (if unaltered) will fit within that is an unknown.

2. Pursuant to a December 2008 meeting between SCA, Idaho Conservation League (ICL, Advocates for the West and the Idaho Dept. of Lands (IDL) in Boise, IDL agreed to:

Put up 2 signs which has been done on Abandon Creek Spur Rd. #44 and Horton Ridge Spur Rd. #25. They are 3'x3' and read:

ATTENTION SNOWMOBILERS

CARIBOU HABITAT AHEAD

NO MOTORIZED USE ALLOWED  
BEYOND THIS POINT

DISTURBANCE OF CARIBOU MAY SUBJECT  
YOU TO CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES  
UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

3. SCA is a co-plaintiff (one of several) in a lawsuit filed in January of 2009 by Defenders of Wildlife (DoW) against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over their failure to respond to a 2002 legal petition (again with SCA) to consider designation of critical habitat for this species. A negotiated settlement is in the works for a proposed rule to be put forth by USFWS in 18-24 months. Critical habitat designation could do some nice things for this species as it would add protection to caribou habitat even when caribou are not present. Expect the U.S. Forest Service and the State of Idaho to fight this idea.

Pursuant to the meeting discussed under point #2 above, SCA has begun work with IDL and outdoor motorized recreationists to designate snowmobile off-limit closure areas to the benefit of caribou wintering on Priest Lake State Forest habitats. This is a first but you can be reasonably optimistic that something good for this species is in the works.

4. 2009 snowmobile closure area monitoring flights began on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009, with a USFS flight. This was followed by an SCA and partners flight in mid-February which saw lots of trespass in the so-called "closed" areas. This information was reported to the USFS for possible law-enforcement action. An additional flight on April 18<sup>th</sup> was put up by The Lands Council of Spokane (on which SCA took 2 spots) which is just one of our partners in this effort to minimize trespass into the closed areas that could harm caribou, especially pregnant cows which may abort the fetus or deliver a weak infant if forced to flee from snowmobile threats.



Picture taken from oofta.wordpress.com



## Recent Events

### *Earth Day*

April 26, 2009

On Earth Day, SCA joined many other environmental organizations at the Sandpoint Community Hall to advocate for continued awareness of the crises facing almost all our natural resources as human populations continue to explode and as our resource exploitation continues to exponentially rise. Mike Connors and Jerry Boggs staffed the SCA table which was focused on bear education (about, not for bears). The staff met and discussed the bear issue and many other resource concerns with between 150-200 people during the day.

### *Lords of Nature: Life in a Land of Great Predators* May 29, 2009

The most controversial issue in the Interior Northwest revolves around the recovery of the northern gray wolf and how that recovery will integrate into the lives of residents, including those who raise sheep, including those who hunt elk but, also, including those who want to see more complete ecosystems that somewhat resemble those of 200+ years ago. The above film was hosted at the Sandpoint Community Hall by SCA and a new group, the Northern Idaho Wolf Alliance, on the above date. Fifty-four (54) people were in attendance, including at least 3 vocal elk hunters. Lords of Nature's most important message (arguably) concerns the cascade of effects that ensue when a top predator is re-introduced into an ecosystem from which it has been absent for decades. For example, the film clearly shows how elk relocate out of riparian zones (to reduce wolf predation) results in a resurgence of new riparian growth in many plant species. New riparian growth results in the return of many smaller species of birds and mammals as well, sometimes, in the return of beaver. Beaver ponds, in turn, have their own set of significant environmental consequences, including resetting the environment for certain fish species---and on and on. It is an interesting film, basically educational, that probably did not change anyone's mindset but may have influenced folks who had not made their mind up on this issue and were looking for information.

### *Schweitzer Mountain Resort Summer Celebration* June 27, 2009

A few weeks ago, Mike Connors and Jerry Boggs (with an able assist from Board Director Sharon Sorby) manned an SCA booth (with our SCA banner proudly attached-mostly) at the Schweitzer Mountain Resort Summer Celebration. Once again, the emphasis was on education regarding living in bear country. This message was helped tremendously by the presence of Chuck Bartlebaugh of the Be Bear Aware Campaign and his able assistant, a mounted grizzly bear (killed a few years ago in Montana by a car). The bear mount attracted each and every child and most adults who happened to set eyes on it. Literally hundreds of people stopped by to have the tactile experience

of petting this bear and determining how its fur felt, etc. Kids were enthralled mainly although there were a few who had a seemingly natural desire to be elsewhere no matter what Mom and Dad were suggesting. Dogs mainly avoided getting too close. Mike, Jerry and Chuck talked to hundreds of people throughout the day and gave out hundreds of pieces of literature (including SCA brochures and Sightlines) on how to live and recreate lightly in bear country. For the first 5 hours, the SCA banner was frequently attached to our table but the morning wind consistently blew it away along with any literature not weighed down with rocks. Banner attachment and security turn out to be major issues (who would have thunk it). Chuck, who has been to dozens of shows and events on bear-related education, deemed the Schweitzer experience to be "extremely successful". Mary Webber-Quinn and Brandon Peterson, event managers for Schweitzer Resort, were excellent to work with, provided SCA a prime spot past which all visitors had to travel and also concluded that SCA's presence provided a value added to their Summer Celebration. All in all, a success for all involved parties and, hopefully, folks with whom we talked will be a bit more aware of how to deal with bears in north Idaho and elsewhere. At the end of the day, we hope that our efforts will help average people do the right thing when they encounter bears, for themselves but, especially, for the health and welfare of the bears.



Picture of Grizzly Bears taken from Wikipedia.org



## MEGA-PREDATORS

Wolves are listed, de-listed and listed again, all within a few years as the politics of hatred and fear encounter admiration, the Defenders of Wildlife's attorneys and a host of conservation organizations, including SCA, which believe large predators should be part of the fabric of nature.

Grizzly bears are in our neighborhood-oops, it's really their neighborhood into which we have moved and now live. We invite them to eat our poorly managed food waste or the dog kibbles on the porch and then, when they become a problem, maybe a human/pet safety hazard, we ask Idaho Fish and Game to do something. That can mean a State employee with a rifle, the final solution for that one bear which only validates the maxim that "A Fed Bear is a Dead Bear!"

Cougars abound in northern Idaho. They feed on white-tailed deer, mule deer and other prey. There are more deer in northern Idaho than there ever were here historically. Deer and elk are the "bread and butter" for Idaho Fish and Game. Roughly 200,000 elk are managed in 16 separate areas of Idaho, of which only one, the Lolo herd, is reported down in population (for which wolves are blamed this year although bears and cougars were the predators to blame in the not too distant past). Deer are much more abundant than elk. The most abundant grazers in the State of Idaho are cattle and sheep. As a group, ranchers may hate large predators more than any other group (close call with elk hunters); however, some ranchers have learned how to live in relative harmony with large predators; others would prefer to continue an irrational hatred.

SCA has recently been engaged in providing education to the public regarding these top predators. Please take a look at the Recent Events article in this Sightlines that talks about this issue. Ecosystems without their historic top predators are incomplete, out of synch and, in some senses, impoverished. Although human hunters are also top predators, they seldom provide the same ecological function as natural predators. Predators and other wildlife are managed on a day-by-day basis by the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game (IDFG). IDFG, however, is directed by the Idaho legislature and executive branch which have demonstrated their own bias in action after action regarding large predators, especially wolves. If you are a hunter or a rancher, you have representation in the State of Idaho. If you are a conservationist, you do not. Wherever you fall in that spectrum of opinion or philosophy, you may want to exercise your right as a citizen and let "your" representatives in the state government know where you stand.



Picture of Wolf taken from Wikipedia.org



Picture of Elk taken from Wikipedia.org



## Logging Projects

SCA, in cooperation with other organizations, has been active in commenting on logging projects on both the Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF) and the Priest Lake State Forest (PLSF) since our last Sightlines.

FEDERAL-The INPF put out the latest version of the Lakeview-Reeder Fuel Reduction Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Lakeview-Reeder). This project has been around for some time and we've commented on it before. The present project calls for fuel reduction efforts on some 3,964 acres on the Priest Lake Ranger District and is being done under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act which restricts the ability to appeal decisions but still gives an opportunity for comments. The prescriptions include: commercial thinning on 1030 acres, an improvement cut on 39 acres, liberation cutting on 45 acres, irregular shelterwood on 853 acres, shelterwood with reserves on 265 acres, seed tree cut on 55 acres, special cut with mechanical fuel piling and burning on 43 acres, hand slashing and burning on 14 acres, and burn only on 1475 acres. In addition, the proposed action includes maintenance on approximately 17 miles of road; reconstruction of 5 miles of road, and, construction of 4.3 miles of new road. Also, 13.3 miles of road would be decommissioned or put into storage and road 1014 (approx. 2.5 mi.) and 3 miles of Road 308 adjacent to Kalispell Creek would be obliterated. SCA comments focused somewhat on what all this means for grizzly bear habitat, particularly in the Kalispell- Granite Bear Management Unit ("K-G BMU") and the Lakeshore BMU. Our conclusion is that the Proposed Action as described in the DEIS will adversely affect grizzly bears in the project area during and after project implementation. We also included comments on water quality within Kalispell, Granite and Reeder Creeks which are already listed by the State as temperature impaired, i.e. their water temperatures are too high to provide adequate habitat for fisheries. Finally, we made comment on the intention to work on the perimeter of Bismarck Meadows, a privately owned but important grizzly bear spring habitat area. SCA is intending to set up a link on the website at which the comments in their entirety will be available. It's not there yet but soon will be.

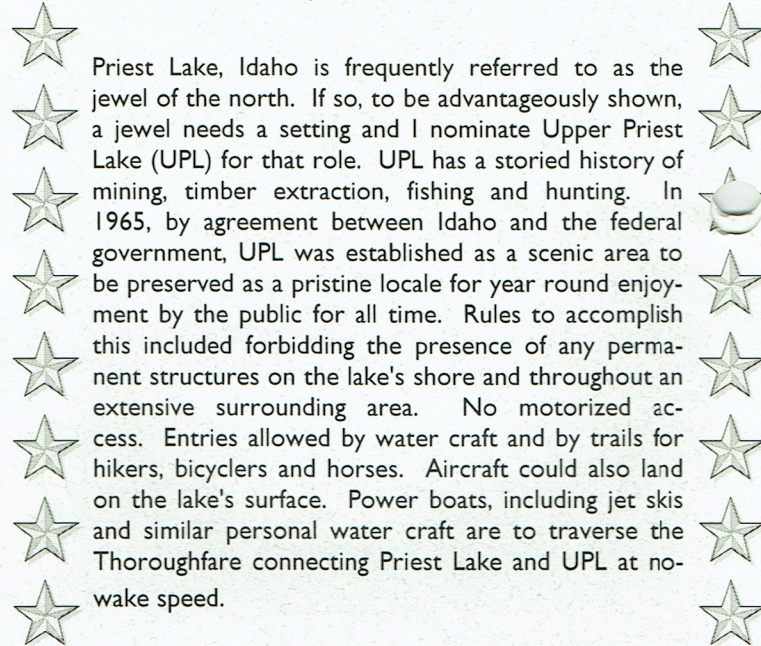
STATE-SCA provided comments recently to the Idaho Dept. of Lands (IDL) on their 2010 logging proposals for PLSF. It was recommended to IDL that two projects, i.e., the Luckier Log and Hunters Echo proposed timber sales, be removed from the 2010 IDL proposed timber sales or at least postponed until the State could properly consider the full impacts of its present roads management on the federally-threatened grizzly bear and evolve a roads management system that equates or exceeds that presently implemented on federal forests. Essentially, SCA would like to see all land management agencies involved in timber production and logging using the same protective management systems, not only for grizzly bear habitat but for streams, old-growth, etc. Once again,

Gates from past and proposed timber sales should be retrofitted and designed to prevent all motorized use beyond them. Gates are a central action issue that IDL could use, through retrofitting, to positively respond to so much of the criticism they receive concerning vehicle impacts from roads on many sensitive resources. However, good roads management is not a panacea to all the problems that IDL presents in its management of PLSF. It would, however, be another positive step toward more responsible management of the State's responsibilities for sensitive resources, including federally listed species. SCA plans to include our formal comments on a link at the website soon so you can see them in their entirety.

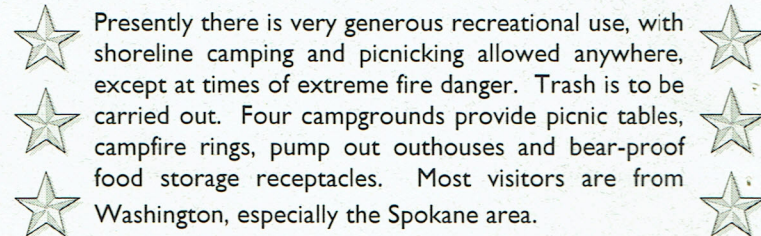


### UPPER PRIEST LAKE-Setting for the Jewel

By Bob Harwood



Priest Lake, Idaho is frequently referred to as the jewel of the north. If so, to be advantageously shown, a jewel needs a setting and I nominate Upper Priest Lake (UPL) for that role. UPL has a storied history of mining, timber extraction, fishing and hunting. In 1965, by agreement between Idaho and the federal government, UPL was established as a scenic area to be preserved as a pristine locale for year round enjoyment by the public for all time. Rules to accomplish this included forbidding the presence of any permanent structures on the lake's shore and throughout an extensive surrounding area. No motorized access. Entries allowed by water craft and by trails for hikers, bicyclers and horses. Aircraft could also land on the lake's surface. Power boats, including jet skis and similar personal water craft are to traverse the Thoroughfare connecting Priest Lake and UPL at no-wake speed.



Presently there is very generous recreational use, with shoreline camping and picnicking allowed anywhere, except at times of extreme fire danger. Trash is to be carried out. Four campgrounds provide picnic tables, campfire rings, pump out outhouses and bear-proof food storage receptacles. Most visitors are from Washington, especially the Spokane area.





# 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.

Pay Pal accepted on our website: [www.scawild.org](http://www.scawild.org)

	Individual	Family
Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20

## Organizations

Under 10 Staff ☐ \$100

Over 10 Staff ☐ \$500

## Selkirk Children's T-Shirts

### Great Birthday Gift for the Young & Young at Heart!

Children's Sizes Available:

☐ 6-8; ☐ 10-12; ☐ 14-16; ☐ 18-20

Children's T-Shirts with Bear Logo: \$12.50

To help more, I'm enclosing an additional contribution:

☐ \$10 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$500

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: SELKIRK CONSERVATION ALLIANCE**

**PO BOX 1809 PRIEST RIVER, IDAHO 83856**



Picture taken by: Mike Connors

## SCA Summer Intern's Experience\*\*

By Bob Harwood

At the end of her temporary employment, our intern Kathleen (Kat) Vardell, who is a Sandpoint high school student, was asked to summarize what she got out of the experience, other than money earned. Her response was very positive and is briefly reviewed. Uppermost was the variety of tasks undertaken. She helped SCA Board members and staff, the US Forest Service and Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Kat found her summer was very educational, especially learning about the environment and steps to maintain and protect it. She also liked learning so much about our natural assets and human pressures throughout the upper Panhandle of Idaho.

SCA really appreciates Kat's help. Positive feedback about her help was received by everyone from the various agencies. She is in her senior year and is busy applying to several colleges and universities as well as the US Air Force Academy. She is leaning toward an engineering or scientific future and feels that her enhanced appreciation of our environment will be of use in times ahead. We wish her great future success.

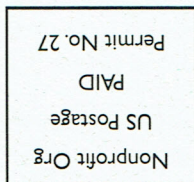
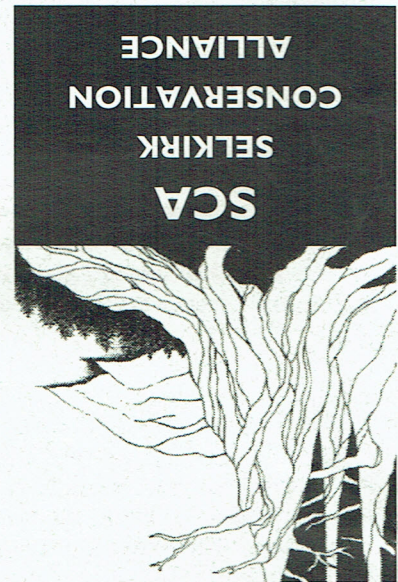
There are some designated intern funds remaining and we would like to continue this program. Can any of you members help out through providing earmarked donations?



## Box Canyon Dam

The Pend Oreille Public Utilities District (PUD) has been in dispute over various mitigation measures related to the relicensing of the Box Canyon Dam. A recent Settlement on these issues between the PUD, federal and state governments and the Kalispel Tribe is available on the PUD's website at <http://www.popud.com>. The PUD has agreed to fish passage of some kind. It might be as simple as "trap and haul" which is just like it sounds. They also agreed to a Trout Habitat Restoration Program that will restore 164 miles of tributary habitat within the next 25 years which will occur in the Calispell, Cee Cee Ah, Cedar, LeClerc, Indian, Mill, Ruby, and Tacoma creek watersheds. "Restoration" of each stream segment will include a combination (some or all) of the following measures as determined necessary by experts: channel improvements (limited to geomorphologic improvements and barrier removal), floodplain restoration, riparian corridor restoration, fencing, conservation easements and/or purchases, non-native fish removal and reintroduction of target fish species. This adds a huge chunk of habitat and impetus to the recovery of bull trout within the Pend Oreille River watersheds. With additional success at Albeni Falls Dam and Boundary Dam, it may be possible within a few decades that bull trout will once again swim throughout this part of their historic range in the Columbia basin.

Priest River, Idaho 83856  
PO Box 1809



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