



SIGHTLINES

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Spring 2011

Newsletter of the Selkirk Conservation Alliance

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LOON SURVEY DAY

SCA NEEDS YOU!
VOLUNTEER TO LOOK
FOR LOONS ON SATURDAY,
JULY 16, 2011.

FEATURED PHOTO



MOOSE NEAR MOSQUITO BAY,
(PHOTO BY ELEANOR JONES)

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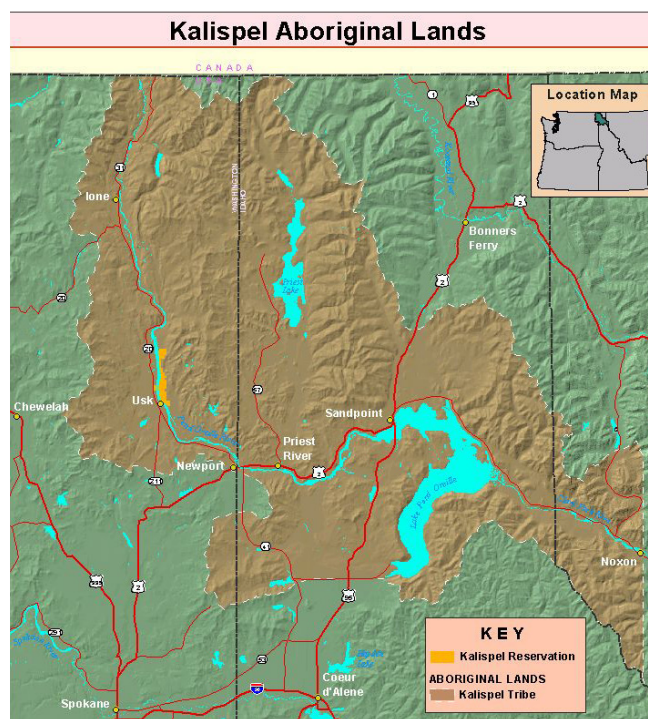
SightLines is the newsletter of the
**Selkirk Conservation Alliance
(SCA)**, a non-profit corporation
providing environmental
oversight and public information
for the Inland Northwest.

The Kalispel Tribe and Ceded Lands

BY DEANE OSTERMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KALISPEL
NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

For thousands of years, the Kalispel people occupied a homeland comprised of the Lower Clark Fork River in Montana to the entire width and breadth of the Pend Oreille watershed (including the Priest River Basin) in both Idaho and Washington. This was judicially defined and affirmed by a Congressional Commission called the "Indian Lands Claims Commission." They were tasked with abolishment of the Tribe's aboriginal title to these lands and tasked to "compensate" the Indian community for the government's taking of these lands through various acts of government. Although imperfect, this was a final fact-based decision made using both historic and ethnographic data.

Ceded Lands are often confused with other concepts like "Traditional Area," "Aboriginal Lands," or incorrectly "Usual and Accustomed Areas." These alternative labels often lack legal definition and can be inconsistent depending upon which context they are used. This is not



the case with the Ceded Lands concept.

Within the Kalispel Ceded Lands there is a unique and contrasting cultural

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The south side of the mountain where I live was once covered, at least in part, with old growth ponderosa pine. Several years ago the grandson of the valley's first settler published a book on the early history of the area that included old photographs of log trucks dwarfed by their two and three-log loads of massive pines. Several other anecdotal accounts mention the enormous size of many of the trees.

Unfortunately, whatever awe early settlers had for the giant trees was dwarfed by the urge to cut them down. Several sawmills were built and it didn't take long to denude the valley and its surrounding mountains.

I've often longed to have a time machine so I could go back and see this landscape as it was before our peculiar notion of "progress" created the spider web of roads and weed infested clear cuts. Lacking such a contrivance, I do the best I can, resurrecting the native forest in my imagination. Fuel for this imagination comes from the decayed remains of old stumps and logs and the exceedingly rare giants that somehow escaped the first, second, and now third logging assault.

One of my pastimes is to bushwhack into remote nooks and crannies in hopes of finding interesting stuff. An unusual rock formation or a mossy bowl where a spring emerges from the side of the mountain can easily justify a trek of miles or hours spent wading through thick brush and clambering over downed trees.

Always on these journeys I search for the Relict, the elusive survivor. Looking over this ravaged landscape one would think the quest impossible but I've found a few "giants" in remote places where they survived the fires of the past few centuries and the saws of the

previous one.

Not long ago I stumbled upon a massive pine on a hillside less than a mile from the nearest road. I could easily have missed it due to the thick growth of younger trees



surrounding it. Fortunately, at an opportune moment, the sun came out from behind the clouds and the giant's yellow slabs of bark glowed like they were lit from within. I've revisited this tree several times over the past few months and each time I find myself trying to imagine what the surrounding forest looked like prior to European settlement and the advent of logging and fire suppression.

To me, the value of such ancient trees is much more than eliciting lamentations over the vanished splendors of yesteryear. The sense of awe such trees inspire is best served by a resolve to heal the ravaged land... to imagine what can be and then work to bring

that vision to life.

Our work must go far beyond saving remnants of the past. We must work to save the future.

Mark Sprengel
Executive Director, SCA
sprengel@scawild.org

For more in-depth articles,
photographs and links,
go to our website
www.scawild.org

KALISPEL LANDS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ecology that differentiates itself from cultural geographies to the south and west; these having as their keystone the salmon subsistence economy. Locally, the resident fisheries of bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish, and many other animal and plant resources like deer and camas provided a broad spectrum of resource opportunities that met Kalispel family needs and individual purpose.

It is core philosophy
of the Kalispel that
resource stewardship
is essential for its survival
and continued association
with its home.

Having a pragmatic outlook towards relationship building and maintenance, the Kalispel often hosted neighboring communities within their homelands to avail of its conspicuous resource abundance and were returned in kind with ability to fish salmon in the homelands of the Spokane and Colville and hunt in unison with confederated bands that seasonally migrated into the Northern Great Plains in pursuit of bison.

Modern day resource management by the Tribe—in cooperation and collaboration with Federal/State/ local governments and, with growing success, other stakeholders—seeks to improve native species composition and viability within the Ceded Lands. This echoes that traditional pragmatic outlook towards relationship building and maintenance.

It is core philosophy of the Kalispel that resource stewardship is essential for its survival and continued association with its home.

Deane Osterman is Executive Director of the Kalispel Natural Resources Department. He can be contacted at dosterman@knrd.org

Join the SCA

Support the Selkirk Conservation Alliance with Your Membership!

Our newsletter, funded entirely by member contributions, keeps you informed of natural resources 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.

**Make a contribution and keep SightLines coming regularly.
Dues and donations are tax-deductible.**

☐ Enroll or Renew Me as a member of the SCA.
Enclosed are my dues.

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

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

☐ \$10 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$500 ☐ other _____

Include the following SCA merchandise:

☐ SCA mug #_____ \$15 each + \$5 shipping/handling
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To pay by credit card, please include type, number,
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Call the SCA Office with any questions. 208-448-1110

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Fishing The Waters of the Selkirks, Or—How I Became An Environmentalist

BY MARK KABUSH, SCA BOARD CHAIR

“So I speak for the fish:

those that are native to the region, and those that are not.” Mark Kabush

Fish Tales begins...

A new SightLines column.

It all began in 1947 when I was eleven and I moved from Los Angeles, California to Nordman, Idaho—a cultural change which could only have been greater had we settled with the Inuits in Greenland.

It was in Reeder Creek, which flows from a beaver dammed stream between Nickleplate and Reeder Mountain that my passion for fishing arose. And it is now, when my fishing memories flow like the numerous waters that enter Priest Lake, that I feel it is time to bring to light that unseen underwater environment that SCA has heretofore paid little attention.

We monitor the animals that inhabit our forests and the forests themselves, in an attempt to save what is left of a truly unique American environment. So I speak for the fish: those that are native to the region, and those that are not. For they are as important a part of the great web of things as the trees and animals that live above the ground and are more visible.

I will begin a fishing narrative in the next issue of *SightLines* with a history of Reeder Creek, and will continue until I have told of my piscatorial adventures in almost all the tributaries, lakes and rivers of the Priest Lake Basin, some comic and some nostalgic for what we have lost. I hope you will all follow along.

Mark Kabush, kabush@bmi.net

Thorofare Opened for Fishing

BY MARK KABUSH, SCA BOARD CHAIR

For the first time in at least sixty years the Thorofare, the connecting river between the Upper Lake and Priest Lake, has been opened for fishing.

It was previously closed to fishing in order to prevent navigational problems arising between fisherman and boaters in the narrow waterway, and to preserve safe passage for Westslope Cutthroat (*Oncorhynchus clarki*) and Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentis*) between the two lakes. The main spawning streams for both species are in the Upper Priest River and adjoining tributaries, which, while previously closed waters, are now open to catch and release fishing with the use of barbless hooks and artificial lures and flies only.

The Thorofare is actually an extension of the Upper Priest River since it drains the Upper Lake into Priest Lake. Consequently, one might assume that the rules for the Thorofare would be the same as for the Upper Priest River. Such is

not the case. Both bait and barbed hooks will be legal in the Thorofare, despite the fact that such a combination is more lethal to the threatened Westslope cutthroat and the endangered bull trout.

Atrout or char which swallows a baited and barbed hook is almost certain to perish, regardless of whether or not it is released. Added to this, the navigational congestion which is almost certain to occur on a crowded boating day in mid-July on the Thorofare, makes one wonder what was in the minds of Idaho fisheries biologists when they allowed the Thorofare to open for fishing at all, much less with bait and barbed hooks.

The Idaho fishing regulations are in effect for two years, so we probably can expect no changes until after 2012.

Contact Mark Kabush, SCA Board Chair, at kabush@bmi.net



The litter pick up volunteer team 2011, from left to right: Terry Turner, Lon Southard, Amy Daniels (shading her eyes), Maggie Drummond, Rosemary Yocum, Bruce Yocum, Babbs Egolf, Kathy Rosenberg, Bill Egolf. Photo credit Mikki Ravenscroft.

SCA Spring Clean Up

Pounds of trash alongside a stretch of Highway 57, 20 miles north of Priest River, is now where it belongs, thanks to the crew of a dozen or so SCA members and volunteers who showed up to lend a hand.

What a gorgeous day. What a satisfying effort. Thank you again to all those who helped this year, and to Amy Daniels, Coordinator for Litter Pick Up.

The spring roadside litter cleanup is an annual SCA tradition. Keep your eyes peeled for the dates of next year's clean up.

A Brief Background on Caribou Movements

BY TIM LAYSER, SCA WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

Unlike their more northern cousins the barren ground caribou, the mountain caribou of our Selkirk Mountains do not make extremely long distance migrations several times each year. Instead, mountain caribou have more complex patterns of movement depending on the particular season of the year.

Mountain caribou are known throughout their range as having a distinct elevational movement pattern. After the long winter season, many caribou shift from high elevation wintering areas to lower slopes where they can find lush green emerging vegetation. After the spring period the caribou once again make a shift in elevation as they return to the upper slopes where they continue to feed on shrubbery and young plants.

An interesting note about caribou is that during the late spring period, pregnant female caribou will travel back to the snowfields along the upper slopes where they will isolate themselves while giving birth. This is thought to be a predator avoidance strategy that is intended to ensure the greatest chance of survival for both mother and newborn calf.

After the summer season and as snow begins to fall on the upper slopes, caribou may once again move to lower elevations and wait out the early portion of the winter season as the snowpack accumulates. Once winter snows have deepened and settled, caribou once again move to the upper slopes where deep snow gives them the lift necessary to reach higher up in the trees to feed on lichen that grows on the upper branches.

In between any of these seasons some caribou may also show long distance movements from one portion of the ecosystem to another.

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Movements between the early winter and the late winter seasons and between the late winter and spring season are known to be timeframes where some caribou tend make their longest movements. These distances may only be several miles for many caribou but may be up to more than 10 miles for others, with males often making the longest movements. When making longer movements within the ecosystem, mountain caribou are believed to travel along the upper slopes and ridgelines or through upper drainages.

Some obstacles which may interfere with caribou movements may include steep slopes, large open areas that may have been created by fire or extensive timber removal, areas of intense human activity, such as highways and snowmobile play areas. Selkirk caribou face many obstacles that lie immediately north of our border with British Columbia including an extensive forest road system which is heavily used in the winter, extensive cross country skiing within Stagleap Provincial Park and of course crossing Highway 3 just north of the border. Three adult caribou were killed by vehicles as they were crossing this stretch of highway just a little over two years ago, and countless others have died since this highway was constructed in the early 1960s.

This year as part of our winter aerial monitoring program, SCA has been monitoring conditions across the landscape which are thought to be important for caribou movement between the core areas in British Columbia and the portion of their range here in the United States.

Tim Layser worked for the U.S. Forest Service for more than 30 years and was the Priest Lake Ranger District wildlife biologist for the past 20 years. layser@scawild.org

Favorite Places: *Lion Head Rock Slides*

SUBMITTED BY SARAH STONER,
SCA MEMBER/SUPPORTER



One of my favorite places in the Selkirk is Lion Head Creek and the Rock Slides. Popular, yes. Yet no less amazing.

Lion Head Creek rushes over smooth granite (photo by Larry MacDonald)

The trail leading to the Slides is an easy two miles, steady uphill and entirely doable for the younger kids in our family, the under-five set.

The Slides themselves are the perfect play/picnic destination—it's easy to understand why they are so popular. But there are plenty of other highlights along the way as well.

Tiny wild raspberries grow alongside the trail. We delight in them. Bring binoculars to watch the mountain goats scramble on the steep crags high above the trail.

No promises, but last summer—the summer of so few huckleberries thanks to a late frost—we tasted fresh berries a'plenty on this well-traveled path. A total delight!

Picnic spots with icy swimming holes abound along the Lion Head Creek trail. If you bring a plastic bag for sliding, just remember to pack it out—or pack out someone else's. Let's keep Lion Head Creek one of The Most Gorgeous Places on Earth.

Submit your Favorite Place in the Selkirk area along with a one- or two-paragraph description and a photograph or two to sca@scawild.org with subject line: "Favorite Places"

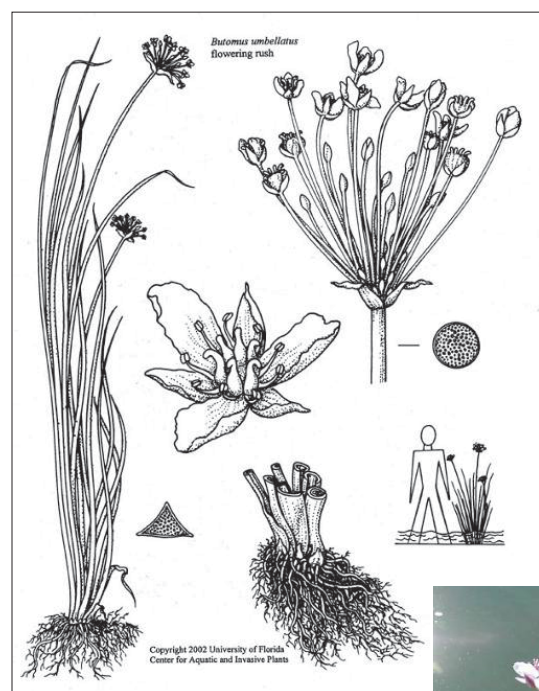
Two Aquatic Noxious Weeds Doing Dirty Work in the Selkirks: *Flowering Rush*, *Yellow Flag Iris*

BY SHARON SORBY, SCA BOARD MEMBER

Foreign plants arrive in our area through a number of vectors—accidentally as hitchhikers or contaminants—and intentionally as introduced crops or ornamentals.

etation that is better suited for bank stabilization and providing habitat—food, resting sites and nesting material—for the animals, frogs, invertebrates and waterfowl that use this habitat type.

head. However, the genotype that is invading the Upper Columbia Basin rarely flowers. Spread is primarily through water movement assisted rhizome transport. There are two leaf types, one is triangular in cross-section, erect and



***Butomus umbellatus*—flowering rush (right). Line drawing of flowering rush (above).**

Most introductions do not create problems. The ones that do go on to become invasive noxious weeds go through a succession of population increases: introduction, pioneering, colonization, lag phase, and exponentiation.

Aquatic noxious weed introductions are usually the result of escaped intentional ornamental plantings or as a contaminant with an aquarium dump. Flowering rush and yellow flag iris are escaped ornamentals.

The problem with these two plants is that they displace native shoreline veg-

Flowering rush is also detrimental to recreational uses including impediment of boat passage due to prop fouling, blockage to swimming, and loss of open water for near-shore fishing. Flowering rush infestations provide ideal habitat for great pond snails (*Lymnaea stagnalis*), which are an intermediate host for the trematode parasite (*Trichobilharzia ocellata*) that causes swimmer's itch.

The introduction of flowering rush into Flathead Lake was first noted in 1964. It has now reached the exponentiation level, spreading to over 1,000 acres and is affecting



the shallow bays and altering the lake's morphology. It has also started to migrate down the Clark Fork River and was discovered three years ago in Lake Pend Oreille and last year in the

Pend Oreille River at Laclede and in the slough behind Rednour Island. Due to Idaho's new aggressive aquatic invasive species program, steps to eradication in Idaho started immediately. As a Class A weed in Washington, immediate control measures were taken on the population found there.

In garden catalogues, flowering rush has an attractive open, pink flower

These plants displace native shoreline vegetation that is better suited for bank stabilization and providing habitat—food, resting sites and nesting material—for the animals, frogs, invertebrates and waterfowl that use this habitat.

stands above the water surface. The other is strappy and floats in the water column. It can grow to a depth of 13 feet.

Yellow flag iris was intentionally introduced into the West Branch of the Little Spokane River as an ornamental planting in the 1940s. It has since steadily spread upstream and completely infests Fan Lake in Pend Oreille County. It is continuing its spread upstream and is colonizing Diamond and Sacheen Lakes.

It also occurs on the Clark Fork and Pend Oreille Rivers, infesting both shorelines all along the Noxon Reservoir. In Lake Pend Oreille and the Pend Oreille River, it infests both shorelines as scattered clumps all the way to Boundary Dam.

I have been watching it along the Pend Oreille River in Washington over the last 15 years where it spent this time in its



Yellow flag iris forms a dense monoculture in wetlands and shallows.

significantly. In the last 3 years, it has started to enter the exponentiation level of infestation as it is spreading to new segments of shoreline at a rapid rate, infesting both shorelines as scattered clumps. Pend Oreille County is in the process of setting up a Cooperative Weed Management area with the goal of developing an aggressive management plan with control projects to stop yellow

lag phase of infestation, present but not spreading

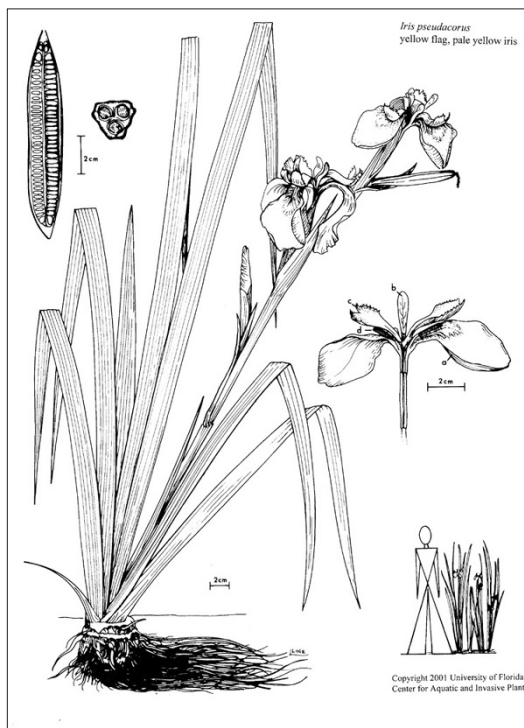
produces large swollen seed pods designed to float on the water. It spreads primarily by seed, although roots that break off can float to new locations and establish a new colony.

When faced with managing infestations, catching noxious weeds at the first stage of introduction is critical to successful prevention, and before the final stage of exponentiation is the key to successful eradication.

Do your part, never plant noxious weeds into natural waters or into garden ponds where they could escape into natural water ways.



***Iris pseudocorus*—typical fan-shaped clump of yellow flag iris (above). Line drawing of flower parts (left).**



Sharon Sorby, SCA board member, serves as Coordinator at the Pend Oreille County Noxious Weed Control Board. She can be reached at SSorby@pendoreille.org

Noxious Weeds in Idaho

36 different species of weeds are designated noxious by state law.

Black Henbane
Buffalobur
Canada Thistle
Common Crupina
Dalmatian Toadflax
Diffuse Knapweed
Dyer's Woad
Eurasian Watermilfoil
Field Bindweed
Hoary Cress
Johnsongrass
Jointed Goatgrass
Leafy Spurge
Matgrass
Meadow Hawkweed
Meadow Knapweed
Milium
Musk Thistle
Orange Hawkweed
Perennial Pepperweed
Perennial Sowthistle
Poison Hemlock
Puncturevine
Purple Loosestrife
Rush Skeletonweed
Russian Knapweed
Scotch Broom
Scotch Thistle
Silverleaf Nightshade
Skeletonleaf Bursage
Spotted Knapweed
Syrian Beancaper
Tansy Ragwort
Toothed Spurge
Yellow Starthistle

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) is responsible for administration of the State Noxious Weed Law.

For more information, see <http://www.agri.state.id.us/Categories/PlantsInsects/NoxiousWeeds/indexnoxweed-main.php>

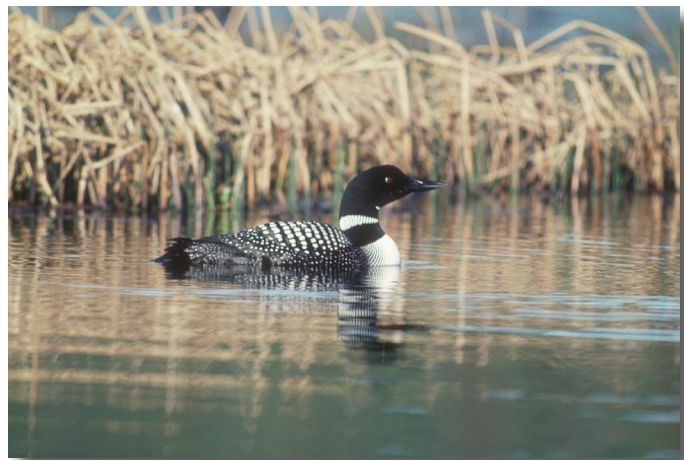
Thursday, Friday... Loon Day!

Volunteer to Be A Part of Loon Survey Day: July 16

BY TIM LAYSER, SCA WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

We are looking for volunteers to assist in conducting common loon surveys on selected lakes within the Selkirk Ecosystem. We are hoping to survey, if possible, Priest Lake, Upper Priest Lake, Chase Lake within the Priest Lake drainage and Yocum Lake, Mill Pond, Crescent Lake and Big Meadow Lake on the Colville National Forest. The selected date for the survey is Saturday, July 16th.

So mark your calendar if you can and want to participate—and contact us!



The common loon is a rare summer resident on lakes within northern Idaho and northeastern Washington.

This date has been selected because it is widely used throughout the range of the common loon to conduct surveys with selected lakes and other potential habitats.

A variety of means can be used to survey for loons—motorized boat, canoe, kayak or by observing the lake from the shoreline on the smaller lakes such as Mill Pond, Big Meadow Lake and Crescent Lake. Required equipment would include binoculars or spotting scope and a bird identification book if available. It would be ideal to survey

all of the above-mentioned lakes, but that will depend of the number of participants who wish to volunteer their time with the survey.

sites are often used from year to year. Loons will use mud, grass, moss, pine needles and/or clumps of mud and vegetation collected from the lake bottom to

Loon Survey Day

With your help, we can survey:

Priest Lake, Upper Priest Lake, Chase Lake within the Priest Lake drainage and Yocum Lake, Mill Pond, Crescent Lake and

Big Meadow Lake on the Colville National Forest.

Survey from: *motorized boat, canoe, kayak or by observing from the shoreline on the smaller lakes*

Equipment: *binoculars or spotting scope and a bird identification book if available.*

Time: *Saturday, July 16, 2011*

Call: *SCA, 208-448-1110 for details or with questions.*

The common loon is a rare summer resident on lakes within northern Idaho and northeastern Washington; they spend the winter along the coastal areas of Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. The only documented loon nesting within the state of Idaho has been on the Upper Priest Lake. Adult common loons and young were observed with young in 1998, indicating successful nesting. It is suspected that loons may be nesting on Pend Oreille Lake near the Clark Fork Delta. Another nesting pair was documented on Yocum Lake on the Colville National Forest, but vandals shot one of the nesting adults.

Common loons arrive on our lakes after the ice has melted. They build their nests close to the water, often on a small island, muskrat house, half-submerged log, or sedge mat. The same

build a nest. Both the male and female help with nest building.

Loon chicks are hatched usually in late June or early July. Loon chicks covered in brown-black down appear on the water in late June or July. Chicks can swim right away, but spend time riding on their parents' backs to rest, conserve heat, and avoid predators such as large fish, snapping turtles, gulls and eagles.

If you would like to participate in our survey please call the Selkirk Conservation Alliance office at 208-448-1110 for details and potential survey assignments.

Tim Layser worked for the U.S. Forest Service for more than 30 years and was the Priest Lake Ranger District wildlife biologist for the past 20 years. Contact Tim at layser@scawild.org