

## Interview With Sgt. Matt Street

By Valerie Watson

VALERIE: Matt, I would like to introduce you to our Spokane River property owners and talk a little about your role on the river. You are a Sheriff's Deputy for Kootenai County. Among other things you have responsibility for the officers patrolling and protecting our waterways. Can you tell us a little about how they operate?



MATT: The official title for the Marine Division is the Recreation Safety Section. In addition to conducting all marine related issues, our Section also oversees the Backcountry Patrols (Snowmobile and ATV), the Dive Rescue Team as well as Search and Rescue. The

Section is made up of one (1) full time sergeant and one (1) full time deputy. We start the hiring process in January of each year in preparation for the hiring of ten (10) seasonal deputies that are the guys that do most of the marine patrols that boaters encounter. These seasonal deputies work on a temporary basis, typically from May 01 through Sept. 15 of each year. Many of the seasonal deputies are college LE students that are either looking for summer work or trying to get their foot in the door with a Law Enforcement agency.

Once the seasonal deputies are hired, they go through two weeks of orientation training that includes; report writing, arrest techniques, firearms qualification, pepper spray training, etc. Once that is completed they attend a state certified, two week "Marine Officers" academy where they learn everything from vessel nomenclature to accident investigation and DUI recognition. The course is very intensive, but the guys learn just about everything they need to know about boating safety and enforcement.

Upon completing the marine academy, the deputies are paired up and assigned a patrol boat and lake (or lakes) to patrol. Currently we have one patrol boat (and team) to cover the Spokane River, one patrol boat for the north end of Lake CDA, one patrol boat for the lower portion of Lake CDA (Carlín Bay to Conklin Park) as well as the CDA River system from Harrison to Cataldo. The remaining two teams split the rest of Kootenai County. One roving team patrols Hauser Lake, Twin Lakes and Spirit Lake while the other covers Fernan Lake, Hayden and that portion of Pend Oreille that falls within our jurisdiction.

VALERIE: How many officers and boats are on the water during boating season and how much of their time is actu-

ally spent on the river?

MATT: Some may think that having ten deputies to patrol the waterways is more than enough. However, upon reviewing last year's stats and patrol times, the average amount of time spent on the water by any team was only 14.5 hours out of a 40 hour week. The remainder of the week was spent completing reports, attending court, conducting routine maintenance and boating safety details.

As the summer comes to an end, most of the seasonal deputies return to school or seek out other jobs. For the past several years, we have been successful in keeping one or two seasonal deputies on throughout the winter, but this depends on funding usually.

VALERIE: You shared how your officers spend their time, how is your program funded and what would it take to increase your patrolling efforts?

MATT: Our program received funding from two different sources. The first source of funding is vessel registration. The other one is through a Recreational Boating Safety Grant.

With every vessel that is registered (and designated) in Kootenai County a majority of that money comes back to the county and placed in a county vessel account. The money in the vessel account is split 50/50 between the Sheriffs Department and the County Parks and Waterways Department. For the last several years the Sheriff's budget has hovered around \$165,000 annually. Furthermore, since the number of registered and designated vessels have stagnated for the past several years, the revenue remains fairly consistent.

There is also a Recreational Boating Safety Grant (RBS): Where the Federal Government distributes funding to states with boating programs. Idaho is one of the states that receives funding and is charged with the responsibility of distributing the funds to individual counties with marine programs. There is a distribution formula that is applied resulting in our program receiving nearly \$50,000 for the 2005 boating season. This money is applied to the seasonal staff wages.

To answer the question about increasing the staffing, it all boils down to funding. Since registration costs remain the same as do the number of registrations, the only answer I have to that question is to raise fees.....and nobody likes to hear that, but that is the reality. The Sheriff's Department has not been in a position to pull deputies off the streets

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and have them work the waterways. Essentially, the entire program is user funded either through fees or fuel taxes.

VALERIE: Of course with continued growth comes added water traffic and unfortunately, complaints regarding loud boats, wake issues, etc. What can the homeowner do? How can we help your people/program?

MATT: We receive various complaints about boating related violations throughout the summer. If a deputy is not present to witness the violation, we must rely on the reporting citizen to provide the information. This is more difficult than you may think. The witness must be able to identify the vessel and the operator AND be (willing) able to testify to that fact in court if necessary. Often times the violator goes by too fast or is too far away to read the bow numbers or see the operator. Furthermore, many people do not want to sign a formal complaint against someone or spend time in court.

My advice is to make every effort to get good information if possible and report it to us. If you don't get it the first

time, be patient. People who routinely violate the law or operate in an unsafe manner will return to do it again and give you a second chance.

VALERIE: Finally, what does the 2006 boating season hold for your water patrol program; any changes or significant challenges?

MATT: The good news is that we have submitted a grant request for another patrol boat. The boat is another rigid hull and should benefit the program. The bad news is that even if the grant is approved, the boat won't see the water until the 07 season due to the delay in the grant process and the construction time.

On another front, I have received information that the RBS Grant may increase for the 06 season. If this is the case, I hope to increase our staff by one team.

We'll have to wait and see.

VALERIE: Thanks for your time, Matt. We'll be looking forward to seeing your boats on the water!



## Submit Your Stories

Do you have a special photo of your boat and/or loved ones enjoying the Spokane River? It's always fun to know what our members are up to.

Send your photos and stories to:

[ScuttlebuttEditor@verizon.net](mailto:ScuttlebuttEditor@verizon.net)

## Environmental Committee Update

by Clyde Sheppard

In the last River Talk (Dec 2005) I discussed the announcement that Mike Bogert, recently appointed EPA Region 10 Administrator, reclused himself from any involvement with the CDA Basin Superfund Site. The position of Regional Administrator had been vacant since July 2004, making its Idaho turn at the Region 10 administrator. Mr. Bogert was appointed regional administrator and was supposed to bring local thinking to the Superfund Site. His previous job was a Governor Kempthorne's attorney and was instrumental in authoring the Legislative Bill creating the BEIPC. He was a strong advocate of local control of the OU3 superfund cleanup.

At that time I discussed the effect on the Spokane River Association that would occur after Mr Bogert reclused himself from any decisions regarding the CDA site. My recommendation at that time was for all SRA members to register their disappointment with Mr. Bogert's decision and its effect on the delisting of the Spokane River, with the Idaho Congressional Delegation (Senators Craig and Crapo and Representative Otter). During the ensuing time, lawyers from the Dept of Justice had extensive discussions with the HQ EPA lawyers and it was decided that it would be in the best interest of EPA if Administrator Bogert rescinded his previous position (reclusion from acting on issues in the CDA Basin) and take the US Government seat on the BEIPC commission at their February 22, 2006 meeting.

I would personally like to thank all the members who took the effort to comment to their elected representatives about the issue. It just goes to show that if you make your position known to the right people things can happen.

## Spring 2006 Membership Drive & Contest!

By Bill McCarty

### We Need More SRA Members Now!

The most important key to our association's ability to protect you as a Spokane riverfront property owner is the percentage of riverfront property owners who are paid-up SRA members! As our SRA leaders participate in negotiations on the regional, county, and local levels concerning issues that directly impact your way of life and the value of your property on the river, their strength or lack thereof in those negotiations is totally based upon that percentage. If the SRA can state that it represents 90% of all property owners on the river, it is in a much more powerful position, as an active negotiator, than if it can claim only 10% participation! Make sense?

Two years ago, when the Avista Post Falls dam relicensing process was definitely our most menacing issue concerning preservation of riverfront property values, riverfront property owners were worried! They reflected their worry by giving the leaders of the SRA a full 52% participation. That's right. At that point in time, our paid up membership represented 52% of all residential, recreational, business/commercial/industrial, and governmental owners on the Spokane River. But today it has declined to about 32%, now that relicensing of the dam is, in some respects, "old news". The other 20% are still listed as members, but have not paid their \$30 dues for calendar year 2005. Apparently, they thought once the dam relicensing issue cooled down, there would be no need to continue their paid-up SRA membership.

### But today we have new worries.

As an example, boat-related safety is on the front burner as the river becomes increasingly crowded with summer recreational activities. We have been fortunate to not have any boating-related fatalities on the river in recent years. How long will that last with the reckless boating behavior we increasingly see? What about boat noise? What about erosion of the shorelines from boating activity?

What about property taxes? They continue to skyrocket with no end in sight. Can long time riverfront residential owners on fixed retirement incomes hope to keep their homes over the long term? If riverfront property taxes continue to escalate at recent high rates, probably not.

How can we directly impact these and other critical issues to insure outcomes that will be favorable to all of us as riverfront property owners? By banding together and speaking with one voice, that's how. Thus the percentage of paid-up SRA members as a proportion of total riverfront property owners must be as high as we can possibly achieve. Only then will we have the clout we need to protect our interests

on the river!

### You Can Help Us And We Will Pay You!

Our strongest asset is our current, paid-up membership. So join us, as an integral part of the Spring 2006 SRA Membership Drive, by talking to your friends, associates, and neighbors who own property on the river.

Tell them about how, with absolutely no compensation, the all-volunteer SRA works tirelessly all year, every year, to influence decision-making bodies that directly affect life and values on the river. Tell them about some of the SRA's accomplishments, such as:

- working to keep waste from being discharged into the river;
- working with the county Waterways Advisory Board to add navigation lights on the river;
- attending hundreds of hours of meetings and/or drafting comments pertaining to Idaho's DEQ and federal EPA initiatives, as well as the dam relicensing process;
- regularly submitting river water quality samples to the DEQ, (e) installing waterfowl piling nesting boxes, and much more.

What a value! We are talking about a minimal \$30 per year in membership fees per property on the river to have the SRA protect our quality of life on the river and the value of our riverfront properties!

Now, for every (a) new member or (b) past member who is behind on his or her annual dues that you bring successfully to the SRA, with the required \$30 check per property, we will reduce your calendar year 2007 SRA fees by \$10. We are setting a maximum of three such new members and/or members in arrears that you insure are paid up for calendar year 2006 by forwarding their \$30 check to us, marked "For 2006 Membership".

Use the form on the right of this page, be certain to fill in all of the blanks, and enclose those \$30 checks to insure getting the credit due you. Also, be certain to put your name on the "Sponsored By" line. Good luck and good hunting!

All such submissions, in order for their sponsor to receive credit as described in this article, must be in the hands of the Spokane River Association, with the required dues checks, prior to July 31, 2006.

**Membership Contest Form** 

### Spokane River Association Membership Application & Contest Submission Form!

Sponsored By (print your name) \_\_\_\_\_

Your Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Your Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

New Members applying for membership OR past mMembers now paying their 2006 \$30 membership dues (please print all below clearly):

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_  
 Full Mailing Address With Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Property Address, If Different \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type Of Property (check one): Full Time Residential \_\_\_ Part Time \_\_\_ Recreation \_\_\_ Business \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_  
 Your number one concern on the river \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_  
 Full Mailing Address With Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Property Address, If Different \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type Of Property (check one): Full Time Residential \_\_\_ Part Time \_\_\_ Recreation \_\_\_ Business \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_  
 Your number one concern on the river \_\_\_\_\_  
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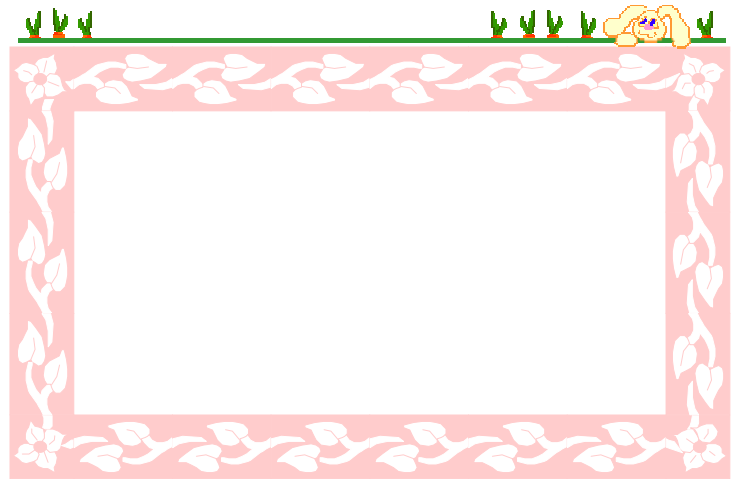
3. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_  
 Full Mailing Address With Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Property Address, If Different \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type Of Property (check one): Full Time Residential \_\_\_ Part Time \_\_\_ Recreation \_\_\_ Business \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_  
 Your number one concern on the river \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Membership fee per property for each calendar year is \$30. Make checks payable and send this completed form to:  
Spokane River Association, P.O. Box 1737, Post Falls, Idaho 83877

The SRA website will be re-launch by next newsletter. Sorry for the delay. Valerie.



**PO Box 1737  
Post Falls, ID 83877**



Spring Is Just Around The Corner. Boating Season Next!!

MEMBERS: To receive time-sensitive info via email, please send an email entitled "Sign Me Up" to Valerie at [RiverTalkEditor@verizon.net](mailto:RiverTalkEditor@verizon.net).

### Become a Spokane River Association Member!

Annual dues only \$30. The higher percentage of river property owners as members, the better we can speak with "one voice" on critical issues we all face (such as property taxes; boating safety, speed and noise; shore erosion; etc.).

"Sign Me Up!", Check Enclosed.     I'm already a member, but my contact information has changed in the last 6 months.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

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

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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Please mail your check to:  
**Spokane River Association**  
PO Box 1737, Post Falls, ID 83877

Questions? Call Membership Chair: Bill McCarty at 208.765.1437 or email [wpmccarty@aol.com](mailto:wpmccarty@aol.com)