



KXLY4 News Team, Marine Patrol
& Pancake Breakfast

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rivertalkeditor@spokaneriver.org

President's Message

By Steve Shamion



Before we close the book on 2007, I'd like to briefly reminisce on a few of your association's activities over the past twelve months.

In February, several of the Spokane River Association's board members participated in hearings regarding EPA permit applications to discharge treated wastewater into the Spokane River. Although new permits were granted, the water quality standard is significantly higher than ever before. The tighter water purity requirements are part of a massive effort to reduce phosphorous levels in the Spokane River. Similar standards are also forthcoming for Liberty Lake, Spokane and other Washington cities as well. The changes will be phased in over the next 10 years, giving city treatment plants time to add the technology required to meet the higher standards.

The Spokane River's return to summer flow conditions is primarily up to Mother Nature. However, the past spring Avista Utilities monitored and adjusted water levels that provided boating conditions 10-14 days earlier than normal. Pat Mahar is now in charge of controlling lake and river water flows when the Post Falls Dam gates aren't open. His close monitoring also extended our boating season this fall. He's done a great job as far as I'm concerned. For regularly recorded updates of the lake levels and river flows, call (208)769-1357.

The SRA annual dinner and membership meeting was held on May 21st at Templin's Red Lion Resort. In addition to updating our members on current and future happenings, Mr. Robert Singletary entertained us with a presentation on the history of the Spokane River. Robert is considered a North Idaho Historian "Extraordinaire" and is also a History Instructor at NIC.

In June, your association sponsored a boating safety certification class, also held at Templin's Red Lion. The class ran from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM and was free for all SRA members and their guests. As you may know, both Washington and Oregon have recently adopted mandatory boat safety certifications for watercraft operators. Your Board of Directors believes the State of Idaho should do the same.

Boating safety and recreation will always be a priority among association members. Although a weekend "no-tow" restriction was not imposed by the Kootenai County Commissioners last summer, your Board of Directors will continue to support and/or initiate programs that detour unsafe watercraft operation. One new program to look forward to is "River Watch". SRA members would work in conjunction with Sgt. Sheriff Matt Street's Marine Division to record and report any illegal or unsafe boating activities. "River Watch" will also assist in tagging and removing "dead-heads" (submerged logs), reducing the number of log piling poles in the river and increasing safety signage at public docks and ramps. We intend to launch "River Watch" early next spring.

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2008 SRA Member Dues

Reminder: Membership dues are due January 2008. Please send your check for \$30 payable to:

Spokane River Association
PO Box 1737
Post Falls, ID 83877

Questions, contact Jackie
McDaniels at:

208.664.0681 or
mjmcDaniels@roadrunner.com

2008 Wish List

By Chris Jessen, Property Taxes Chair



With our state legislators gearing up to start the 2008 session, a few wishes for the New Year.

Registration of non-motorized watercraft in Idaho.

On November 30, 2007 a task force was convened at the request of Governor Butch Otter to explore the advisability and feasibility of requiring non-motorized watercraft (e.g., kayaks, canoes and rafts over 7 feet long) to be licensed.

This group was comprised of legislators (Eric Anderson-Priest Lake, George Saylor-Coeur d'Alene and Lee Heinrich-Cascade), governmental agency employees and private citizens (including lobbyist for the Idaho Whitewater Association).

The time has come for meaningful legislation to help the Marine Division of the Sheriff's Department do their job. Over half of the marine emergency response calls to the Sheriff's Department comes from non-motorized watercraft. Everyone who uses the waterways of Idaho should be responsible for sharing in the costs of maintaining and building a better rescue and policing environment.

Additional funds for milfoil eradication.

This program has been very successful to date where it has been implemented, according to Dean Sangrey of the State Parks Department. Payette Lake is an excellent example. One or more of three techniques are used, physical extraction, chemicals and shading. More needs to be done; therefore the funds should be allotted, if not expanded.

Boating safety.

As everyone knows our waterways are becoming more crowded each year. While a legislative bill has never been introduced, the following three, long on common sense, requirements have been discussed in Boise.

1. Motorized watercraft would require the operator to be sixteen years of age or older.
2. A fourteen or fifteen year old could qualify as operator if they took a boating safety class and pass a test.
3. No individual would be allowed to sit in front of the operator of wave runner.

These are all common sense items that the legislators should consider.

*"Common sense is the measure of the possible."
Henri Frederic Amiel*

The Deadhead Award!

A picture is worth a thousand words!

On November 11, 2007 one of our SRA property owners/members, Tom & Marie Flanagan, discovered a huge hump in the Trex decking of their dock. Upon inspection they saw that a gigantic log had vertically wedged itself between the undercarriage of the deck shoving itself upward like a sledgehammer as the river levels dropped for the winter. In freezing wind and rain, Tom removed 12 of the planks in order to prevent further damage.

As luck would have it, a week later a huge barge was working up river a 1/4-mile. Tom call the company and they gladly came down and hoisted a 32' log from under Flanagan's dock and hauled it away!

Crazy, what are the chances of this ever happening??!



Thanks Marie for sharing!
Send your photos/stories to rivertalkeditor@spokaneriver.org.

Stay With Your Boat

By Ross Walkinshaw, Safety Chair



Since the Federal Safe Boating Act of 1971 was enacted we have seen a dramatic success story of improvement in recreation boating safety. The number of registered vessels has increased from ~6 million in 1971 to ~13 million in 2006. During this time, boating fatalities have decreased from ~1,600 per year to ~600 per year (more than twice the boats and 1,000 lives saved each year). This great success story for boating safety is due to education, enforcement and technology.

The boat and engine manufacturers work very hard to design and build boats and motors that are safer for the boater. Engine manufacturers have developed engine accessories that are shielded to prevent fires and explosions. Boat builders have designed methods of flotation that keep the vessel floating level if it is damaged enough to fill with water. This 'Level Flotation' is a US Coast Guard requirement on outboard boats up to 20 feet and is part of most major boat builders safety features. What this means to us is that if our boat is damaged enough to sink, we still have a place to be mostly out of the cold water until help arrives. Remember – it is best to stay with your boat and out of the water. Cold water robs the body of heat 25 times faster than cold air.

The US Coast Guard says that nearly 85% of all boating fatalities are from drowning. Examining this statistic, it's obvious if the number of people on the water wearing life jackets increased, it would further reduce boater fatalities. The next step is mandatory life jacket use. The Coast Guard is currently studying this.

Boater education requirements of some degree currently exist in 46 states and territories. The vast majority of boaters (74%) believe that in order to operate a boat, mandatory testing should be required.

The future for Idaho is possible legislation to enact regulations restricting some activities state wide. Steve Klatt, who is North Idaho's Idaho Park and Recreation board member, tells us that the coming year will have legislation that will address some statewide boating regulations. These include age requirements for operating boats and personal watercrafts. Another personal watercraft restriction being considered will make it illegal to have a passenger in front of the driver on the vessel (such as a small child.) Another prohibition being considered concerns the riding of devices in close proximity to the rear of the boat. This is commonly known as 'teak surfing' and often results in carbon monoxide poisoning that has caused unexpected deaths.

Also under consideration in the future is mandatory education for operators of motorized recreational devices. For example, boats, ATV's, off-road motorbikes, and snowmobiles. If you have interest in these proposals, please get involved in the process of support for or against.



THANKS GUYS!!! On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank Bill McCarty and Paul Anderson for the many, many years of service on the SRA's Board. Both have resigned their positions effective the end of 2007.



Bill was also the Chairman of our Membership Committee. His creativity regarding design and marketing will certainly be difficult to replace.

Paul provided monthly updates on the Spokane River's "Industrial Relations and Development." We've all seen the dramatic changes, however Paul's insight and knowledge helped inform the Board of Directors well before the developments ever broke ground.



As association members, you should know how fortunate we were to have Bill McCarty and Paul Anderson serving on your board. While we'll certainly miss their contributions, I think we'll miss their smiling faces and positive attitudes even more.

Steve Shamion, President

** Note: Anyone interested in joining the Board of Directors, please contact Steve Shamion at 208-773-3234. We obviously have some openings that need to be filled.*