SECTION 10
BOATING AND RECREATION

This fact sheet addresses the impacts boating and recreation can have on water quality and how *you* can make a difference with *Best Management Practices (BMPs)*. BMPs are actions you can take to protect our natural resources. **The ultimate goal of this information is to prevent negative impacts to water quality.**

1. Read the facts and information in the following pages.
2. Fill out the Risk Assessment Worksheets in order to analyze your individual situation.
3. Fill out the Action Worksheet, then **take action!**

Play Smart

Most likely you live in this beautiful area for the abundant recreational activities it provides: boating, waterskiing, camping, swimming, and fishing. Our hope is that you continue to enjoy these activities, while at the same time, put in place some simple best management practices to keep the water clean for generations to come. The waterways in the Pend Oreille Basin are becoming increasingly populated and that is why preventing water pollution and preserving water quality is especially important.

There are a number of potential pollutants associated with boating and recreation. These include, but are not limited to, human waste from long term boating trips and camping, petroleum spills during boat maintenance and operation, erosion resulting from large wakes and speeding boats, and aquatic weed introduction and spread.

Some of the best management practices mentioned in this section may seem inconvenient at a time when you just want to relax on the lake or you feel a time constraint, but please keep in mind that a real inconvenience would be polluted water. Thank you for doing your part.

Personal Watercraft (PWC)

PWCs are small jet propelled boats designed to carry one to three passengers on top rather than inside. These watercraft are considered motorboats and are subject to the same regulations as motorboats. **PWCs must follow no wake guidelines** (page 10-3).

When operating your personal watercraft, consider the effect you may have on the environment.

- Operate in water at least 30 inches deep, to prevent disturbing bottom sediments and aquatic vegetation.
- Avoid causing erosion. Operate at a slow speed, and do not create a wake when operating near shore.
- Do not dock or beach your PWC in reeds and grasses. This could damage fragile environments and encourage the spread of aquatic invasive species like Eurasian watermilfoil.
- Take extra care when fueling in or near the water. Oil and gasoline spills are very detrimental to the aquatic environment. Fuel on land if possible, with a catchment device underneath in case of spillage.
- Never use you PWC to disturb, chase, or harass wildlife.

Boat Sewage and Waste

Discharge or dumping of sewage or other wastes from any vessel into State waters is prohibited.

Idaho Code 67-7505

Untreated sewage (black water) is a pollutant in surface water because it can contain disease causing bacteria and viruses leading to illness such as dysentery and infectious hepatitis. Discharged sewage water and gray water also cause aesthetic degradation and can contain high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus that can stimulate algae growth in lakes.

Although many boats have on-board sanitation devices, it is important to become familiar with the many vault toilets, restrooms, and pump-out stations around the lake, and whenever possible, use these on-land facilities rather than on-board ones. The Bonner County waterways map is located at the County Public Works Department.

Reducing Sewage and Gray Water Impacts:

- Use on-shore restrooms when docked and before casting off. Plan ahead for restroom stops.
- Do not discharge untreated sewage in any lake, river or stream.
- Always use a sewage pump-out facility to empty holding tanks.
- If pump-outs are not available at your marina, ask them to have one installed.
- For sanitation systems that require treated chemicals, look for chlorine free and formaldehyde free products**.**
- Use shore facilities for dirty dishes and showers on shorter day trips.
- Use phosphate free/non toxic soaps.
- Use alternative cleaners. Baking soda, lemon juice, and vinegar all perform as well as commercial cleaning products.

Figure 10-1 *Marine pump-out station*

MARINE SANITATION DEVICES (MSD)

Federal law requires all installed toilets to be U.S. Coast Guard Certified. Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs) are rated I, II, or III.

Types I and II MSDs treat waste with special chemicals to kill bacteria. If you have a Type I or II MSD, it must have a holding tank for untreated waste and a "Y" valve must be secured in a closed position while operating in all State and U.S. waters.

Type III MSDs provide no treatment and are either holding tanks or portable toilets. Collected waste must be taken ashore and disposed of in a pump-out station or onshore toilet.

LARGE BOATS AND HOUSE BOATS

Many large boats and house boats have installed toilets. Installed toilets must have a holding tank for sewage (black water.)

Idaho Panhandle Health District Code (IDAPA 41.1.200) ***prohibits any boat containing waste water facilities to be on district rivers or lakes unless the facilities are sealed to prevent untreated or treated sewage discharge or spilling.***

PUMP-OUT STATIONS

Discharge of human waste into all State waters is prohibited. Surface waters, such as lakes and streams, are considered State waters. Human waste must be pumped into a boat pump-out station (Figure 10-1). There are many pump-out stations located throughout the Pend Oreille Basin. Become familiar with these locations and use them. The County waterways map showing pump-out locations can be obtained from the Bonner Soil & Water Conservation District.

Current PUMP-OUT locations in Bonner County

Lake Pend Oreille

Garfield Bay
City Beach marina
Sandpoint Marina
Bayview
Farragut State Park
Kramer Marina

Priest Lake

Priest Lake Marina
Hills Resort
Bishop's Marina
Blue Diamond Marina

No Wake Zones Prevent Erosion

The impact of waves continually hitting the shoreline cause it to erode and wash away. When shorelines erode, the damage decreases property value, degrades fish habitat from sediment loading, decreases riparian habitat, and causes excess nutrient loading, which encourages the growth and spread of algae blooms and aquatic invasive species.

No Wake Zones

- Within 200 feet from any shoreline, dock, pier, structure, or any person in the water .
- Within 50 feet of any other vessel (15mph).
- The area surrounding all bridge structures.
- Wherever a "No Wake Zone" sign is posted.

Figure 10-2 *Bank erosion caused by boat wakes and flooding. Bank lacks a healthy vegetative buffer.*

Camping along the Shoreline

When using the waterfront for recreation and leisure, make sure your activities do not cause lasting damage to the shoreline or water. There is nothing better than swimming and camping along a beautiful lake or river, but keep in mind why you enjoy it! Make sure it stays that way for you and others in the future. Cleaning up, washing, burning, and waste disposal on the shoreline needs to be done responsibly.

Camping

- Use the restroom/latrine whenever one is provided. If none is available, bury human waste a minimum of 150 ft from the water's edge.
- Never dispose of fish guts or other waste in the water. It attracts pests and adds nutrients to the water.
- Never wash in the lake or river; wash dishes, hair, clothes, and yourself at least 150 ft from the water's edge. Always use biodegradable soap.
- Handi-wipes work well for cleaning, but pack it out!
- Properly dispose of all garbage, including litter you find. Pack it in—pack it out.
- In areas with established fire rings, keep your fire within designated areas. Ashes washed into water introduce unwanted phosphorus.
- Camp at least 150 feet from the lake shore, stream banks, and riparian areas.

Swimming

- Do not use soap or shampoo in the water.
- Do not use the water as a bathroom.

Off Road Vehicles

The use of off road vehicles, such as all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), mountain bikes, and snowmobiles can have a severe effect on lakes and rivers by increasing erosion, turbidity, and sedimentation. Always stay on well maintained trails, and stay away from sensitive areas during spring melt when the ground is thawing and very susceptible to rutting and erosion.

Boat Maintenance and Operations

There are numerous risks to water quality associated with boating. Boats require fluids for maintenance that can have detrimental impacts to aquatic life. When caring for boats, a significant amount of solvents, paint, oil, and other pollutants can potentially seep into groundwater or be washed directly into surface water. Many boat cleaners contain chlorine, ammonia, and phosphates, which can harm plankton and fish. Oil spills from motors and refueling contain petroleum products harmful to fish, wildlife, and human health.

Reduce pollution from boats and marinas:

- Select non-toxic cleaning products.
- When replacing fluids such as oil, fuel, and coolant, always use safety measures, such as a drop cloth or bucket, to prevent chemicals from entering water.
- Carefully fuel boat engines using a funnel and fuel absorbing materials. If your local marina doesn't provide these products, encourage them to do so.
- Keep boat motors well-tuned to prevent fuel and lubricant leaks and improve fuel efficiency. Because the bilge is continually pumping potentially contaminated water into the lake, it is critical that your engine is clean and well maintained.
- Stow it, don't throw it! Keep your trash on board and out of the water. This includes cigarette butts, fishing line, and any food or drink packaging.
- No power loading! Using the motor to load your boat onto and off of the trailer stirs up sediment at the end of ramp creating a large hole (Figure 10-3) that trailers get stuck in.

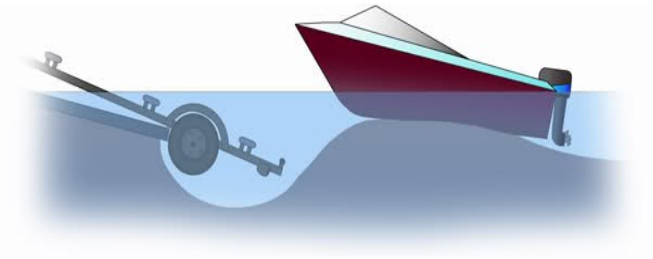
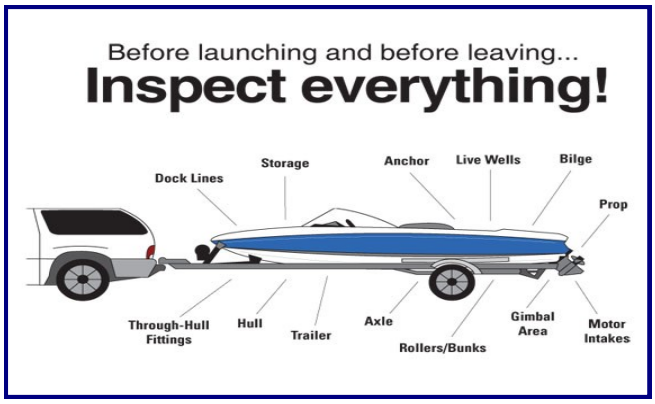


Figure 10-3 *Power loading stirs up sediment and creates large hole at the end of boat ramp*

Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are also referred to as "nuisance" and "exotic" species, and they are one of the most significant threats to our water resources today. Aquatic invasive species often travel from one body of water to another by "hitching a ride" on watercraft, recreational equipment, and animals. Call the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (208) 332-8564, if you see anything suspicious. Please read Section 9: Aquatic Invasive Species for detailed information on this topic.



Clean

Remove all plants, animals, and mud. Discard away from waterbody, storm drain and ditches. Thoroughly wash everything, including crevices and other hidden areas.

Drain

Thoroughly drain your boat before leaving the area, including wells, ballast, and engine cooling water.

Dry

Allow time for your boat to completely dry before launching in other waters. If you have been in a known zebra/quagga mussel infested waterbody, it is recommended your boat dry for 30 days.

Resource Directory

Bonner County Waterways
1500 Hwy 2, Suite 101
Sandpoint, Idaho 83864
(208) 255-5681

EMT Services
Call 911/ Non-emergency reports 265-5525

Idaho Department of Water Quality
2110 Ironwood Pkwy
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 769-1422
cdalakemanagement@deq.idaho.gov
deq.idaho.gov

Idaho State Department of Agriculture
2270 Old Penitentiary Rd
Boise, ID 83712
(208) 332-8500
1-800-830-2268

Idaho Parks and Recreation
2885 Kathleen Ave; Suite 1
Coeur d' Alene, ID 83815
(208) 769-1511
www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/
Boating licenses and certification

Clean Boating Websites

Boat U.S. Foundation
www.boatus.com/foundation/

100thMeridian Initiative
100thMeridian.org

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!
Protectyourwaters.net

Earth911
Earth911.com

Further Reading….

Boat Green/ 50 Steps Boaters Can Take to Save Our Waters. Clyde Ford. New Society Publishers. 1/2/2008

RISK ASSESSMENT WORKSHEETS
Boating and Recreation

The assessment table below will help you identify potential environmental risks. For each question indicate your risk level in the right-hand column. Some choices may not correspond exactly to your situation. Choose the response that best fits. When finished turn to the **Action Worksheet** on page 7-7, and record your medium and high-risk practices. Your goal is to lower your risks. Use the BMP recommendations to help you determine the best solution.

	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK	YOUR RISK
Boat Maintenance	Boat is maintained by a professional mechanic before boating season begins ensuring motor doesn't leak oil and fluids.	Have boat maintained every couple seasons.	Don't maintain boat until there is a noticeable problem.	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
Boat Fueling	Carry fuel absorbing products with me at all times and have encouraged marinas to carry similar products.	When fueling, I am careful not to overflow or spill.	I have never been concerned with gasoline spilling in the water. I pump directly over water.	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
Aquatic Weed Prevention	Always clean and inspect boats and equipment before and after launching, to prevent spreading aquatic invasive species to other water bodies.	Check boats and equipment only when time allows.	Never clean and inspect boats and equipment.	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High
No Wake Zones	I know the No Wake Zones are 200' from lake shores and 50' from banks on Lake Pend Oreille.	Mostly I abide by No Wake rules, but sometimes I let it slip.	I have never known where the No Wake Zones are.	☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

ACTION WORKSHEET
Boating and Recreation

Write all high and medium risks below.	**What can you do to reduce the risks?**	**Set a target date for action.**
Sample: Bathing in the lake with soap.	Don't take baths in the lake, but if necessary, use biodegradable soap. Look at your local stores for biodegradable soap.	When it is warm enough to go swimming.

Notes

References

"Managing Nonpoint Source Pollution from Boating and Marinas." *Polluted Runoff (Nonpoint Source Pollution).* U.S Environmental Protection Agencey. February 25, 2008. <http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/facts/poin9.htm> December 23, 2009.

"Waters, Facilities, and Regulations." *Bonner County Boating.* Bonner County Waterways/Parks and Recreation. 2008. December 20, 2009.

"Clean Boating Information." *Earth911.com*. 2009. <http.//earth911.com/clean-boating-information.> December, 2009.

"Limiting Impact of Recreation on Water Quality." *Protecting our waters.* University of Minnesota Extension. 2008 <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/naturalresources/components/DD6946e.html> November, 2009.

"Recreational Threats to Lake Water Quality." *Lake*A *Syst.* University of Maine Cooperative Extension. October 2, 2009. <http://www.unmext.maine.edu/waterquality/LakeASyst/recreationaltrhreats.htm> November, 2009.