

Eagle Island Lake State Park

Introduction: Eagle Island State Park is named for the land that stretches from the Boise River north channel to the Boise River south channel. The entire Eagle Island is much larger than the state park. The north and south channels of the Boise River split from one another about 2 miles downstream from the Glenwood Bridge. The two channels come back together about 8 miles further downstream, which is two miles downstream from Eagle Island State Park. Eagle Island State Park only represents about 25% of the total island area. The rest of the island are private lands consisting of rural properties to the west and major housing and commercial developments to the East. The state park is rapidly becoming surrounded by urban development. Park professional William Edward Brown coined the term “Islands of Hope” in his book of the same name. He applied the term to park lands in reference to their accessibility for recreation. Eagle Island State Park certainly qualifies for this term as it is located on an actual island and it has become an island of undeveloped quasi-natural land in the middle of a major urban area. Former Governor Dirk Kempthorne referred to it as the “Central Park” of the Boise Metropolitan Area. The Boise Metropolitan Area population is over 600,000. About 293,452 persons visit Eagle Island State Park each year. If the master plan for the park is ever implemented, Eagle Island State Park will fulfill its destiny for both titles.

Getting There: The park entrance is located on State Street (Highway 44) about 2 ½ miles west of Eagle, Idaho. The new park entrance is labeled on signs at its intersection with State Street as “Eagle Island Parkway.”

Major Features:

The Ponds: There are two ponds in the park. The main pond is the primary attraction of the park. It has a developed swimming beach and is accessible on the south side from the parking lot and turf picnic areas. It provides opportunities for swimming, fishing, wildlife viewing and non-motorized boating. The other pond is near the new entrance to the park. While it offers some scenic views, it is not yet generally accessible for recreation due to lack of parking and developed facilities.

The River: Since Eagle Island State Park is situated on an island between the north and south channels of the Boise River, one would expect the river to be a primary attraction. However, lack of close parking, barbed wire fence barriers, and excessive riparian under growth all seem to discourage accessibility. There are a few opportunities for river viewing and maybe even fishing by using the park’s trail system which has approaches to both channels of the river.

The Park: Eagle Island State Park is classified by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation as a recreation park. The park consists of 546 acres and is at the 2,724 feet elevation. It includes about 1.9 miles of river frontage. The facilities available include: 2 parking lots; a designated overflow parking lot on the grass for special events; an equestrian parking lot with room for horse trailers; a water slide; 2 restrooms; 4 group picnic shelters; 60 family picnic tables; 2 volleyball courts; a disc golf course; a playground; horseshoe pits; and an entrance station. There is also a small visitor center where gifts and souvenirs can be purchased and paddle boards

can be rented. Only about 26 acres (5 %) of the total of 546 acres of the park have actually been developed for permanent park purposes. Some temporary parking lots, roads, and a trail system have been provided in the undeveloped portions of the park. It is estimated that only about 10% of the park lands are being used for park purposes. Much of the undeveloped portions of the park are still under an agricultural lease.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game operates a fish hatchery near the southwest corner of the park. The park is heavily used in the summers by visitors swimming in the lake and using the water slide, picnicking, playing frisbee, walking on the many trails, and engaging in other types of passive, informal recreation. The park is also popular for special events and family

Geology: The geology of Eagle Island State Park is derived from the story of the geology of the Boise Valley. The historic geological activities of the Boise River are key to the story. The Boise River starts high in the Salmon River range of the Rocky Mountains. These mountains are made up of a formation known as the Southern Batholiths of Idaho. These batholiths are basically huge masses of granite. The ridges and valleys in these mountains were determined by stream erosion with the sediments of such eventually washing downstream into the Boise Valley. There were also intrusions of basaltic eruptions within the Boise River watershed. These eruptions continued into the Pleistocene Epoch and coarse sediments were transported from the mountains onto the plain during Quaternary glaciations. During the Pleistocene there were dozens of periods of glacial climate that provided many opportunities to carve valleys and spread gravel. The result was the formation of river terraces composed of gravel. In the Boise Valley, 8 specific terraces have been identified as follows: (1) Boise; (2) Whitney; (3) Sunrise; (4) Gowen; (5) Lucky Peak; (6) Five Mile Creek; (7) Amity; and (8) Ten Mile. In the local area, these have become commonly referred to as “benches.” Eagle Island State Park is situated in the lowest terrace, namely the Boise Terrace. The Boise Terrace consists of Quaternary sedimentary rocks that are mostly channel alluvium of the Boise River described as sandy cobble gravel. Periodic flooding and river course changes have deposited this alluvium fairly uniformly throughout Eagle Island State Park. So rock types commonly found along the Boise River can be found in the gravels and cobble of Eagle Island State Park.

Without the control of dams, the Boise River periodically flooded the low lying areas of the Boise Valley, including Eagle Island State Park. Before 1895, there were several exceedingly high-water years in which floods of catastrophic proportions occurred. One of the highest flows on record occurred on June 14, 1896, when the river reached 35,500 cubic feet per second (CFS). There is also evidence from various sources that indicate that there were several years, at least one in each decade prior to 1896, in which the flow exceeded that of June 14, 1896. For example, some historical witnesses have said that 1884 was the highest year that they had known on the Boise River. Eagle Island State Park is clearly in the historic flood plain of the Boise River. Peak stream flows have seldom exceeded 8,000 CFS since the dams have been in place and in May 2015 the flow was only 1,400 CFS.

The actions of the Boise River are now highly regulated by dams, diversion canals, and ditches. Although, Eagle Island may have had some flooding in the past, today all the water flow through the park is regulated which has created a rather “un-natural” park.

Ecosystems and Plant Communities:

The Ponds: The ponds at Eagle Island State Park have been artificially created. They were made by excavating a depression and then allowing water from the river to fill them with the outflow drainage going back to the river. These bodies of water are more closely defined as ponds rather than lakes. A common definition of a pond is a body of water where light penetrates to the bottom and it is shallow enough for rooted water plants to grow throughout, and it lacks wave action on the shoreline. The ponds provide habitat for wetland plants and animals such as cattails, water-lilies, frogs, turtles and herons. The ponds are fringed by wetlands that support the aquatic food web, provide shelter for wildlife, and stabilize the shore. All ponds are subject to periodic algae blooms and eutrophication. Further, under normal circumstances where a pond is receiving sediments from incoming stream, they are destined to eventually fill in and become just wetlands and later meadows. These processes are all held at bay at Eagle Island State Park by an adequate circulation of fresh water and sometimes physical extraction of sediments. So while the ponds at the park provide a unique attraction, their purpose is primarily recreation rather than natural preservation.

The River: The river ecosystem and its associated riparian zones provide a rich foundation for plants and wildlife. This part of the Boise River is still in the portion considered the cold water stretch which supports a cold water fishery dominated by the rainbow trout and mountain whitefish. Both the north channel and the south channel run fairly swiftly past the park, but there is some slack water behind artificial diversions and beaver dam activity. There is an abundance of wildlife that lives in an around the river. It is not uncommon to see great blue herons, belted kingfishers, and dippers.

The Land: Because Eagle Island State Park has been subjected to decades of water diversion, flood control, grazing, and farming, it is anything but a natural ecosystem. If Eagle Island State Park had been left to nature, it would most likely be a black cottonwood forest ecosystem. So the keynote plant species of the park is the black cottonwood. The black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*) thrives in flood plains and riparian areas. Cottonwoods can reach 40 meters in height, and over a meter in diameter. The trees are fast growing and have great habitat value. If allowed to grow into natural forests and copses, they provide a fairly complete shade canopy. Cottonwood forests include many large trees and snags that are important to a variety of wildlife species. A good example of this are the cottonwood trees in the main parking lot of Eagle Island State Park. The formation of cottonwood forests are directly related to the natural processes of flooding and disturbance. The exact processes that were once common at Eagle Island State Park. Many plants are not tolerant of saturated soils and periodic flooding. Black cottonwoods are resistant to flooding and regenerate best on disturbed lands. As other plants are killed off by floods, cottonwoods thrive and dominant in these conditions and soon form dense stands. Cottonwoods get their name from the fluffy white seeds that drop from them in summer. The seeds are dispersed long distances by wind or water. But for germination, they need bare soil, moisture and plenty of sunshine. If there are no floods to spread their seeds and provide favorable conditions for germination, the cottonwood trees cannot regenerate naturally. It could be said that if all farming and grazing was eliminated from Eagle Island State Park when it became a park in 1977 and if the Department of Parks and Recreation used their irrigation system to simulate periodic flooding conditions, that today there would be a black cottonwood forest that would cover most of the park.

But because Eagle Island State Park has been farmed and grazed for decades and all flooding has been controlled, there is a somewhat un-natural ecosystem in place that nevertheless provides a pleasant environmental setting. There are many introduced species that were brought here by pioneers from other parts of North America and the world. Some of the commonly found plants in the park are: Russian olive, box elder, silver maple, golden currant, blackberry, catalpa, cattail, milkweed, black locust, salisfy, sagebrush, rabbitbrush, elm, willow, and grasses. Also, since Eagle Island State Park is being actively farmed there are numerous domestic “hay species” present. The park is also infested with such noxious weeds as purple loosestrife and poison hemlock. Spotted knapweed and thistle can also be found.

Wildlife:

Mammals: The mammals known to be present in the park include: mule deer, beaver, otter, fox, and muskrat.

Birds: The birds known to be present in the park include: great blue heron, snowy egret, duck, grebe, osprey, Canada goose, Swainson’s hawk, bald eagle, kestrel, magpie, valley quail, pheasants, and raven. The keynote animal species of the park is the ever present great blue heron. The great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) is a large wading bird that is common near the shores of open water and in wetlands over most of North America. It is the largest North American heron. The great blue heron can be identified by their slight bluish-gray color red-brown thighs, with brownish or black stripe up their flanks, a white face with a yellow spear like bill. They can be often seen in Eagle Island State Park around the ponds or along the shores of the Boise River channels or in flight across the park. They are very adaptable to wetland habitats of flooded meadows, lake edges, or shorelines. So even though Eagle Island State Park is set aside for recreational pursuits, its ponds, rivers, canals, and ditches provide outstanding habitat. Their primary food is small fish, but will also prey on frogs, aquatic insects, rodents, and other small mammals. They usually feed in shallow waters, while wading slowly with its long legs and spearing fish or frogs with its pointed bill. They usually breed in colonies called rookeries, in trees close to lakes or other wetlands. The Eagle Island State Park Master Plan calls for creation of additional wetlands and some rookery islands that will undoubtedly attract more of these magnificent birds to the park.

Fish: Rainbow trout, mountain whitefish can be found in the Boise River. Perch, bass, and bluegill are found in the ponds.

Cultural History: The tribes that roamed the area of Eagle Island State Park were the Northern Paiute and Northern Shoshone. The Northern Paiute had a somewhat lesser influence in the area, but they did have bands that occupied a specific territory, generally centered on a lake or wetland that supplied fish and water-fowl. So Eagle Island would have provided them an ideal place. However, most of their bands occupied lands in the lower Boise River near the Snake River and Southeastern Oregon.

The Northern Shoshone tribe was more prominent in the Eagle Island area. Specifically the part of the tribe known as the Yahandeka or “Groundhog Eaters” occupied lands along the Boise River. One of the bands of the Yahandeka were the Boise Shoshone. They were among

the very early mounted bands, with their main hunting lands along the lower Boise River and Payette River. One of the most prominent men of the band was Peiem. He was the first Shoshone to have extensive contact with the fur traders who began to roam the region around 1818. He was present at the 1820 great peace conference on Little Lost River in 1820. He later had contact with Alexander Ross and Peter Skeene Ogden during their Snake expedition.

Emigrants began traveling through the Yahaneka occupied lands on the Oregon Trail in the 1830s. Conflicts between the emigrants and the Shoshone along the trail were actually very rare. Quite often mutual aid and trade occurred between the Shoshone and the emigrants. Most of the conflicts were the result of thievery of the emigrant's goods rather than murderous attack. However, as the number of emigrants crossing the Oregon Trail increased over the course of the 1850s, Shoshone and emigrant relations deteriorated. On August 20, 1854, the Shoshone killed 18 of the 20 members of the Alexander Ward party at a site about 8 miles west of Eagle Island State Park. This event led the U.S. eventually to abandon Old Fort Boise and Fort Hall, in favor of the use of military escorts for emigrant wagon trains. The next Fort Boise was established in 1863, around which would grow the settlement of Boise. The Fort Hall Reservation was established for the Boise and Bruneau Shoshone bands on June 14, 1867. The Boise Shoshone were removed from the Boise Valley and relegated to Fort Hall at that time.

History: In 1811, the Pacific Fur Company expedition, the Astorians, explored the Snake River Valley on their way to the Columbia River. Led by Wilson P. Hunt, the westward journey discovers the Boise Valley. In 1812, Robert Stuart comes through the valley and names the river "the wooded river." The French fur trappers in the area defaulted to the French

The Ward Massacre Site

The Ward Massacre Site is located near Middleton, Idaho off of Lincoln Road. From Eagle Island State Park, go west on State Street (Hwy. 44) to Middleton, ID. Turn left (south) on Middleton Road. Proceed to Lincoln Road and turn left. The site will be on your left. The small park has picnic tables, benches, vault toilets and interpretive panels.

In the 1830's, local tribes, including the Shoshone, Paiute, and Bannock began trading with emigrants passing through southern Idaho on the Oregon Trail. What was only a few hundred wagons in 1842 became a flood of 8,000 emigrants in 1853. Contact between the two cultures began to be strained. By 1854, southern Idaho had become a dangerous place with little protection for both wagon trains and native bands. On August 20, 1854, the Alexander Ward Party of 20 men, women, and children were traveling on the Oregon Trail with five wagons. The Wards pulled their wagons off the Trail for lunch and to water their stock when two white men and three Native Americans approached the party to trade for a horse. When the trade failed, one of the Indians attempted to ride off with the horse and was killed. Fearing retribution, the Wards hurried back to the Trail and corralled their wagons to defend themselves from about 60 Indians, who had raced from their encampment across the river to give battle. For nearly two hours, six men defended the wagons. When the last defender fell, the wagons were rushed and two boys and two non-combatant men were killed. The women and children were gathered in a wagon and driven toward the river. In all, 19 immigrants were killed.

Two days after the attack, a rescue party from Ft. Boise found the four burned wagons and the bodies of the Ward party. In early September, 1854, Major Granville Hallar set out with a US military force from their post in Oregon to avenge the Ward-party deaths and eventually apprehended most of the perpetrators. In the following years, use of the Oregon Trail plummeted. Travel resumed mid-way in the Civil War when large gold deposits were discovered in the Boise Basin. Mindful of the Ward Massacre, President Lincoln's administration established a military Fort Boise in 1863.

translation of “wooded” or “Boise.” This place name would be associated with the valley and the river that runs through it, long before it would be used for a settlement of that name. Donald MacKenzie developed the Snake country fur trade after 1818. Thomas McKay built the original Fort Boise (Old Fort Boise) on behalf of the Hudson Bay Company in 1834. It was run for a time by François Payette. The Hudson Bay Company purchased Fort Hall in 1837. Soon a trail was established between the two primarily along water courses.

In 1836, Henry H. Spalding and Marcus Whitman traveled west to establish the Whitman Mission near modern day Walla Walla, Washington. The group was the first to travel in wagons all the way to Fort Hall, where the wagons were abandoned at the urging of their guides. They used pack animals for the rest of the trip and would have passed right through the area of Eagle Island on their way to Old Fort Boise. In 1839, a group of eighteen men from Peoria, Illinois, set out with the intention of colonizing the Oregon country. They became the first pioneers to traverse most of what would become known as the Oregon Trail. Their natural course would most probably be following the course of the Boise River. The first party to use wagons all the way from Fort Hall through the area that would become Idaho were Robert Newell and Joseph L. Meek in 1840. The Oregon Trail would include several routes, but most emigrants would pass through the Boise Valley to connect with Old Fort Boise before crossing the Snake River into Oregon proper. It is obvious with the well watered lands of Eagle Island that there may have been some very desirable campsites in the area. The establishment of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869 would soon eliminate the great migrations on the Oregon Trail. By 1883, the Northern Pacific Railroad reached the Treasure Valley

Gold was discovered in 1862 in the Boise Basin and the settlement of Idaho City grew up around it. The influx in population of miners coming in to work the claims suddenly create a market for local farming. Truman C. Catlin became one of the first settlers on Eagle Island. He established a preemption claim on 160 acres of land on Eagle Island in about 1863. In 1864, he obtained water right number 4 on the Boise River. He and his neighbor, Polete Mace then built the first irrigation ditch on Eagle Island to irrigate 700 acres. Truman Catlin would ultimately receive the patent to his claim from the U.S. General Land Office in 1871 for land that was actually located within Eagle Island State Park. Catlin called his area Eagle Island because of the large number of bald eagles that inhabited it. Truman Catlin and Polete Mace are enumerated on the same page of the 1900 census in a location with the place name of Green Meadow precinct. Truman Catlin died in 1922 and is buried in the Star, Idaho cemetery.

Another early settler who had established his farm on land actually located within Eagle Island State Park was William Francis. He received his first patent to his property in 1869 and an additional patent in 1875, so he most likely was settled on the land at about the same time as Truman Catlin. He was originally from Ohio. In 1880, William Francis was identified as a horse dealer. So by that time irrigation, farming, and grazing were well established at Eagle Island State Park.

In October 1929, the State Board of Prisons purchased the Eagle Island property from Karl Fischer of Eagle for \$72,000, to be used as a prison honor farm. In March of the following year, prison operations on the property begin with 40 trustees. Carlton B. Holt was appointed to the position of superintendent. The barns and milking parlor were built from plans by Superintendent Holt and the University of Idaho and the prison dairy operation began. The original bunkhouse and dining hall/kitchen were also built in that year.

Between 1937 and 1939, the Eagle Island Fish Hatchery was built and began operations

under the Department of Fish and Game. In 1944, the Biennium Report to the Idaho State Legislature recommends disposing of the Eagle Island Honor Farm property, stating that, “The selling price would probably bring enough to pay for some fertile land elsewhere...”

In 1946, the prison inmates built dikes, designed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, along the south bank of the north channel of the Boise River to protect the prison farm buildings from flooding. Also a dormitory was built by the inmates for \$29,000 in 1949. The last prison farm building to be built was the slaughterhouse in 1965.

Park History: In 1977, the Idaho Department of Corrections discontinued operation of Eagle Island Honor Farm and turned over the property to the Idaho Department of Lands. The Idaho Land Board voted to set aside Eagle Island property for development as a state park. The IDPR Board approved Eagle Island State Park General Development Plan in November 1980. The new park was dedicated on June 25, 1983 and opens for business with approximately 26 acres developed with a water slide, picnic areas, restrooms and concession and swimming area. In 1989 the IDPR leased some of the park lands for agricultural use (farming of hay and associated grazing).

With an eye towards the future and seeking a location for a better entrance to the park, the IDPR purchased 7.3 acres from Ron and Sharon Taylor and 5 acres from Wes Laurence to provide access from Highway 44 in 1995. A permit was obtained for operating a gravel pit and crushing operation at the proposed new entrance and bridge on Highway 44 across the north channel of the Boise River in 1996. An additional 6.59 acres is purchased from Wes Laurence in 1997.

On May 18, 2000, the IDPR Board approved the draft master plan for Eagle Island State Park. In January 2006, Governor Dirk Kempthorne issued Executive Order No. 2006-1 creating the Eagle Island State Park Site Planning Committee to develop a comprehensive Master Plan for the future role of Eagle Island State Park. In April, Governor Kempthorne held a ceremony at Eagle Island State Park in announcing his “Experience Idaho” initiative which he described as a once-in-generation investment in some of the state’s most special places. In June, Governor James E. Risch signed an Executive Order No. 2006-19 reaffirming the Committee and establishing a deadline for completion of its work. The Eagle Island State Park Master plan was completed in September 2006

In 2006, the Legislature authorized 3 million dollars for the construction of a bridge over the north channel of the river in preparation for establishing a new entrance. A contract was let and construction began which obligated its completion. In February of 2007, Governor Otter declined to fund the 1 million dollars authorized for continuing construction on the new entrance road. The finished bridge became nick-named “the bridge to nowhere” as the new entrance project languished for the next 8 years. In April 2011, a contract was let to Knife River for a 5 year contract to extract gravel from the park lands in the area to be excavated for the planned lakes. The proposal was to use revenues generated by the gravel sales to finance further improvements in the park. Unfortunately, the gravel market has remained weak and Knife River has made no excavations. IDPR Director David Langhorst was able to get \$250,000 authorized in 2015 to complete the new entrance and road connection to the existing parking lots. Construction of the new entrance (Eagle Island Parkway) was completed in November 2015.

Recreation Activities:

Picnicking: Eagle Island State Park has 4 group picnic shelters available. There are also 60 individual picnic tables placed throughout the park.

Fishing: The main lake (or pond) has fish in it, namely perch, bass, and bluegill. It is a warm water fishery. The entrance area pond may also have similar fish in it. The Boise River is a cold water fishery with rainbow trout and mountain whitefish in it. The best access for fishing in the park is in and around the main lake. Fishing in the Boise River is not very accessible. First, most of the river shoreline has barbed wire fence barriers and the excessive undergrowth makes it difficult to access the river. Second, the only place where there

is parking by the river is next to the “old dairy” area in the north east corner of the park. However, the park trails can be used to walk-in to other locations on the river. The Eagle Island ponds are not designated as “family fishing waters” by the Department of Fish and Game, but are routinely stocked. All fishing in Eagle Island State Park is subject to the licensing and take regulations of the Department of Fish and Game.

Boating: Non-motorized boating is permitted in Eagle Island State Park. However, there are no boat ramps provided for this purpose. The main lake can be accessed near the swimming beach where the shoreline is closest to the parking lot. This makes launching a little more difficult for canoes, fishing boats or heavier craft. Further, the small size of the main lake does not make it very conducive for serious paddlers. The main lake is more conducive to “floaty toys,” small kayaks and stand-up paddle boards. Stand-up paddle boards can be rented at the park visitor center. The pond near the entrance does not have any potential launch areas at this time. While the river appears to be inviting to floating activities, there are no put in or take out sites, and there are numerous obstacles such as heavy brush and vegetation cover. Further, the north channel has a large diversion dam right next to the entrance road bridge. As always, personal flotation device (PFDs) are required for all occupants.

Swimming: A sandy swimming beach is provided on the main lake. The beach is conveniently located near numerous picnic and day use facilities. There are floating markers that designate the swimming portion of the lake. There are no lifeguards on duty.

Water Slide: The water slide was part of the original park developments in the 1980s. At that time, other commercially operated aquatic parks were not yet available in the local area. So this water slide filled an important recreation niche. It is still a popular attraction today, since unlike

Please Remember

- There is a \$5.00 per vehicle per day fee required for access to the park.
- Open fires are not allowed on the beach.
- There are no lifeguards on duty in the designated swimming beach.
- Personal floatation devices are required for any water craft on the ponds or river.
- Dogs must be on a leash at all times, are not permitted in the buildings and are not allowed on the swimming beach.
- Motor vehicles are to stay on established roadways unless directed otherwise.

commercial aquatic parks, there is nearby picnic and day use facilities in a scenic park setting. Water slide riders must be 42" tall. The fees for the water slide are: \$1.00 for one ride; \$8.00 for ten rides; or \$12.00 for an all day pass.

Playground: There is a playground located in the main picnic area for children.

Volleyball Courts: Volleyball courts are located on the east side of the main parking lot.

Disc Golf: There is an eighteen hole disc golf course available.

Zip Line: A zip line complex was installed in the park in 2015 and will open to general admission in Spring 2016.

Snow Park: A winter sports snow park is installed each winter through use of snow making machines. This venue is used for snow sledding and tubing.

Trails: There are about 5 miles of unimproved trails in the park available for walking, horseback riding, and walking dogs. Some of the trails are old farm roads. Others are maintained by horse and foot traffic alone. The trails traverse park areas that are currently under farm lease so expect fences and gates. There are no developed bicycle trails and as of yet the Boise River greenbelt trail does not connect with the park. The closest connection is along state street about ½ mile from the new park entrance. Due to the lack of developed trails, the park is not conducive to bicycles.

Visitor Center: There is a visitor center located in the park office located next to the main restroom. Here one can get park information, purchase souvenirs, gifts, drinks, snacks, or rent stand-up paddle boards.

Special Events: Eagle Island State Park is a very popular venue for special events, which at times can overwhelm park facilities. In 2014, there were as many as 27 special events that drew 26,693 people to the park. Some of the larger events can draw between 1,000 to 2,000 people. These events have included: disc golf tournaments; cross-country and running meets; horse trail rides; and even Civil War re-enactments. The Boise Philharmonic has also been providing scheduled concerts in the park. The park staff has had to require permittees to bring in extra temporary toilets as the existing two restrooms in the park cannot handle the sanitation needs. The park staff has also made do by constructing a temporary gravel parking lot to the west of the main parking lot. Then when a need arises for overflow parking, the extra cars are being parked on turf areas to the east of the main parking lot. It is important to note that all of these activities are being conducted basically on the same 26 developed acres of the park. Eagle Island State Park is being loved to death!

Resource Management Issues: The most predominant current resource management issue for Eagle Island State Park revolves around the leasing of farm lands for agricultural purposes. The current 3 year farm lease expires at the end of 2016. The leasee also does the maintenance work on the parks irrigation ditches. If development work related to the Eagle Island Master Plan does

not start soon, the lease will probably be renewed for another three years. Despite the IDPR earning some additional income for this use, from a resource management point of view, it is unfortunate that the park was not allowed to default to natural plant succession since it became park land in 1977. Had that occurred, the park lands today may have an entirely different appearance with a greater abundance of cottonwood groves and subsequent natural regeneration rather than the cultivation of hay species. The continued cultivation of the park lands had contributed to noxious weed infestations, especially poison hemlock and purple loosestrife. The park also has an abundance of other invasive species.

The park is full to capacity almost every weekend from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day Weekend. The demand has clearly out paced the capabilities of the existing facilities. The park is experiencing some of the symptoms of over-crowding such as disputes over parking spaces.

Another resource management issue that surfaced in 2014 was related to water quality in the main lake. Several people contracted the norovirus after swimming in the Eagle Island State Park lake. At least 100 cases were identified. While there are tests that can be made for e-coli and other bacteria, there is no viable preventative test for norovirus in the water. The swimming area was closed and the lake drained down for disinfecting purposes. Part of this problem may well be related to the fact that the lake is too small and fairly shallow (12 feet) and may not be able to sustain the ever increasing recreational demand. These types of problems may become more routine. The Eagle Island State Park Master Plan calls for much bigger and deeper lakes with a greater degree of circulation with river water flowing in and out of the park's lake system.

Suggestions for the Future: The Eagle Island State Park Master plan was completed in September 2006. The overall vision for the park is to blend the urban and natural environment, creating a place for visitors to experience and learn from their surroundings. The north portion of the park will include camping areas, kayak/canoe launching sites, picnic areas, a world class natural resource education center and an amphitheater. At the heart of the park, the existing water slide and beach areas will remain, with a large shelter set in an ornamental garden that will provide opportunities for a variety of scheduled events. The southern portion of the site will continue to be more remote, undeveloped and encourage a natural experience of the park with passive uses, such as trails, meadows and informal picnic areas. The Master Plan will also increase wildlife habitat through the preservation of existing wetlands, development of new wetlands and a perimeter forest planting reminiscent of the groves of black cottonwood trees in the park. The improvements and developments in the master plan should all be implemented. However, depending upon extraction of sand and gravel as the only funding source has significantly stagnated these plans. In the meantime, the recreation demand for Eagle Island State Park is clearly exceeding its capacities. The following are some suggested improvements that should be done despite not have the full funding for implementing the master plan.

- Now that the new entrance road has been completed and connected to the existing parking areas, all the existing paved surfaces should be resurfaced. The paved surfaces at the park are in poor condition and in need of resurfacing. The gravel extension of the main parking lot should also be paved and lines provided to delineate parking spaces. Consideration should also be given to constructing a new parking lot in the area on the grass that has been used for overflow parking. This will help in meeting existing

- demands for parking space until such time as the master plan can be implemented.
- Connect the existing equestrian parking lot (gravel) to the new entrance road by a temporary gravel road that follows the planned alignment in the master plan.
 - The dilapidated buildings are an eye sore! Make a determination of what historic buildings will be saved for interpretive use. For example, the wardens house may have historic value and its movement and restoration might be feasible, while the old dormitory and old slaughterhouse should be removed. Invite local fire departments to burn down the buildings that are to be removed. Then start a project working towards moving all the buildings that might be restored to the old dairy area.
 - The junk and disheveled appearance of the old dairy area is an eye sore! Start a major clean-up project that will demolish and haul away all the old and dilapidated structures in and around the old dairy barn and miking parlor. When the surface has been clean-up, spread native seed to re-vegetate the areas.
 - Discontinue all farming within the park.
 - Start a project to remove all the barbed wire fences from the park. Start doing this with all internal fencing first to eliminate these artificial barriers to recreational access. Then start towards replacing the entire perimeter fencing with smooth wire to make it more wildlife friendly.
 - Increase abatement of noxious weeds, especially spotted knapweed, purple loosestrife, and poison hemlock.
 - Consider starting a black cottonwood nursery and start volunteer tree planting events.