Priest Lake State Park

Introduction: "Priest Lake is the loveliest, wildest, most perfect spot of all." These were the words of Nell Shipman, an early silent movie producer when she selected Priest Lake as a base of operations. Many Priest Lake State Park visitors would probably echo these thoughts. Lovely, wild, and perfect are good descriptors of Idaho's northernmost state park. The white sandy beaches entice the visitor to the clear waters which await them. Nature has blessed this region with a crystal clear, 23,000-acre azure blue lake, nestled in the Selkirk Mountains. The vast Selkirk Mountains rise above the park to the east. Visitors to the park will enjoy the dense forest of cedar, fir and tamarack and will be able to observe the park's year round inhabitants such as the whitetail deer, black bear, moose and bald eagles.

Priest Lake State Park lies just 30 miles from the Canadian Border and sits along the eastern shores of Priest Lake, a 19 mile long, over 300 foot deep lake. Noted for its extremely clear water, fed by streams cascading from the high Selkirk peaks. A two-mile thoroughfare connects the main lake to the remote Upper Priest Lake that is accessible only by foot, mountain bike, or boat.

Priest lake offers several historical sites such as where Nell Shipman had her movie studio in the 1920s. Then along Indian Creek there was once a log flume that ran for miles. The current Squaw Bay Group Camp is the remnant of the historic logging camp #9. Then near the Lionhead Boat Ramp can be found the decaying wreck of the steam tug boat the *Tyee II*.

The three units of Priest Lake State Park are all situated adjacent to a huge tract of State Endowment Lands know as Priest Lake State Forest. These lands contain a number of recreational attractions and there are hundreds of miles of roads and trails for ATVs or motorcycles. In the winter months there are four hundred miles of groomed trails that can be used for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiles. This makes the campgrounds at Priest Lake State Park perfect staging areas for accessing extended outdoor recreation opportunities..

Getting There: Take Highway 57 north from Priest River, Idaho for about twenty miles to Dickensheet Junction. Turn right on Dickensheet Highway. In about a mile you will cross a bridge over the Priest River. Right after the bridge will be the entrance to the Dickensheet Unit on your right. Another 5 miles on the Dickensheet Highway will bring you to the town of Coolin. Take a right turn on East Shore Road and follow it for about 11 miles to the entrance to the Indian Creek Unit. Continuing north on the East Shore Road for about 10 miles will bring you to the entrance to the Lionhead Unit.

Major Features:

The Landscape: The Selkirk Mountains start at the eastern shore of Priest Lake and rise up to 7,600 feet peaks. These mountains are well stocked with western red cedar and western white pine as well as many small lakes and waterfalls. Numerous pristine streams flow out of the mountains and down to Priest Lake. Across the lake from the park are the mountains known as the Priest Lake Selkirks. Just as impressive as those on the east side they offer a forested view with impressive peaks reaching for the sky. Not to be forgotten is the tranquil scene of the Priest River that flows by the Dickensheet Unit. Even getting to the park is a "scenic drive." Priest Lake State Park is on the edge of wildlands on all sides. It is the proverbial "end of the road" because

to the north of the Lionhead Unit the road becomes a narrow primitive route and you can't get to Canada from here unless by foot, even though it is only 30 miles away.

The Lake: Priest Lake is 19 miles long and 5 miles wide at its widest point. It is 360 feet deep and has eight picturesque islands. Upper Priest Lake is connected to the larger lake by a two mile channel called the "Thorofare." The upper lake can only be reached by boat or on foot and is part of the designated Upper Priest Lake Scenic Area. At the north end of the lake, the 2-mile river "Thorofare," connects the lake with Upper Priest Lake, which is about 3 miles long by 1 mile wide. Priest Lake is the least developed of the Idaho Panhandle's major lakes. Counting Upper Priest Lake it is a total of about 25 miles long and 26,000 surface acres. It is one of the most beautiful lakes in the United States and along with Lake Tahoe is said to have the clearest water in the nation. Divers claim the visibility can exceed 100 feet underwater.

The Park: Priest Lake State Park has about 756 acres. As provided by statute, the park also includes the surface of Priest Lake out to 1,000 feet from the shoreline. It is made up of three separate units: (1) Indian Creek (295 acres); Lionhead (415 acres); and Dickensheet (46 acres). The park is situated at about 2,440 feet in elevation. Indian Creek and Lionhead are both along the eastern shoreline of Priest Lake. Dickensheet has frontage on Priest River near the intersection of State Highway 57 and the Dickensheet Highway. The Indian Creek Unit first became a "park" under the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) in 1959. The park receives about 118,987 day users per year and 65,191 campers for a combined total of 183,178 visitors per year. The park is very popular especially for camping. Planning ahead is essentially as this state park is the first to fill by reservations out of all the state parks in Idaho. A 2018 BSU Study determined that the Economic Impact of the park is $5,302,000.

Indian Creek Unit: This unit is the headquarters of Priest Lake State Park. It has the park office and visitor center with a camp store that sells camping gear, snacks, gifts, books, and even ice cream by the cone. Indian Creek has a total of 93 campsites as follows: 11 sites with full hook-ups, 62 sites with electric and water hook-ups, and 20 standard sites. There are six rental camping cabins available. There are four improved restrooms (flush toilets, sinks, showers) and two vault toilets. There are 5 paved parking lots and one gravel parking lot. There are 1.5 miles of paved road and one mile of gravel road. The park features two day use areas (one in a forested area and one at the beach) with 6 picnic tables available. There is a group shelter at the beach day use area. There is a two lane boat ramp with two courtesy docks. This boat ramp is the deepest ramp on Priest Lake. The adjacent parking lot can accommodate numerous vehicles with trailers attached. The swimming beach is situated between two docks. One of these docks and a longer one to the north are used for overnight mooring of boats. There is room for 15 moorings.

The Indian Creek unit has three trails totaling about 2.8 miles within its boundaries. The Indian Creek Nature Trail is a little less than ½ mile in length and starts near the picnic area in the forested area.

The Old Flume Trail Loop is about 1.4 miles and it starts and finishes at the park visitor center. It makes a circle around most of the park land on the west side of East Shore Road.

The View Point Trail is 1.4 miles round trip. The trailhead can be found by walking past the entrance to loops A and B on the old county road base approximately 100 yards. A trail sign on the left marks the start of the trail. It winds through a beautiful stand of timber and then

crosses East Shore road before it begins a short climb the view point.

Lionhead Unit: The Lionhead Unit has a total of 47 standard campsites (no hookups) with central water. Despite the lack of RV hookups, this campground is also very popular because some of the sites are right on the lake shore. However, the parking spurs are small and the access road is narrow. Because of this persons with trailers or RVs that are longer than 25 feet should not attempt to camp here. The campground has five vault toilets. Between the two ends of the campground is a day use area on the beach with a dock and a few picnic tables available. The boat ramp is one lane with a more-or-less natural surface (not paved). The ramp has one courtesy dock. The adjacent gravel parking lot can accommodate vehicles with trailers attached. This additional day use area has a vault toilet.

Separated from the main portion of the Lionhead Unit is the Squaw Bay Group Camp. The buildings here are left over from the days that the Diamond Match Company had a lumber camp here. For awhile the Diamond Match Company used it as a retreat place for executives of the company. It has 12 RV campsites with sewer and electricity, a shower building, group fire pit, beach, boat ramp and kitchen. The cabin which sleeps eight, has two bunk rooms. It has the only improved restrooms in the Lionhead Unit. There is also a vault toilet here. The group area has its own swimming beach and dock.

The Lionhead Unit has 1.7 miles of trails. The Shipman Point Trail is a one mile loop. The Nell Shipman movie studio was located near here during the early 1920s.The trail begins above the boat ramp and takes you on a journey through a unique grove of old-growth timber to Lion Creek, Then returns via the lakeshore.

Dickensheet Unit: This unit has a small campground with 11 standard campsites. However there are no services or water. There is one vault toilet and 2 gravel parking lots. This unit is right on the Priest River providing access for anglers, canoes, rafts, kayaks and others who wish to enjoy the river scenery. Just across the river and a little downstream, the U.S. Forest Service operates a day use area with some hiking trails.

Priest Lake State Forest: There are several significant recreational attractions on the State Endowment Lands managed by IDL. However, since providing for outdoor recreation is not among IDL's management objectives they provide little in the way of recreational facilities or publicity. They do to some extent maintain an access road system but only to the point of providing for timber sales and extraction. But nevertheless the approximately 180.000 acres on the west slopes of the Selkirk Mountains contains some great attractions. Before attempting to visit any of these attractions, inquire at the visitor center at the Indian Creek Unit or the IDL office near Cavanaugh Bay. Some of these attractions are as follows:

Hunt Lake is a splendid alpine lake near the ridge of the Selkirk Mountains. Getting there can be difficult. It requires a 1 mile hike on an unimproved trail that is nothing more than a marked (arrows on the rocks) route that traverses a boulder field. The trailhead is reached by driving east up "road 241." Road 241 takes off from the East Shore Road about 3 miles south of the Indian Creek Unit.

Hunt Creek Falls is one of our true rustic treasures, the contrasts of the falls and surroundings are what artists move to North Idaho for. Hunt Creek Falls is one of Priest Lake's most beautiful features. With giant black granite, moss-covered boulders striking counterpoint to the white waters and ferns and tall cedars, this is a true gem of a swim area, or just to hike to,

Priest Lake State Forest

Unlike the designation of “State Park,”you won’t find many references to “state forest” being an official designation by the Idaho Legislature. However Chapter 5 of the Idaho Statutes under the category of “Public Lands” clearly has a heading of “State Parks and State Forests.” At the time of Idaho Statehood (1890), the Congress granted sections 16 and 36 of every township to the state for the purpose of financing public schools. The new State of Idaho was also authorized to make “indemnity selections” from the public domain “in lieu” of lands granted in Section 16 and 36. These state lands are referred to as endowment lands. Perhaps wishing to capitalize on the rich stands of western white pine forest, most of the area on the east side of Priest Lake was gradually selected for indemnity lands .Most of the selections were completed by the 1920s. In 1950 these state lands to the east of Priest Lake were designated as Priest Lake “State Forest.” Later, in the 1980s, the State executed land exchanges with private companies that added nearly 13,000 acres to the state forest and resulted in its present boundaries. Today the Priest Lake State Forest has about 180,000 acres within its boundaries. The Department of State Lands does not have a mission objective to actually encourage recreation on the endowment lands. Nevertheless, the lands in this “state forest” have been important to outdoor recreation in 3 significant ways: (1) parts of Priest Lake State Park were carved out of former endowment lands, (2) the western slopes of the scenic Selkirk Mountains are in the viewshed of Priest Lake and the surrounding area and constitute a great extension of open space to the state park; and (3) there are a handful of popular recreation attractions on the endowment lands. Some of these sites are: Hunt Creek Falls, Lookout Mountain, Chimney Rock, Hunt Lake, Lionhead Peak, and the Lion Creek falls/slides .

with the reward being the falls at the end. Towards the top of the falls the water gushes over rocks into a pool, splitting then over a boulder in a second falls, and split around another giant boulder. From below, a clear ‘Y’ form is seen, coming together in a cauldron of a pool below. The falls gain force through a rock chute that finally make a fire hose spurt at the end. To get there, take “road 23" just after the Hunt Creek bridge on the East Shore Road. The road is rough with many rocks. Getting to the falls will require about a 100 yard walk.

Upper Standard Lake is a 16.2 mile out and back trail that offers scenic views and is rated as difficult. The trail is primarily used for hiking. The trailhead is off Two Mouth Road #32 approximately 7 miles north of Indian Creek Campground. The trail is an old logging road that is slightly overgrown with brush.

The Mount Roothaan Trail is a 2.5-mile hike in the Selkirks high country to a magnificent overview of the range’s most iconic landmark, the great granite spire called Chimney Rock. Chimney Rock is a dramatic tower of high-quality granite. Carved out by converging glaciers, it was left to stand alone as a solitary "lightning rod". Even the easiest route requires technical climbing to access the summit. There is no "walk-up" route. Descent is by rappel. The tower is triangular: the east and west faces meet on the south edge, forming a thin prow. The spectacular summit is flat and exposed, and strewn with granite boulders. It’s a long drive to the trailhead (and a high-clearance vehicle is advised), but the hike is a wonderful payoff. The trail runs along Horton Ridge to the shoulder of Mount Roothan with fantastic views of Gunsight Mountain, Hunt Peak and Sundance Mountain along the way. The last, steep half mile or so is to the summit of Mount Roothaan, where Chimney Rock will stand directly before you. Adventurous scramblers can fairly easily continue on to the base of the rock spire itself. To get there, turrn off East Shore Road onto Hunt Creek Road # 24, and travel another 12 miles or so on gravel forest roads. The access road is not suitable for vehicles with low ground clearance.

Chase Lake is a great lake for fishing and is fairly easy to get to. Take East Shore Road south from Coolin. Then take Chase Lake Road east. The lake has rainbow trout, bass, catfish, perch and sunfish. There is a boat ramp, dock, and vault toilet here.

Lookout Mountain stands above the north end of Priest Lake, directly west of the Lionshead and north of Chimney Rock and Harrison Peak. It sports 2 lookouts on its summit: the original lookout built in 1929, which is on the national historical lookout register, and a newer one built in 1977, which is still used. Although its summit is reached by hiking a trail, this peak, as most of the others in the Selkirks, has an imposing, vertical north face. It requires a hike of 2 miles round trip on an unimproved trail that can be hard to find. The access is from “road 44" and “road 432" past two small lakes to the fire lookout. The access road is not suitable for vehicles with low ground clearance.

The Lionshead is comprised of 2 massive granite summits, known as West and East Peaks. The elevation of the lower but more difficult West Peak is 7226 feet, while the East Peak is 7266 feet high. It lies one drainage west of Pyramid Peak and is composed of the same fine granite as Chimney Rock. There are great opportunities for technical climbing routes at all difficulties, and it is remote. To get there, continue past Lionshead Campground on East Shore Road for about 4 miles. Then take “Road 44.” Continue on “road 44" for about 3.5 miles. Turn right at a T-junction and go another .3 miles to a big switchback and park. Follow a ATV trail to a trail that takes you up east of Abandon Creek and to the north side of The Lionshead. The trail ends after a little over 1 mile and 1,000 feet of elevation gain in a large boulder field beneath the towering north face of West Lionshead. From here, it is a lot of boulder hopping to get to your destination.

Lion Creek Falls/Slides are fed by Lion Creek. This is one of the most popular recreation areas on the east side of Priest Lake with natural water slides the locals call “Slippery Rocks.” The colossal slices of granite form a natural architecture of slides, pools, and falls. The picnic area provides the perfect amphitheater to view the antics of children and people at play, but don’t expect great crowds. Sure, there are often plenty of people, but just as often, tranquility rules. Spring finds the water too high and cold to be played in, but with summer, there are plenty of swimming spots. To get there, head east on “road 42" which starts right across the East Shore road from the entrance to the Lionhead Unit. Follow the road to where the culverts have been removed. Park in this area and hike up the same road for about two miles to an old parking area. From there, cross a small stream (Kent Creek) and follow the south side of the stream about 200 yards to the water slides area on Lion Creek. Lion Creek and Kent Creek intersect at a 'Y' just above the old parking area. The two-mile hike will get you to the best area of Slippery Rocks. However, you may observe other areas along the hiking route where Lion Creek flows over granite slabs. Any of these sites are also good recreation areas if you elect not to hike the entire two miles.

The Wigwams trail is located on the western edge of the Idaho panhandle. The trail climbs through the south fork Lion Creek drainage and switchbacks up through steep granite towards the Selkirk crest. The all around views are just spectacular and definitely worth the short hike. Lookout Mountain, Lionshead, Mount Roothaan, Chimney Rock, and Priest Lake can all be viewed from the crest. The Wigwams Trail is a 3 miles out and back. The trail has a lot of roots and rocks but is in pretty good condition. You cross by a creek and follow it for a short distance before heading up. The access is via Two Mouth Road #32 which is approximately 7 miles north of Indian Creek Campground. The last mile to the trailhead is difficult, a high clearance vehicle or AWD recommended.

Geology: The Selkirks are the backbone of the Priest River uplift, that exposed Cretaceous granitic rocks of the Kaniksu batholith, that intrude Mesoproterozoic Belt Supergroup, and

overlying Neoproterozoic Deer Trail and Windermere groups and Cambrian rocks. A small Jurassic or Cretaceous granodiorite intrudes the Deer Trail Group in the northwestern part of the range. This intrusion is associated with accretion of rocks in inland northwest known as the Kootenay Arc, a possible island-arc terrane.

The process that resulted in this current situation started about 250 million years ago as the North American Plate collided with the plate under the Pacific Ocean. About 160 million years ago the belt of sedimentary rocks of the Kootenay Arc jammed against the American Plate. The moving ocean floor swept sediments into the descending trench that formed at the point of contact between the plates. These materials were heated up and recrystalized to form schist and gneiss or melted to form granite. Thus the new generation of basement rocks that formed under the arc is a complex of granite and metamorphic rocks.

The collision between the two plates pushed up a broad welt of sheared rocks on the surface during mid-Jurassic time and continued into the late Cretaceous until about 100 million years ago. These rocks formed the first stage of the northern Rocky Mountains and probably reached a height of approximately 20,000 feet. This area against the ocean probably closely resembled the modern Andes Mountains of South America.

About 65 million years ago enormous volumes of the molten granite formed huge batholiths under the Coast Mountains and Idaho. This molten material rose into the early mountains making them mechanically weak. They sheared off into great slabs and were moved into western Montana to form parts of the modern Northern Rockies. An area of granite or metamorphic rock that rises to the surface from deep in the crust to displace the rocks that covered them is called a Core Complex. The Priest River Complex composed of Kaniksu Batholith granite forms the base of the modern Idaho portion of the Selkirk Mountains. Some small areas of older sedimentary rock remain scattered through the largely granitic mountains.

During the Ice Age, the Cordilleran ice sheet descended from Canada covering much of the northern United States. During maximum glaciation, the ice was thick enough to pass over all but the highest peaks of the Selkirk Mountains. The ice in the vicinity of Sandpoint near the southern end of the range was more than 4,500 feet thick. The mountains of the region were encased in ice and would have been fully involved in glacial processes. Every valley and mountain slope contributed to the massive ice tongue that filled the broad Purcell Trench to the east. About 20,000 years ago the last great ice sheet retreated from the U. S., but lingered nearby in Canada until about 6,000 years ago when it finally melted. During the later stages it went through a succession of retreats and minor advances. During this time there were periods of alpine glaciation in the mountains. Evidence of this activity is abundant in the high mountains today.

The Selkirk Mountains provide the premier glacially carved landscape in Idaho. Glacial cirques, a steep-sided, rounded, bowl-shaped feature carved into a mountain at the head of a glacial valley dot the range. In the cirque, snow accumulates and eventually converts to glacier ice before heading down the glacial valley. A horn is the sharp peak that remains after cirques have cut back into a mountain on several sides. Sharp ridges called arêtes separate adjacent glacially-carved valleys. The ice travels down the valley, scraping the walls and converting the bottoms into broad U-shapes. As the ice melts the landscape exposed is one of straightened, parallel valleys with hanging tributary basins headed by bedrock lakes collected in the hollow of the cirques. These glacial features are abundantly represented in the modern Selkirk Mountains.

In the Priest River valley a recent glacier (7,000 to 25,000 years ago) scooped out more of the valley floor and pushed soil, gravel and boulders down the valley to what is now the south

edge of Priest Lake. As the climate warmed and the glacier started to melt, gravel and boulders formed a natural dam that impounded the melt-water in the scooped-out area behind it. Over time the ice disappeared. Today, the pristine water of Priest Lake is a mute reminder of the mighty forces that created it.

Ecosystems and Plant Communities: The park includes three ecosystems: western white pine forest, lake, and riparian.

Western White Pine Forest: Western white pine was once the dominant species in the forests that surround Priest Lake. But extensive logging, fire suppression, and the introduction of the disease white pine blister rust have reduced the white pine ecosystem to less than 1% of their historic range. For centuries, western white pine dominated the moist forest ecosystems of the Inland Northwest. Today western white pine is limited to less than 10% of its former distribution only 100 years ago. So the forests of Priest Lake State Park are a mix of several conifer species that include lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, western red cedar, western hemlock, Douglas fir, grand fir, Englemann spruce, western larch, and sub-alpine fir. So all the conifer species of Northern Idaho are well represented here. The under story of this forest includes: spirea, trillium, calypso orchid, thimbleberry, Oregon grape, wild rose, huckleberry, red osier dogwood, devil's club, foamflower, lady fern, queencup, bunchberry, and wild strawberry.

The keynote species is the western white pine. The Idaho Legislature designated the western white pine (*Pinus monticola)* as the state tree in 1935. It is one of the most desirable and valuable tree species in the Inland Empire because of its aggressive site establishment, excellent wood quality and fast growth. Western white pine is one of the major tree species of the mixed conifer forest types in northern Idaho. The tree was first noticed by William Clark in 1810 as the Lewis and Clark Expedition crossed the Lolo Pass into Idaho. David Douglas, noted Scotch explorer of the Pacific Northwest, first described the tree for scientific purposes in 1825 when he found it growing on the slopes of Mt. Saint Helens, and later in 1831 along the banks of the Spokane River. Its botanical name *Pinus monticola* means; Pine of the Mountains. This magnificent tree is one of the tallest pines in the world reaching up to heights of over 200 feet and eight feet in diameter. It is a long lived tree. The oldest recorded western white pine was 615 years old.

Western white pine has a slender, symmetrical bole with a long, narrow, and regular crown, bluish-green foliage with a whitish tinge and well marked nodal branching. Due to its whitish tinge, it has also been called silver pine. The bark is very thin at first, gray and smooth, with resin blisters on young trees, becoming finely checked into small dark gray to charcoal colored squares. The needles are thin, and as with other true white pines, its needles are in bundles of 5 and they are 4 to 6 inches long. The cones have unarmed scales and mature mid-August of the second year.

The wood of western white pine is distinguished by its uniform, light, soft texture. Because of the knot-free wood characteristics of old-growth trees, one of the most common uses during the first half of the 20th Century was for the production of wooden matchsticks. In the early days of lumbering in Idaho the Western White Pine Manufacturers Association gave it the name "Idaho White Pine" to distinguish it from eastern white pine which grows in the Great Lake states. Today the wood is used for furniture, paneling and siding, pattern making, and specialty products.

In 1910, white pine blister rust was imported into North America from France. By the

1930's, much of the Pacific Northern western white pine forests were being devastated by this fungus. Since the 1950's, the United States Forest Service (in cooperation with various universities, state agencies, and private industry), has developed rust resistant varieties so that once again, this majestic pine is becoming an important tree in the forests of the Pacific Northwest.

The Lake: Priest Lake is considered as an oligotrophic lake. Oligotrophic lakes have low amounts of organic matter, the result of low nutrient content, nitrogen and phosphorous. They are clear and fully-oxygenated and thus support fish species like trout that require cold, well-oxygenated water. There has not been a change detected in Priest Lake's oligotrophic status in 24 years. In summer time, priest lake is stratified with three layers: the upper warm-water layer (the epilimnion), the middle temperature flux layer (thermocline), and the lower cold-water layer (hypolimnion). Like Priest Lake, Lake Coeur d'Alene and Lake Pend Oreille are also oligotrophic lakes. However both of those lakes suffer from heavy metal concentration from mining wastes and phosphorous and other nutrient loading from urban and residential development along their shorelines. This has affected their water clarity and oxygenation. The water clarity at Priest Lake has often been compared to that of Lake Tahoe. However, clarity at Lake Tahoe is on decline due to nutrient loading. The greatest threat to water clarity at Priest Lake is the residential developments along its shoreline.

The native fishery at Priest Lake has been severely effected by introduction of non-native species. Lake trout were originally introduced to the Priest Lake system in 1925 to create a sport fishery and their population remained low and relatively stable until the 1970's,. The opossum shrimp (*Mysis diluviana*) was introduced in the 1960s as a trout food source. This increased the survival of young lake trout. By the 1990s, the population of lake trout grew to the point where a decline in kokanee population was detected. By this time, lake trout dominated the recreational fishery in Priest Lake. The IDFG began lake trout removal efforts of varying intensity and different harvest regulations. The population increase of lake trout has also resulted in a decrease in the bull trout population. It was believed that no lake trout inhabited Upper Priest Lake until immigration through the Thorofare was seen in the 1990's. Once the lake trout became established in Upper Priest Lake, a sharp decline in native bull trout populations occurred concurrently with the lake trout increase in Priest Lake. Bull trout reproduction is currently restricted to Upper Priest Lake with an estimated population of only between 100-150 adults

The lake is a noted fishery that at one time held the world record kokanee salmon and still holds the National record lake trout (57 lbs.). Neither species is native to the lake and due to mismanagement of the food base, kokanee are extinct in the lake now and the lake trout, though fairly plentiful are relatively small now. Now management emphasis is focusing on the restoration of the native cutthroat trout and bull trout; the former having been decimated by the larger predatory lake trout. Unfortunately the lake is being rapidly developed and for many it has lost much of its natural beauty. Nevertheless the following game fish can still be found in the lake: yellow perch, rainbow trout, brook trout, lake trout, bull trout, cutthroat trout, and Rocky Mountain whitefish

Riparian: The riparian places in the park are the along the shoreline of Priest Lake, the banks of the Priest River at Dickensheet, and along Indian Creek and Lion Creek as they flow through the park. The riparian species include: aspen, black cottonwood, paper birch, red alder, and willow.

Wildlife: Priest Lake State Park has abundant wildlife and sighting some of the more common animals is a frequent experience. But because Priest Lake is one of the most remote state parks and that it lies adjacent to large tracts of wildlands, some rare animal can be seen such as grizzly bear, Canadian lynx, and wolverine. One noteworthy animal is the Woodland Caribou. The Selkirk Mountains was the last remaining home for this animal in the lower 48 states. It is well adapted to the hard local winters, they are able to cross deep snows on 7-inch wide "snowshoe-like" feet, and eat the lichens that drape old trees. The woodland caribou once lived as far south as the Salmon River. Even in the high country, the caribou were threatened by people. One hunter killed 25 in the winter of 1888-89. Loggers punched roads into the Selkirks in the 1950s, and the caribou were rediscovered. Forests were cut and burned. Deer that thrive in the brush that was left over moved in, carrying a parasite known as a brainworm. That all but wiped out the caribou. Those that survived the parasite were the ones that lived in the higher elevations in the Selkirks. In studies, it was learned that the caribou summered in clear-cut areas and that their early winter habitat was being logged and fragmented with roads and power lines. As the clear-cuts grew back, they attracted deer. Mountain lions and wolves followed and preyed on the caribou, which doesn't kick as hard as a moose and didn't have the flight response of deer. Prior to the 1980s, few biologists and animal groups advocated for what was recognized as the southernmost population of woodland caribou in North America. But a partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the IDFG, and the Province of British Columbia started a 35 year conservation project aimed at preserving the mountain caribou — the most endangered species in the United States. The goal was to restore the population of the woodland caribou that once roamed throughout the Northern U.S., but now had retreated to the highest elevations of Idaho's northernmost mountain range. The project included transplanting caribou from Canada to build the population from an endangered remnant into a healthy herd. However after years of effort, the population of caribou was not increasing as planned and a decision was made that the project was no longer viable. Idaho's last surviving caribou was trapped in a net and carried by helicopter from the Selkirk Mountains north into Canada on January 14, 2019.

Mammals: The mammals present in the park include: mule deer, whitetail deer, elk, moose, mountain sheep, mountain goats, black bear, raccoon, beaver, muskrat, mink, coyotes, bobcat, mountain lion, Canada lynx, bobcat, coyote, weasel, Columbia ground squirrel, western red squirrel, chipmunk, badger, snowshoe hare, wolf, porcupine, and striped skunk.

The keynote species is the Canada Lynx. Several sightings of this rare animal have been made in the Priest lake area in the past twenty years. The Canada lynx (*Lynx Canadensis*) is a lynx species native to North America. It ranges across Canada and Alaska extending into the United States in the area of the northern Rocky Mountains. With a dense silvery-brown coat, ruffed face and tufted ears, the Canada lynx resembles the other species of the mid-sized feline genus Lynx. It is slightly larger than a bobcat, with which it shares parts of its range, and over twice the size of the domestic cat. The Canada lynx is a medium-sized cat between 31 and 39 inches in head-and-body length, stands 19 to 22 inches tall at the shoulder and weighs 11 to 40 pounds. The males are larger and heavier than females. Like the bobcat, the Canada lynx has forelimbs shorter than the hindlimbs, so that the back appears to be sloping downward to the front. The stubby tail, typical of lynxes, measures 2 to 6 inches. The coat is generally yellowish brown (though the back is sometimes grey), and can change color seasonally. Some dark spots can be seen on the underbelly, where the fur is long and white (sometimes with a hint of buff). The coat is short and reddish brown to greyish in summer, but becomes notably longer and greyer

in winter, with a mix of greyish brown and buff hairs. The spots may become more distinct in summer. The tail is marked with dark rings and, unlike the tail of the bobcat, terminates in a fully black tip.

The Canada lynx tends to be nocturnal like its primary prey, the snowshoe hare. These hares comprise 35 to 97 percent of their diet, and the proportion varies by the season and the abundance of hares. However, at times when the numbers of the hare drop, lynxes will include other animals in their diet – such as ducks, grouse, moles, ptarmigan, red squirrels, voles and young ungulates .

The Canada lynx is currently listed as a threatened species with designated critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act. In January 2018, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the Canada lynx is being considered for delisting due to recovery and conservation efforts spanning nearly two decades.

Birds: The birds present in the park include: common loon, pied-billed grebe, western grebe, goldeneye, teal, great blue heron, Canada goose, mallard, hooded merganser, harlequin duck, mountain and western bluebirds, osprey, great horned owl, bald eagle, American kestrel, red-tailed hawk, Cooper's hawk, turkey vulture, common raven, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, common nighthawk, belted kingfisher, northern Flicker, pileated woodpecker, cliff swallow, Steller's jay, Clark's nutcracker, black-capped chickadee, nuthatch, western tanager, red winged blackbird, water ouzel, and dark-eyed junco.

Reptiles and Amphibians: The reptiles and amphibians in the park include: garter snake, western toad, Pacific treefrog, and long-toed salamander.

Fish: The fish present in the park include: yellow perch, rainbow trout, brook trout, lake trout, bull trout, cutthroat trout, and Rocky Mountain whitefish.

Cultural History: Evidence such as ancient rock art and rare finds of arrowheads along beaches, suggest that Native Americans lived in the Priest Lake area as early as 7,000 years ago. This area was important hunting and fishing ground for the Kalispel Indians. Here they hunted deer, caribou and snowshoe hare. While fishing, the Kalispels glided across the lake in "sturgeon-nosed" canoes made of cedar frames and white pine bark.

Indian Creek was a favorite summer gathering spot for the Kalispell Indians. They fished in Indian Creek for Rocky Mountain whitefish which they dried for the winter. They brought their abundant harvest of huckleberries to the sandy beach where the women spread the berries out on blankets to dry.

During the mid to late 19th century, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians worked to preserve its culture and life in the midst of increasing white settlement in the area. Roman Catholic priests began working with the Tribe in 1844. In 1855, the Upper Kalispel Tribe ceded its lands and moved to the Jocko Reservation in Montana at the request of the U.S. Government. The Lower Kalispel Tribe, ancestors of today's Kalispel members, refused to give up ancestral lands and continued to work toward an agreement that would allow the Tribe to remain on its homeland.

During the late 1800s, while most other tribes were going through the process of having reservations established, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians had almost no relationship with the federal government. Congress did propose a treaty in 1872, but the terms were poor and the Tribe refused to sign it. By 1874, Congress had stopped establishing treaties with tribes altogether,

leaving the Kalispel Tribe with no legal protection.

By 1875, the Tribal population had shrunk to only 395 people. From 1880 to 1910, as more white settlers moved into Kalispel territory, the Tribe witnessed its land disappearing, but could do nothing to prevent it. Many of the white settlers filed claims under the Homestead Act in order to "legally" obtain land which was rightfully home for much of the Tribe. This time period also introduced the widespread use of alcohol, which many consider to be a fundamental source of the breakdown of the family unit.

For generations, Kalispel members remained trapped in a subsistence lifestyle. In 1965 only a couple of homes on the reservation had running water and there was only one telephone for the whole Tribe. The average annual income for a Tribal member was approximately $1,400. The Kalispel Tribe of Indians has faced several challenges associated with life in remote rural areas such as unemployment, inadequate housing, limited economic opportunities and prejudice. With most of the land on the reservation unsuitable for development, the Tribe has had to develop innovative ways to create opportunity for Tribal members. A Kalispel Indian Reservation was established along the banks of the Pend Oreille River near Cusick, Washington in 1914.

History: Fur trappers traveled to this region in the early 1800s, establishing trade with the Kalispell Indian Tribe. These trappers explored the Priest Lake Basin in search of otter, mink and beaver.

In the 1840s, Father Pierre Jen DeSmet, a Catholic priest, worked with the Native Americans throughout the region. The Jesuit priests organized missions among the Indians. Father DeSmet came up with Priest Lake 's original name, Lake Roothaan. He named the lake after Father Roothaan, who was the Father General for the area. The Native Americans had difficulty pronouncing Roothaan; they used the name Kaniksu, which translated is "black robe," meaning "priest." Apparently it was easier for the white man to say "priest," rather than "Kaniksu." Through the years, "priest" became the preferred name of the lake.

Gold was discovered in British Columbia in the 1860s, bringing thousands of miners to northern Idaho where they settled many small communities in the Pend Oreille region.

In the 1880s the Northern Pacific Railroad linked northern Idaho to the rest of the country. In 1890 the Great Northern Railroad constructed a depot on the Pend Oreille River near the confluence with the Priest River in the town that would be named Priest River.

By 1890 mineral exploration had expanded to the Priest Lake area, and many newcomers settled in hopes to strike it rich. Mines prospered for awhile, but the mining boom dwindled at the end of the decade.

Idaho became a state in 1890. Under the statehood act they were granted section 16 and 36 of every township to be used for educational purposes. However, patenting of these lands could not occur until the official General Land Office surveys were completed.

Congress passed the Act of February 28, 1891 that provided the states with authority for the selection of lands for educational purposes in lieu of those of those appropriated for other purposes. This meant that the State of Idaho could select parcels of land "in lieu" of their acceptance of sections 16 and 36 in each township. These selections of land would be known as "indemnity claims." Then a month later on March 3, 1891, Congress passed the Forest Reserve Act that gave the President the authority to proclaim "forest reserves" on the public domain lands.

The town of Coolin, Idaho would be named for Andrew Coolin. Andrew Coolin was born

on January 4, 1849 in Toronto, Canada. He was married to Elizabeth Layfield (a widow) on May 17, 1895. In that marriage record he was shown as a resident of Kootenai County, Idaho. Andy Coolin opened a post office at the southern end of Priest Lake in 1893, thereby giving his name to the nascent community. Hopes were high for a mining bonanza in the area and for a future link to the railroad, 28 miles away. Coolin's house, the Post Office and the Brown Brothers Store were shown as notations on the General Land Office survey notes dated February 27, 1897. To accommodate travelers and prospectors, Walt Williams, an employee of the Great Northern Railroad, built a two-story log hotel, the Northern Inn, in 1900.

Two of the early prospectors, L. and Curtis Crenshaw built a cabin on Eight Mile Island in 1897. They worked their Deer Trail Lode mining claim until January 1, 1898, when they sold their log cabin, shop, cellar, smokehouse and boathouse to W.J. Anders for $65. Anders sold out to Samuel Vinther and Nels Nelson, cousins from Spokane in 1900. Although unable to patent their claim, Vinther and Nelson and their descendants would use the cabin each year from 1906 to 1981 as a summer retreat.

By the late 1800s Indian Creek became a "conveyor belt" for logging. Logs were transported in a flume for more than three miles. They spilled from the mouth of Indian Creek into the lake. Then the logs were floated to the south end of Priest Lake.

The Priest River Forest Reserve was proclaimed by President Grover Cleveland on February 22, 1897. It was first administered by the U.S. General Land Office who began to sequester it from the public land entry laws. President Theodore Roosevelt later proclaimed it as Kaniksu National Forest on July 1, 1908. What should be noted is the great forested lands on the west slope of the Selkirk Mountains were all excluded from the proclaimed boundaries of the forest reserve. It may be that the State of Idaho had an eye on these forest lands and had already filed "indemnity claims" there. This would give the State of Idaho authority to use and occupy their claims until such time as the surveys were complete and the land was patented to the state.

In the summer of 1897, Howard Gumaer and Gifford Pinchot set the stage for logging in Priest Lake area. Gumaer was a Wisconsin timber cruiser and Pinchot was in Priest Lake at the bidding of President William McKinley. Pinchot was assigned to study the economics, and what that looks like in a place like Priest Lake, which had just been declared a forest reserve in February. Howard Gumaer thought that there were great white pine forests here. Pinchot was convinced that he could change the timber industry in America by changing their practices of 'scorched earth,' into something more of what could be called conservation methods. Gifford Pinchot would become the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service in 1905.

Priest River is the "town that logs built." Ever since the early the 1890s when Italians from southern Italy immigrated to hew ties for the Great Northern Railroad, the woods product industry was the base of Priest River's economy. The town's first sawmill was built in 1897 as the demand for lumber increased. Logs were driven down the Priest River from the Priest Lake area to the sawmills starting in 1901.

In 1903 Andy Coolin received a patent on his homestead claim for 157 acres in Section 10 of Township 59 North and Range 4 West on October 4, 1900. He was planning to leverage his land into a financial empire. Coolin formed the Priest Lake Town Site and Improvement Company with his brother and other local investors in 1907. By that time Spokane businessman Joseph B. Slee already operated a steamboat out of Coolin connecting the lake with supplies, mail, and transportation. He named the boat the *W.W. Slee*. In 1906, Leonard Paul opened a general merchandise store in the tiny village; Ida Handy opened the Idaho Inn in 1908. When mining riches failed to pan out and Andy Coolin's efforts to lure the railway to Priest Lake came

to naught, the village of Coolin became a center for summer vacationers and services, including a sawmill, store, hotel, ranger station, docks, and steamboat service. Andy Coolin died in Spokane on January 10, 1936.

It would seem that Andrew Coolin had beaten the State of Idaho in the race to claim public domain lands on the east side of Priest Lake, but he wouldn't be the only one. Harry E. Augstadt filed his homestead claim in the late 1890s for 158 acres just 2 miles north of Indian Creek in section 15 of Township 61 North and Range 4 West. He received his patent on September 16, 1904. Augstadt had come west from Pennsylvania. He was living in Priest River in the 1910 census. Another Coolin homesteader was Charles E. Reardon. He was born on January 14, 1873 in Kansas. He was married to Ida Marie Rylander and they were living in the Priest Lake precinct in the 1910 census. He received patent to his homestead claim for 135 acres in section 2, 3, 10, and 11 in Township 59 North and Range 4 West. This land was a little north of the Town of Coolin. Then the land that is just west of the Lionhead Unit was settled by homesteader Samuel T. Byars. Samuel Byars was born on January 23, 1877 in Tennessee. In the 1910 census he had his occupation listed as a forest ranger with the U.S. Forest Service. He received patent to his 113 acre claim in section 10 of Township 62 North and Range 4 West on May 13, 1913. He was married to Grace May Harmon. He would be a lifetime resident of Coolin. He died at Coolin on June 15, 1914.

In 1910 a few people in Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint were suggesting that a national park be established at Priest Lake. This could have been an opportune time since the patents had yet to issued to the State of Idaho for their indemnity claims and it was still about 20 years before the State Land Board began initiating cottage leases for shoreline areas along the east side of Priest Lake. Since Priest Lake was perhaps the most pristine and wild of Idaho's large lakes, it most certainly would have been worthy of national park status. But probably due to the value of the stands of timber and mining activity in the area, the idea was quickly abandoned.

The Priest Lake mining district was booming in 1910. It was located several miles above Upper Priest Lake on the southwestern slopes of Continental Mountain almost to the Canada border. The route for miners and supplies to get there was by stage from the railhead at Priest River to the town of Coolin. Then steamboats went daily from Coolin to the head of the lake. From that point, packing on a 20 mile trail was required through the Priest Lake Valley to several different mining properties (McLean mine, Continental mine) situated on Upper Priest River and Cedar Creek.

The tree that the first loggers were after was the western white pine. These old growth trees were massive with straight trunks of knotless lumber. Loggers started at the south end of Priest Lake and worked their way north. They cut as many of the giant trees as they could float to the mills at Priest River. Rail transportation and an abundance of lumber attracted lumber companies; vigorous logging operations ensued, producing millions of board feet of lumber from the white pine.

In those early days, the biggest hurdle facing those who wanted to log the area was how to get the logs out of the Priest Lake area. The U.S. Forest Service would have liked to see a railroad run from Priest River to Priest Lake, and began selling tracts of land to small regional timber companies in hopes they would build the railroad. In 1912, the Forest Service awarded the largest contract to Dalkena Lumber Company. But they didn't build the railroad. Instead, they "blasted" their way down the Priest River, which also allowed other loggers to drive their logs down the river. It was around the same time that C.W. Beardmore took over the White Pine Lumber Company after it burned down and was subsequently rebuilt. Beardmore was from

Wisconsin. He came to Priest Lake to get timber claims and create logging camps In 1914, he had got enough resources to buy the mill.

Logging camps were set up and logging operations continued with horses, gravity, water and a labor force of lumberjacks. But Priest Lake was so remote, they had to be really innovative about how they got the timber out. They would log in the winter, in the snow and ice, as fires were a threat in the summer, and the ground was too soft for the wagons loaded with logs and pulled by the horses. In the era of flumes versus chutes to get the logs down the steep hills., flumes were "really" expensive, so most of the Priest Lake operations used chutes. The logs would arrive at the shore of Priest Lake from the flumes and chutes. Then they would be towed in “booms” or “rafts” by a steamboat tug. The steamboat tug named *Tyee I* began operating on the lake in 1922. The *Tyee I* would tow the booms down to the southend of Priest Lake where they could be driven down the Priest River in a log drive. After the log drive down the Priest River and the logs reached the Pend Oreille River, crews would sort and brand them — they even had someone with the title, "stray log inspector."

After the Industrial Workers of the World, known as "Wobblies," began to strike in 1917, camps were upgraded to better suit the needs of the lumberjacks. Following World War I, more mechanized vehicles, heavy enough to carry logs, began to surface. The 1920s would be the "heydey" for Priest Lake logging, right up until the last big profit year of 1926.

Nell Shipman came to the lake in 1921 to film a movie, made a home there and did much to promote the area. Helen Foster-Barham, nicknamed Nell, bounced into life October 25, 1892, in Victoria, B.C. She yearned for a career as an actress and landed a part with a theatrical touring company at the tender age of 13. She learned a lot about acting as well as growing up. At 18 she married Ernest Shipman, a producer who financed several of her films, including *Back to God’s Country*, which realized more than 300% profit. During her 7 year marriage, Nell had a child, Barry Shipman.

Nell Shipman became a celebrated actress, as well as a talented writer and director. At various times during her career, she wrote, acted in, directed, and produced films. Some of her early successes included *God’s Country and the Woman* (1916), *Barbee, Son of Kazan* (1918), and *Back to God’s Country* (1919). Nell was distinctive for her work in the first wildlife-adventure films ever made, and for her insistence on humane treatment of animal actors-a rare sentiment in those days.

She eventually moved her crew from Hollywood to Spokane to shoot indoor scenes for Nell’s feature-length silent motion picture, *The Grubstake*. She then traveled throughout the northwest, looking for suitable country to film the outdoor scenes. She found the ideal setting, exclaiming, “Priest Lake is the loveliest, wildest, most perfect spot of all.” She brought with her a “zoo” of 70 animal actors, son Barry, her partner and director Bert Van Tuyle, and future Academy Award winning cameraman Joseph Walker. She also employed various local people to help construct and run the camp.

Nell acquired her own animals to perform in her productions, transporting her zoo of more than 200 animals to the lake. A menagerie of eagles, wolves, bobcats, deer, elk, dogs and Nell’s pet bear, Brownie. Nell’s skill with animals was recorded by local resident Madlyn Byars, 13 years old at the time: “Once in a while at night a wild animal would get the zoo animals excited. The uproar would be deafening. Nell would go out to the pens and you could follow her progress from pen to pen because everywhere she went the animals quieted down. It was remarkable.” Madlyn was the daughter of Samuel T. Byars who was an early homesteader and forest ranger living on the neighboring property.

The Shipman studio was headquartered at Lionhead Lodge in the present day park from 1921 to 1925. Nell, with her ten year-old son, Barry, and her company, worked on a series of seven short films collectively titled *Little Dramas of the Big Places*.

Heavy costs and lack of experience forced Shipman productions to shut down, leaving Nell bankrupt. Undaunted by this failure, Nell turned primarily to writing. Soon after she left Priest Lake, never to return, her feature-length silent movie, *The Grubstake*, became a huge financial hit in the U.S., Canada and throughout the world.

Nell transferred her animals to the San Diego Zoo and she returned to California. Although none of the studio survives, this area once was the setting of numerous cabins, animal cages, barns, and other structures necessary to life and motion picture activities in the Priest Lake wilderness. She continued to work on the fringes of the motion picture industry, she never regained her former prominence. Nell Shipman died in California on January 23, 1970 at the age of 78.

None of Nell's films were thought to have survived the ravages of time. Recently however, through the efforts of Boise State University and the Canadian National Archives, at least three titles have been rediscovered and assembled in a collection at BSU. Although Nell faded into obscurity for a time, her works are now enjoying a resurgence of interest.

The logging industry around Priest Lake had already slowed down in the 1920s, but the Great Depression in 1929 slowed things further. In 1925, crews logged 236 million board feet out of Priest Lake. Seven years later, in 1932, they logged only 11 million board feet. Only two logging companies survived the Great Depression — the Kaniksu Cedar Company, which later changed its name to Schaefer-Hitchcock, and Diamond Match Company. Diamond Match bought out almost everybody as people still needed matches.

Five million acres of western white pine forest occupied the best growing sites in and near North Idaho in the late 1800s. While other tree species were also present, it was the large, prized white pine timber that lured lumber mills west from the largely harvested eastern white pine forests in the Lake States. It dominated the local timber industry from 1900 to 1965. Western white pine was declared the Idaho's official state tree in 1935.

But the "limitless" supply of white pine was not to last. In 1910, blister rust-infected western white pine seedlings from France were shipped to British Columbia. The disease spread rapidly, and in a couple of decades was found in Idaho. A few decades later, most of the great western white pine forests were gone. While the rust epidemic was the main cause, native bark beetles, wildfire and logging accelerated the decline.

A number of disease control measures were tried early in the epidemic, including quarantines, antibiotics and most notably "Ribes eradication." The rust has a complex disease cycle which requires two hosts. Only spores produced on gooseberry and current shrubs (both genus Ribes) could infect the pines, so in theory, elimination of those plants would protect the pines. It was the time of the Great Depression, so between 1933 and 1942, about 25,000 young men who were enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps in the Inland Northwest were put to work pulling, digging, spraying and scraping away the offending shrubs. In the end, the effort failed to reduce the Ribes population sufficiently to protect the pines. Current control efforts involve planting rust-resistant trees and pruning young trees.

Despite the impact of the Blister Rust, there were still significant amounts of western white pine to harvest. The knotless wood was perfect for making matches. The Diamond Match Company had bought up other lumber companies and had secured contracts to continued the harvest. During the late 1940s, the Diamond Match Company had a floating logging camp at

Indian Creek. Later they floated this camp up to the Lion Creek area and established camp 9.

The Indian Creek flume was built by the Diamond Match Company in 1946. At a cost of $30,000 a mile, this 3.5 mile flume was the least expensive and most efficient way to transport logs to Priest Lake at that time. The flume was like a giant wooden waterslide. The logs were pulled into the flume with a long handled hooked tool called a peavey. The logs then floated down the flume to the lake. When enough logs reached the lake, they were tied together in booms. These log booms were towed to the outlet of Priest Lake by steam powered tugs, like the *Tyee*. These booms were held at the lake's outlet until the spring of the year. Then timber workers called "river pigs" would guide the floating logs down the Priest River to the mills. The last great log drive down the Priest River occurred in 1948. The flume at Indian Creek was abandoned in 1952.

It would not be until the late 1920s that the State of Idaho would secure all of their patents for the indemnity lands they had selected. However it was obvious that they had already been making timber sales from their claim properties and probably had issued the leases for timber camps and the Shipman Studios. But once they received patent to the lands they were free to do with them as they pleased. Their mission was making money for support of Idaho schools and they were not short on schemes to do this. One such scheme was the idea of leasing lots along the shoreline of the lake for private parties to build vacation cabins on. This was called the "cottage site leasing" program. But it would create a unique situation in which the cabin/cottage building would be owned by private parties, but the land on which it stood would remain in the ownership of the State of Idaho.

Starting in the late 1920s the Idaho Land Board began making cottage site leases at Priest Lake. Originally there were 343 state leased cottage sites on the east shore of the lake. Over several decades cottage site leases were continual renewed with very little in the way of rate increases. Families would enjoy the cabins they built and pass them off to succeeding generations of their family. The cabin/cottage buildings were also routine bought and sold along with the right to continue the lease of the lot. But the State Land Board was required to have rates that reflected "market value" for the property. By the late 1900s, some of the lease rates were increasing by as much as 154%. Many lessees were not happy about this. Some lessees began to express a desire to purchase the endowment land they leased, thus unifying the estate (ownership) of both structure (cottage) and land (site). In 2010, the State Land Board voted to divest ownership of cottage sites at Priest Lake and directed the IDL to develop the voluntary auction for ownership process. This process involved putting each cottage site lot up for bids. The process basically resulted in the privatization of a great deal of shoreline along the lake. So publically owned shoreline like Priest Lake State Park was becoming increasingly scarce.

Prior to 1950 the State Endowment Lands where the Priest Lake State Park is today were under the management of the Priest Lake Timber Protective Association. Then in 1950, the Priest Lake State Forest was established and all responsibilities for management of the endowment lands in the area was entrusted to the IDL.

As recently as the 1950s, there were few roads on the east side of Priest Lake past Indian Creek. Logging was the major activity in the area and transportation to the north end was by horse, foot or boat. North of Indian Creek, three logging camps had been installed, Camp seven, Camp eight, and Camp nine (Squaw Bay). Camp seven and Camp Eight were up Indian Creek and they were the end of the road as far as transportation was concerned. From there north, boats were used with supplies taken in by barges.

What is now the Lionhead Group Camp was once a logging camp (Camp 9) and log

holding area, owned and operated by the Diamond Match Company from the 1940s through 1956. This camp consisted of three 50-man and several 5-man bunkhouses. During its months of operation, April through October, 100 to 118 men lived at the camp. Through the winter, the camp was closed.

The *Tyee II* was a logging tug that towed logs on the lake from 1954 to 1959. The logs were tied together in booms and the *Tyee II* towed the booms to the south end of the lake. To make steam, The *Tyee's* boiler burned as much as eight cords of wood every trip. The tug's top sped, in calm conditions, was one half-mile per hour. The logs were hauled down from Mosquito Bay or Canoe Point and dumped into log booms. The log booms would be picked up by the *Tyee* and rafted down to Cavanaugh Bay where they were sorted and loaded onto trucks. As the road system expanded, the *Tyee II* became obsolete because trucks were soon being used to haul logs directly from the forest to the mills in Priest River. The tug was stripped of its metal and set on fire to be scuttled, as was the custom and usual fate of unneeded vessels. However, before the *Tyee II* could sink, it drifted ashore at Mosquito Bay, to its final resting place, a reminder of a bygone era. Today, its hulk is beached near the boat launch area of the park at Lionhead.

With the advent of diesel trucks, bigger machinery, and faster logging, the Diamond Match Company shut down all its logging camps at Priest Lake in 1956. Until the camps closed, logs had been hauled on the lake. Hauling logs by truck was much more cost efficient.

Park History: The Indian Creek Unit of Priest Lake State Park got its start as part of the Priest Lake State Forest administered by the IDL. A Division of Parks had been created within the IDL and it took over responsibility for Indian Creek in 1959. There was a concession operated camp store there from 1959 through the 1960s.

The IDPR was created by the Legislature in 1965 and in 1966 the new IDPR took over the management of the then endowment property at Indian Creek that would become Priest Lake State Park.

In 1967, the Indian Creek campground was developed with designated campsites, running water and electrical/sewer hookups, flush toilets and an Oregon designed restroom/shower building. There were initially 134 campsites, most without hookups. But by the late 1970s this number would be reduced to about 92 campsites.

In 1972, the endowment lands that would become the Indian Creek Unit were purchased from the IDL using Land and Water Conservation Fund monies. Indian Creek became the nucleus of the park after the formal transfer to the IDPR in 1973.

In 1974, Priest Lake received about 30,925 visitors.

The Dickensheet property was donated to IDPR by a local rancher in 1975.

The Lionhead Unit (Mosquito Bay) was formally purchased from the IDL and dedicated in 1977, although it had been administered by the park for more than a decade.

In 1986, the Diamond Match Company offered IDPR 293 acres of property at Squaw Bay at Lionhead. It had an extensive sandy beach, some cabins dating back to the Camp 9 days, and a significant amount of forested property to the east. The Nature Conservancy purchased the property. This Squaw Bay property was then acquired by the IDPR from the Nature Conservancy in 1987. Unfortunately due to funding problems the IDPR was enable to make an additional purchase for some shoreline property at the south end of Squaw Bay.

The old East Shore Road used to run right through the center of the Indian Creek Unit. In 1990, this road was re-routed to a location significantly up slope from where it was. This

increased IDPRs ability to control access to the park with an entrance station (kiosk).

The visitor center at the Indian Creek Unit was completed and opened in 2002.

Please Remember

- There is a $5.00 per vehicle per day fee required for access to the park even if the entrance station is closed.
- All campers are asked to stop at the visitor center and register before occupying your campsite, even when you have a reservation.
- Open fires are not allowed on the beaches.
- There are no lifeguards on duty at the designated swimming beaches.
- Personal floatation devices are required for any watercraft on the lake.
- All watercraft must display a current invasive species decal.
- Dogs must be on a leash at all times, and are not permitted in the buildings. There is a designated pet beach area at Indian Creek.
- Motor vehicles are to stay on established roadways unless directed otherwise. When parking lots are full, please do not park on the side of the access roads.
- Motor vehicles (including OHVs) must have a park permit and be street legal, licensed, and insured.
- Trailers or RVs longer than 25 feet should not make reservation for or enter the Lionhead Campground.

Recreation Activities:

Camping: Camping is perhaps the most popular activity at the park. The park features 151 individual campsites, 6 camping cabins and a group camp that can accommodate 50 people. But this has proven to be rather inadequate as the demand for this camping space in the summer season is extremely competitive. All of the campsites can be reserved in advance except for the 11 sites at Dickensheet which are first come-first served,

Picnicking: There are 6 picnic tables available for individual use at Indian Creek. There is one group shelter available at Indian Creek. There a few picnic tables available at the beach at Lionhead as well.

Boating: Both Indian Creek and the Lionhead Unit have boat ramps. The boat ramp at Indian Creek is a paved two lane ramp with two courtesy docks. It is here that visitors with large boats may wish to launch as it is the deepest ramp on the lake. From here water sports such as water skiing, etc, can be enjoyed. Those with fishing boats may also launch here. On the other hand, the ramp at Lionhead has an unimproved surface with only one courtesy dock and can handle only one launch at a time. But Lionhead is a great place to launch non-motorized craft as well as fishing boats. Both ramps have parking lots where vehicles with trailers attached can park. The park offers “boat camping “ at mooring docks at Indian Creek.

Trails: There are over 6 miles of trails in the park. Some of the trails are available for mountain bike use. At Indian Creek there are 4 trails: (1) the Indian Creek Nature Trail that is ,5 miles; (2) the Flume Trail is 1.4 miles; (3) the Viewpoint Trail is .7 miles; and (4) the Lone Star Loop is .6 miles. The Lionhead Unit has 1.7 miles of trails for hiking and biking. Priest Lake State Park lands are adjacent to the state endowment lands known as Priest Lake State Forest which

virtually offers unlimited opportunities for trail uses of all kinds.

Winter Sports: The trails can also be used in the winter for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The Indian Creek Unit contains 3.5 miles of cross-country skiing trails and links up with 125 miles of snowmobile trails in the Priest Lake State Forest.

Nature Study: You can start your nature study at the park visitor center where there are exhibits, guides, and nature oriented books and publications available. Take the Indian Creek Nature trail that is a short ½ mile walk along Indian Creek that has 12 numbered stops. Pick-up a trail guide at the visitor center.

Swimming: The park only has three official swimming beaches, one at Indian Creek, one at Lionhead Campground, and one at the Lionhead Group Camp..

Fishing: The fish that can be caught include: yellow perch, rainbow trout, brook trout, lake trout, bull trout, cutthroat trout, and Rocky Mountain whitefish

Resource Management Issues:

Noxious Weeds: The yellow common tansy and the purple spotted knapweed have been identified as noxious weeds growing in the park. .

Overcrowding: Priest Lake is just way too popular. The first "overcrowding" situation occurs in cyperspace about 9 months before a visitor's expected day of arrival at the park. This is when the Reserve America website begins to take reservations for campsites at Priest Lake. Just a microsecond after midnight on a day nine months before the first camping day, people from all over the northwest are clicking their mouse in the hopes of securing their favorite campsite at Priest Lake. Some are lucky and some are not. Nevertheless, 9 months before the expected date, the Priest Lake Campgrounds are already filled to capacity. Then once everyone arrives at the park, the place is packed. This is even true for the campsites without hookups at Lionhead because many of those sites have frontage directly on the shore. The piece of the park's real estate in greatest demand is the swimming beach. Visitors are intent upon reserving their spots on the beach early in the morning by placing their awnings on the beach to claim a spot for later. There have been so much use of portable awnings that the park staff has had to establish rules about placement. For example, there is a required set back from the waters edge so that a path for walking along the beach can be maintained. The bottom line is that Priest Lake State Park is going to need additional camping facilities to meet current and future demands.

Future Improvements Planned: There appears to be no current master plan or general development plan available for this park.

Suggestions for the Future: The following are suggested improvements to the park:

- IDPR should consider paving all the roads in the park. At Indian Creek there are three campground loops that are still gravel while the rest of the roads are paved. The Dickensheet Campground road is gravel. All the roads at Lionhead are gravel. Upgrading

to pavement will decrease dust and enhance the visitor experience. Paving of the campsite parking spurs should also be considered.

- The end of the pavement on East Shore Road is now just a few miles short of the entrance to the Lionhead Unit. IDPR should work with Bonner County to get the East Shore Road paved all the way to Lionhead.
- The park staff is currently operating the old marina day use area on the south side of Indian Creek for park purposes based upon an agreement with IDL. IDPR should seek a new agreement from the IDL that would allow for developing some recreational facilities there. Then a new access road to the site could be constructed that ties into the park's main access road system. The long range plan should be to acquire this property from IDL.
- IDPR should considering adding a central water system to Dickensheet Campground so that the campsites would meet the normal amenity threshold as standard campsites.
- The "old log cabin" entrance station/kiosk at Lionhead is a historical relict. IDPR should consider replacing it with a modern entrance station perhaps positioned a little further up the entrance road towards the East Shore Road.
- Indian Creek needs additional camping facilities. IDPR should consider adding some campground loops, perhaps between the visitor center and Cape Horn Road or on the other side between the visitor center and the maintenance/ residence area.
- Lionhead needs additional camping facilities. IDPR should consider developing a new campground loop south of the entrance road that is in between the entrance road and Lion Creek. These new campsites should be hook-up sites.
- Once the additional campsites have been added in a new Lionhead Campground, the current campground should be redesigned. At the west end of the current campground, eliminate a few campsites and install a standard "turn around" loop and eliminate the exit to the East Shore Road. As a long-term project, the IDPR should consider working with Bonner County to cut away a greater portion of hillside to move the county road back maybe 100 feet to provide extra room for the old campground.
- Group camping space appears to be in very high demand at Lionhead. IDPR should consider adding a couple of "Farragut Style" group camps. There appears to be plenty of room for this. Also consider building a new access road to the group camps that comes off the main entrance road with a bridge over Lion Creek.
- Although the Dickesheet Unit has great river access it lacks a connection to other recreation facilities and opportunities. It sits directly across the river from a large block of National Forest Land. The Forest Service has a day use area with a trail system just off of Highway 57 and downstream from Dickensheet. Adjacent to the Dickensheet entrance is an old bridge over the river. IDPR should work with the Forest Service to build a trail from the old bridge along the west side of the river that would tie into the Forest Service trail system downstream.
- Just 3 ½ miles east up a gravel road from the Lionhead Unit is the Lion Creek Falls or slides. This is a very unique recreational resources that is comparable to Slick Rock State Park in Arizona. The IDPR should explore the possibility of making the Lion Creek Falls/Slides into a "state park annex" of the Lionhead Unit. This would have to be done through an agreement with IDL for IDPR to be responsible for public use management at the site. In that way, some day use amenities such as a vault toilet and picnic area might be developed at the falls as well as making an improved trail system for access to the

slides. This would make this place much more “family friendly” and add another natural wonder to the state park system.