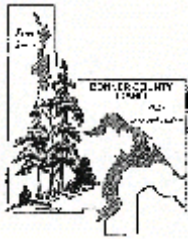


**Recreation Component  
Bonner County Comprehensive Plan**

# **Recreation Component Bonner County Comprehensive Plan**

January 15, 2002



## **BONNER COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

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*Base Map of Bonner County, Idaho*  
*Park Sites Located in Bonner County, Idaho*

# **RECREATION COMPONENT**

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This component includes an analysis of parks, public lands, and campgrounds; parkways and scenic drives; trails; water-related recreation, including marinas/boat access, beaches/public access, fishing, and other water-related recreation activities; and other recreation activities, including downhill skiing, golf, and shooting ranges.

## **CHAPTER 1 - PARKS, PUBLIC LANDS, AND CAMPGROUNDS**

### **Section 1.1 - Parks**

The following is a list of parks, consisting of Federal, State and City/County units, located in Bonner County.

#### **Federal (USFS)**

##### Ledgewood Picnic

Located on Priest Lake, Ledgewood is a day-use area that includes a picnic area with 12 picnic tables as well as a swimming beach. Both drinking water and toilets are available.

##### Maiden Rock

This park is a day-use area located on Lake Pend Oreille. Activities include boating and fishing and toilets are available; however, the facility is only accessible by boat and does not have drinking water.

##### Albeni Falls Dam

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates Albeni Falls Dam Cove on the Pend Oreille River. The park offers a day-use area with swimming and boating. Toilets are available.

## State

### Priest Lake State Park

- Location: 33 miles north of Priest River on the east shore of Priest Lake
- Size/Length: 3 Units, 755 Acres
- Elevation: 2,400 Feet
- Description: Noted for its clear water, glacier-carved Priest Lake extends 19 miles and is connected to the smaller Upper Priest Lake by a placid, 2-mile-long thoroughfare. The Selkirk Mountain Range towers nearby. Priest Lake State Park has an abundance of beautiful scenery and recreation opportunities. Park trails follow giant cedar-hemlock forests and crystal clear creeks. By traveling the rugged roads originating from one of the three park units (Lionhead, Indian Creek, or Dickensheet) and heading east into the mountains, white-tailed deer, moose, black bear, coyote, or mountain goat (the latter rare) may be seen. Priest Lake feeds Priest River, and the Dickensheet Unit at the park is a popular entry point for raft and canoe trips down the river.
- Recreation: Boating, camping, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, picnic area, swimming, wildlife viewing, Nordic skiing, ice fishing
- Facilities: Flush toilets, boat ramp, camping, dock, group facilities, parking, picnic tables, handicapped facilities, dump station, firewood available, playground, horseshoe pits, volleyball area, public phone
- Fishing: Bull trout (endangered), cutthroat trout, kokanee salmon, lake trout (Mackinaw)
- Camping: Dickensheet Unit: 11 campsites, no hookups. 22-foot maximum RV length, open April-Nov.  
Indian Creek Unit: 92 campsites, 11 hookups, 50-foot maximum RV length, open year-round.  
Lionhead Unit: 47 campsites, no hookups. 22-foot maximum RV length. May-Oct. Reservations can be made for campsites at Priest Lake. There are also group camping facilities at Squaw Bay.
- Trails: There are ½ mile hiking trails at the Lionhead and Indian Creek Units and a 3/4-mile trail at Viewpoint.
- Season: Year-round (Indian Creek Unit)
- Fee: Camping and motor vehicle entrance fee

## Round Lake State Park

Location:	10 miles south of Sandpoint off US 95
Size/length:	142 acres
Elevation:	2,122 feet
Description:	58-acre Round Lake was formed by glacial activity nearly 1 million years ago. A 2-mile trail encircles the lake. The park is an excellent wildlife viewing area and one might expect to see wildlife ranging from gophers, muskrats, and mink to bobcats, black bears, and white-tailed deer. The lake is only 37 feet deep, so it warms sufficiently for comfortable swimming. Round Lake campsites are shaded by towering western red cedar, western hemlock, ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and western larch.
Recreation:	Camping, canoeing, hiking, picnic area, Nordic skiing, ice fishing, wildlife viewing, swimming, boating-electric motors only, guided nature walks, interpretive program and ice skating
Facilities:	Camping, boat ramp, picnic tables, flush toilets, dump station, firewood available, showers, horseshoe pits, group facilities, public phone
Fishing:	Largemouth bass, bullhead catfish, crappie, perch, and pumpkinseed.
Camping:	53 campsites. 22-foot maximum RV length. No hookups. RV dump station.
Trails:	A walk on the 2-mile "trappers" nature trail around the lake will take hikers under canopies of western white pine, Engelmann spruce, grand fir, lodgepole pine, black cottonwood, paper birch, red alder, and rocky mountain maple. The self-guided botanical trail also includes a view of the state flower, the syringa, which blooms in late June.
Season:	Year-round
Fee:	Camping and motor vehicle entrance fee

(Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation)

## **City/County**

### Bonner County

Bonner Park West is located just west of the confluence of Priest River on the Pend Oreille River. It is a day-use area only. It is 2 to 3 acres in size and offers a boat launch, a swimming area, picnic tables, running water, and restrooms facilities.

Garfield Bay, located on Lake Pend Oreille, has a day-use area and 26 campground sites. The day-use area has picnic tables and some offer barbeque pits. Restrooms and running water can be found throughout the picnic area and campground. It also offers a beach with boat launch facilities.

### Sandpoint

The City of Sandpoint has eight parks, including City Beach and the Baldy Shooting Range. The parks range in size from 1/4 acre to 24 acres. They are primarily used for recreation and special events, such as the annual Festival at Sandpoint held at Lakeview Park/War Memorial Field. Travers Park also is used for softball league games and micro-league soccer. Concessions are available at the park during softball season. Restrooms and tennis courts are available and a walking path encompasses the park. The City Beach has boat launch facilities, a picnic area, basketball courts, horseshoe pits, and volleyball nets in the summer. (City of Sandpoint)

### Priest River

Priest River has one city park located downtown on High Street. (City of Priest River)

## **Section 1.2 - Public Lands**

The Idaho Panhandle National Forests are an aggregation of the Coeur d’Alene and portions of the Kaniksu and St. Joe National Forests. Approximately 2.5 million acres of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF) lie within the panhandle of northern Idaho and extend into eastern Washington and western Montana. Areas of the Kaniksu and Coeur d’Alene National Forests are located within Bonner County, representing about 19 percent of the Idaho Panhandle National Forest.

Within Bonner County, approximately 60 percent of all land area is publicly managed, and 40 percent is privately owned. Table 1.2 shows the distribution of federal, state, and local acreage in the county. The largest public land steward is the National Forest, which manages more than 470,000 acres. The smallest land manager is Idaho Parks and Recreation with 805 acres.

Table 1.2 - Bonner County Acreage Distribution

<i><b>Agency</b></i>	<i><b>Acres</b></i>	<i><b>Percent</b></i>
<b>Federal Land</b>	493,027	44.3%
BLM	11,520	
National Forest	472,655	
Other	8,852	
<b>State Land</b>	169,701	15.3%
Endowment Land	167,238	
Fish and Game	1,660	
Parks and Recreation	805	
<b>County</b>	4,521	0.8%
<b>Municipal Land</b>	4,117	
<b>Private Land</b>	440,698	39.6%
Total:	1,112,064	100%

(Idaho Department of Commerce, 1999)

All state and federal lands are open to public recreation including camping, hunting, fishing, photography, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, wildlife observation, boating, skiing, rock climbing, and swimming. Outside of designated recreation areas there is a three-day maximum use for camping by an individual, persons, or group. No camping may occur within 100 feet of any development.

### **Section 1.3 - Campgrounds**

The county abounds in camping opportunities that cater to every level of outdoor experience.

#### **Sandpoint Area Campgrounds**

Tables 1.3a and 1.3b are representative lists of the camping sites managed by a variety of government agencies.

Table 1.3a - Sandpoint Area Campgrounds

<b><i>Campground</i></b>	<b><i>Location</i></b>	<b><i>Attractions/Facilities</i></b>	<b><i>Ownership</i></b>
Garfield Bay	14 Miles SE of Sandpoint on Garfield Bay Road	On Lake Pend Oreille, Drinking water, toilets, picnic area, boat launch, 22-foot travel trailer spaces, 20 tent/trailer units, 6 tent only sites.	Bonner County
Green Bay	16 miles SE of Sandpoint	Lake Pend Oreille. Pit toilet, picnic area, tables, grills, fishing, 3 sites, no fee.	National Forest Service
Porcupine Lake	25 miles E of Sandpoint	Porcupine Lake. Pit toilet, picnic tables, grills, fishing.	National Forest Service
Samowen	17 miles E of Sandpoint	Lake Pend Oreille. Water, toilets, dump station, covered picnic area, beach, boat launch, 36-foot trailer spaces, 81 sites.	National Forest Service
Whiskey Rock	30 miles SW of Clark Fork, via Road 278	Lake Pend Oreille. Pit toilets, water, fishing, swimming, picnic area, 6 sites, no fee, handicap accessible.	National Forest Service
Round Lake State Park	10 miles S of Sandpoint, 2 miles W of Dufort Road.	Round Lake. Water, toilets, showers, dock, 24-foot travel trailer spaces, swimming, hiking, fishing, picnic tables, barbecue grills, boat launch, 55 units.	Idaho State Park
Albeni Cove	2 miles E of Newport off Highway 41	Pend Oreille River. Water, toilet, dock, 26-foot travel trailer spaces, boat launch, swimming, 13 units.	Army Corps of Engineers

<i><b>Campground</b></i>	<i><b>Location</b></i>	<i><b>Attractions/Facilities</b></i>	<i><b>Ownership</b></i>
Priest River	1 Mile E of Priest River on Highway 2	Priest River. Water, toilets, showers, dock, 32 foot travel trailer spaces, boat launch, swimming.	Army Corps of Engineers
Riley Creek	15 miles W of Sandpoint, 1 mile S of Laclede	Pend Oreille River. Water, toilets, showers, 32 foot travel trailer spaces, swimming, dump station, boat ramp, dock, 67 units.	Army Corps of Engineers
Springy Point	4 miles SW of Sandpoint on Lakeshore Drive	Pend Oreille River. Water, toilets, showers, 32 foot travel trailer spaces, swimming, dump station, boat ramp, dock, 40 units.	Army Corps of Engineers

(USFS, Idaho State Parks, and Army Corps of Engineers)

### **Priest Lake Area Campgrounds**

Table 1.3b - Priest Lake Area Campgrounds

<i><b>Campground</b></i>	<i><b>Location</b></i>	<i><b>Attractions/Facilities</b></i>	<i><b>Ownership</b></i>
Beaver Creek	39 miles N of Priest River, E on paved road for 12 miles	Priest Lake. Swimming, trail head, bike trails, portage to thoroughfare, handicap accessible, 20 units.	National Forest Service
Luby Bay	29 miles N of Priest River, Nordman	Priest Lake. Water, toilets, dump station, 26 foot travel trailer spaces, 52 units.	National Forest Service
Osprey	27 miles N of Priest River, Nordman	In the woods near Priest Lake. Water, toilets, 26 foot travel trailer spaces, 11 units.	National Forest Service
Outlet	26 miles N of Priest River, Coolin	Priest River. Toilets, 32 foot travel trailer spaces, 28 units.	National Forest Service
Dickensheet	23 miles N of Priest River	On the Priest River. Toilets, canoe/raft launch, 24 foot travel trailer spaces, 11 units.	Idaho State Park (Priest Lake State Park)
Indian Creek	34 miles N of Priest River on the east side or Priest Lake	On Priest Lake. Water, toilets, showers, 32 foot travel trailer spaces, store, docks, sand beach, dump station shallow	Idaho State Park (Priest Lake State Park)

<i><b>Campground</b></i>	<i><b>Location</b></i>	<i><b>Attractions/Facilities</b></i>	<i><b>Ownership</b></i>
		boat ramp (poor condition), 92 units.	
Squaw Bay	46 miles N of Priest River, Coolin	On Priest Lake. Water, toilets, showers, 32 foot travel trailer spaces, 8-man cabin with kitchen, beach, group camp area	Idaho State Park (Priest Lake State Park)
Lionhead	46 miles N of Priest River at the north end of Priest Lake	On Priest Lake. Water, pit toilets, dock, beach, boat launch, 47 units.	Idaho State Park (Priest Lake State Park)
Navigation	Upper Priest Lake	On Upper Priest Lake. Pit toilet, 5 tent units, accessible by boat or foot.	National Forest Service
Plowboy	Upper Priest Lake, at the mouth of the thoroughfare	On Upper Priest Lake. Pit toilet, 4 tent units, accessible by boat or foot	National Forest Service
Reeder Bay	30 miles N of Priest River	Priest Lake. Water, toilet, trailer spaces, tent spaces, 24 units, picnic area.	National Forest Service

(USFS, Idaho State Parks, and Army Corps of Engineers)

## CHAPTER 2 - PARKWAYS AND SCENIC DRIVES

There are numerous scenic roadways in Bonner County. Seven such tours are described in Nancy Renk's book *Driving Past*. (Renk)

**Tour 1: Pend Oreille River** - This tour follows the north bank of the Pend Oreille River on Highway 2 (recently dedicated as a scenic byway) as far as Priest River and returns along the south side on Dufort Road to Highway 95. The tour visits Bonner County historical sites that include the community of Dover, the Seneacquoten ferry landing, downtown Priest River, and Sagle.

**Tour 2: Selle Valley** -This tour covers the rural area northeast of Sandpoint. Starting in Sandpoint, the tour goes by way of Highway 200 to Colburn-Culver Road and then takes Highway 95 to Elmira and back to Sandpoint. Points of interest on this tour include the Pack River and the sand dunes south of Elmira.

**Tour 3: Sunnyside, Hope, and Clark Fork** -This tour leaves Sandpoint and travels on Highway 200 (Pend Oreille Scenic Byway) to Hope, Clark Fork, and the Cabinet Fish Hatchery. Points of interest on this tour include the Pack River Flats, a moose viewing area, Denton Slough, and the Cabinet Fish Hatchery.

**Tour 4: Glengary and Garfield Bay** -This tour travels through the rural area of Bonner County known as Glengary Peninsula. The tour heads south from Sandpoint on Highway 95 and then east on Sagle Road to Garfield Bay and Martin Bay on Lake Pend Oreille. Points of interest include the Long Bridge, scenic views of the Cabinet Mountains, and Garfield Bay.

**Tour 5: South Loop** - This tour is a loop through the southern and western ends of Bonner County. It passes through Cocolalla and Careywood on Highway 95 south of Sandpoint. It then travels west on Highway 54 to Spirit Lake in Kootenai County. From Spirit Lake it heads north on Highway 41 to Priest River. Points of interest include Cocolalla Lake, the Hoodoo Valley, and Albeni Falls.

**Tour 6: Priest Lake** - This tour starts just east of Priest River and follows the Eastside Road to Coolin at the south end of Priest Lake. It then continues up the west side of the lake as far as Nordman, returning to town along Highway 57. Points of interest include the Diamond Match Company flume, the Priest River Experimental Forest, a view of the Sundance Fire burn area, Priest Lake, and the Hanna Flats Cedar Grove.

**Tour 7: Hope-Pend Oreille Drive (Pend Oreille Scenic Byway)** - The Pend Oreille Scenic Byway, Highway 200 in Bonner County, edges the northern shores of Lake Pend Oreille, Idaho's largest lake. Highway 200 runs from the State Highway 200/US Highway 95 intersection at Sand Creek southeast about 30 miles to the Idaho-Montana border.

## CHAPTER 3 - TRAILS

### **Section 3.1 - Jurisdiction (Federal, State and Local)**

Within the Idaho Panhandle National Forest there are 2,016 miles of trails. For winter users, 78 miles of cross-country ski trails and 1,007 miles of groomed snowmobile trails are available. (GORP)

Considering that more than 60 percent of Bonner County is publicly managed, it is easy to understand why there are hundreds of trails for various recreational purposes in Bonner County. Table 3.1 lists a few of the more popular and accessible developed trail systems and the recreational opportunities of each.

Table 3.1 - Bonner County Trail Systems

<i>Trail</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Snowmobiling</i>	<i>Nordic Skiing</i>	<i>Mountain Biking</i>	<i>Hiking and Horses</i>
Granite Pass System	3 mi. N of Nordman	4 trail system, parking for 15 cars	Priest River Ranger District (Federal)	!			
Hanna Flat	4 mi. S of Nordman	Parking for 15 cars	Priest River Ranger District (Federal)		!		!
Priest Lake State Park	33 mi. N of Priest River on State Hwy. 57	Store, camping, electricity, parking for 25-30 cars	Priest Lake State Park (State)	!	!		
Chipmunk Rapids	21 mi. N of Priest River on State Hwy. 57	Parking for 10 cars, 2,500-foot elevation, snowmobiles prohibited	Priest River Ranger District (Federal)		!	!	
Schweitzer Mtn. Resort	11 mi. NW of Sandpoint off US Hwy. 95	Day lodge, food, lodging, equipment rentals	Schweitzer Mtn. Resort (Private)		!	!	!
Sunnyside Road Hwy. 200 Loop	Hwy. 200 East 9.5 to road cut off	Countryside and shoreline trails	Sandpoint Ranger District (Federal)			!	

<i>Trail</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Snowmobiling</i>	<i>Nordic Skiing</i>	<i>Mountain Biking</i>	<i>Hiking and Horses</i>
Lake Shore Dr./Dufort Road Round Lake Loop	Bike path begins behind Sandpoint Courthouse	Shoreline trail with lake views, crosses 2 mi. bridge	Sandpoint Ranger District (Federal)			!	
Trestle Creek Rd.	12 mi. E of Sandpoint	Parking for 8-10 cars	Sandpoint Ranger District (Federal)	!			
Gold Hill	6 mi. SE of Sandpoint	Views of Lake Pend Oreille	Sandpoint Ranger District (Federal)			!	!
Strong Creek Trail 444 Beetop-Round-top Trail 120	Hwy. 200 E to Hope up Strong Creek	View of Lake Pend Oreille, ridgetop views, steep gain	Sandpoint Ranger District (Federal)			!	!
Mineral Point	1 mi. N of Garfield Bay	Trail begins 1 mi. N of Garfield Bay	Sandpoint Ranger District (Federal)				!
Round Lake State Park	10 mi. S of Sandpoint off US Hwy. 95	Mostly flat, some rolling hills and dense forest, fishing	Round Lake State Park (State)				!
Johnson Creek/Dry Crk. System	3 mi. SW of Clark Fork	6 trails, parking for 8-10 cars	Sandpoint Ranger District (Federal)		!		
Johnson Cabin Trail	From Clark Fork take Johnson Creek Road 278, 16 mi. to trail	Steep grades	Fernan Ranger District (Federal)			!	!
Stoneridge Resort, Blanchard	40 mi. N of Coeur d'Alene	Ski rentals, lodging, dining	Stoneridge Resort (Private)			!	!

(USFS, Idaho State Parks, Army Corps of Engineers, Hagadone Directories)

## CHAPTER 4 - WATER RELATED RECREATION

### **Section 4.1 - Marinas/Boat Access**

Table 4.1 lists the county facilities available for accessing water recreation. Fifty sites allow access to all the major water bodies.

Table 4.1 – Water Recreation Access Facilities

<i><b>Body of Water</b></i>	<i><b>Location of Facility</b></i>	<i><b>Ramp Condition</b></i>	<i><b>Parking Spaces</b></i>	<i><b>Docks</b></i>	<i><b>Fuel</b></i>	<i><b>Camp Sites</b></i>
Priest Lake	Lionhead-Priest Lake State Park	Good (Sand)	20	No	No	47
Priest Lake	Indian Creek-Priest Lake State Park	Poor (Shallow)	10	Yes	Yes	81
Priest Lake	Blue Diamond Marina (Fee ramp)	Fair	20	Yes	Yes	5
Priest Lake	Cavanaugh Bay Marina (Fee ramp)	Good	10	Yes	Yes	None
Priest Lake	Coolin	Poor	10	Yes	Yes	None
Chase Lake	Chase Lake	Good	None	Yes	No	None
Priest Lake	Bishop's Marina	Good	2	Yes	Yes	None
Priest Lake	Outlet Resort (Fee ramp)	Good		Yes	Yes	None
Priest Lake	Hill's Resort (Fee ramp)	Good	10	Yes	Yes	None
Priest Lake	Kalispell Boat Launch (Fee ramp)	Good	35	Yes	No	None
Priest Lake	Elkin's Resort (Fee ramp)	Good	20	Yes	Yes	None
Priest Lake	Grandview (Fee ramp)	Good	20	Yes	No	None

<i>Body of Water</i>	<i>Location of Facility</i>	<i>Ramp Condition</i>	<i>Parking Spaces</i>	<i>Docks</i>	<i>Fuel</i>	<i>Camp Sites</i>
Priest Lake	Priest Lake Marina (fee ramp)	Good	15	Yes	Yes	None
Priest Lake	Kaniksu Resort	Good	10	Yes	No	None
Priest Lake	Granite Creek Marina (fee ramp)	Good	15	Yes	No	None
Priest Lake	North Tule Bay/Beaver Creek	Poor	10	No	No	None
Freeman Lake	Freeman Lake	No Ramp	10	Yes	No (motors not allowed)	None
Pend Oreille River	Albeni Cove Recreation Area	Good	15	Yes	No	13
Pend Oreille River	Dock-N-Shop	No ramp	16	Yes	Yes	None
Pend Oreille River	Bonner Park West	Good	10	Yes	No	None
Pend Oreille River	Priest River Recreation Area	Good	15	No	No	1
Pend Oreille River	Thama	Poor	8	No	No	None
Pend Oreille River	Riley Creek Recreation Area	Good	60	Yes	No	68
Pend Oreille River	Laclede	Fair	3	Yes	No	None
Pend Oreille River	Willow Bay Marina	Good	48	Yes	Yes	20
Pend Oreille River	Morton Slough Access Area	Fair	6	Yes	No	15
Jewel Lake	Jewel Lake	Poor	5	Yes	No (motors not allowed)	None
Round Lake	Round Lake State Park (fee ramp)	Fair	22	Yes	No (motors not allowed)	53
Cocolalla Lake	Cocolalla	Good	15	No	No	None

<i>Body of Water</i>	<i>Location of Facility</i>	<i>Ramp Condition</i>	<i>Parking Spaces</i>	<i>Docks</i>	<i>Fuel</i>	<i>Camp Sites</i>
Lake Pend Oreille	Springy Point Recreation Area	Good	20	Yes	No	40
Lake Pend Oreille	Sandpoint Water Park	Good	30	Yes	No	None
Lake Pend Oreille	Sunnyside	Fair	4	No	No	None
Lake Pend Oreille	Trestle Creek Recreation Area	Good	20	Yes	No	None
Lake Pend Oreille	Hope Boat Basin	Good	30	Yes	No	None
Lake Pend Oreille	Pringle Park	Good	6	Yes	No	None
Lake Pend Oreille	Red Fir Resort (fee ramp)	Good	10	Yes	No	50
Lake Pend Oreille	Floating Restaurant	Good	30	Yes	Yes	None
Lake Pend Oreille	Samowen Park	Good	10	Yes	No	100
Lake Pend Oreille	Island View Resort (fee ramp)	Good	10	Yes	Yes	40
Lake Pend Oreille	Granite Creek	No Ramp	None	Yes	No	None
Lake Pend Oreille	Whiskey Rock	No Ramp	20	Yes	No	6
Lake Pend Oreille	Lakeview Landing	Good	8	Yes	Yes	None
Lake Pend Oreille	Cedar Creek	No Ramp	None	Yes	No	None
Lake Pend Oreille	Talache	Poor	6	No	No	None
Lake Pend Oreille	Garfield Bay	Good	32	Yes	No	None
Lake Pend Oreille	Bottle Bay Marina (fee ramp)	Fair	20	Yes	Yes	None

<i>Body of Water</i>	<i>Location of Facility</i>	<i>Ramp Condition</i>	<i>Parking Spaces</i>	<i>Docks</i>	<i>Fuel</i>	<i>Camp Sites</i>
Mirror Lake	Mirror Lake	Good	10	Yes	No	None
Shepherd Lake	Shepherd Lake	Poor	10	Yes	No	None
Kelso Lake	Kelso Lake	Good	6	Yes	No (motors not allowed)	None
Granite Lake	Granite Lake	Poor	5	Yes	No	None

(Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, 1998)

## **Section 4.2 - Beaches**

### **Lake Pend Oreille**

Lake Pend Oreille is the largest lake in Idaho. It is approximately 43 miles long, 1,000 feet deep, and nearly 6 miles wide in some locations. Lake Pend Oreille has 114 miles of shoreline. There are many public and private beaches surrounding the lake ranging from sandy to rocky.

City Beach in Sandpoint is the largest public sand beach on Lake Pend Oreille. It is a beautiful city park with beach volleyball, basketball, tennis, concessions, boat ramps and docks. Near Hope, the Forest Service operates Samowen Park, donated to the public by Sam and Nita Owen, Hope-area pioneers. The park offers clear water for swimming on a pebble beach. There are several barbecue and picnic areas in open timber along the shore, as well as overnight camping, a boat ramp, docks, and hiking.

The Army Corps of Engineers maintains several recreation areas on the lake and four areas west of Sandpoint on the Pend Oreille River. Closest to Sandpoint on the south side of the river is Springy Point, with a swimming area, launch ramp, camping and picnic spots. On the lake at Trestle Creek, the Corps maintains a pebble beach with designated swimming area, picnic grounds, and a concrete boat launch.

The Forest Service operates a small campground at Garfield Bay with a small pebble swimming area across the road. Whiskey Rock Bay, a remote sandy beach on the east shore of the lake, is best accessed by boat. Boaters can dock overnight or pitch a tent and enjoy one of the lake's few natural sandy beaches.

Undeveloped picnic sites may be found along the Monarch Mountains, with a number of small vest-pocket beaches from Johnson Creek, at the mouth of the Clark Fork, to Kilroy Bay. Generally, these beaches are accessible only by boat. (Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce)

## Priest Lake

Priest Lake is one of the three largest lakes in the Idaho Panhandle and is a popular recreation area. Priest Lake is actually two lakes, Upper and Lower Priest Lake, connected by a 2.5-mile thoroughfare. The lake is 25 miles long with 80 miles of shoreline, much of it publicly managed. The east shore is largely managed for timber production as part of the Priest Lake State Forest, while the western shore is predominately U.S. Forest Service lands. Numerous campgrounds and resorts are available to visitors.

There are four islands on the lake with sandy beaches for camping. Kalispell and Bartoo Islands have large sandy beaches that are accessible only by boat. A portion of Bartoo Island is private land. Four Mile and Eight Mile Islands have smaller beach areas.

There are two state park campgrounds, Indian Creek and Lionhead, on Priest Lake. Each offers large sandy beaches for swimming. Both are open to day-use. On the west side of the lower lake, the U.S. Forest Service maintains 10 campground and day-use areas with swimming.

### **Section 4.3 - Fishing**

Bonner County is home to some of the finest fisheries in the state. It offers two of the largest lakes in the state, Lake Pend Oreille and Priest Lake, and hundreds of miles of streams and rivers. Bonner County offers numerous opportunities for all types of fishing such as trolling for trophy size fish, ice fishing, shore fishing on the smaller lakes, and spin casting or fly casting on the many streams and rivers. Game species in the county include cutthroat trout, brown trout, bull trout (endangered), Mackinaw (lake trout), rainbow trout, steelhead, Kamloops, kokanee, perch, bullhead, large and small mouth bass, brook trout, and whitefish.

The County attracts anglers from the northwest region of the U.S. and Canada. Table 4.3 provides a glimpse of fishing license sales in Bonner County compared to statewide license sales issued between 1992 and 1999.

Table 4.3 - Fishing Licenses/Permits

<i>Resident and Non-resident Fishing Licenses/Permits</i>								
	<i>1992</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>
Bonner Co. <sup>1</sup>	16,480	14,503	15,309	14,521	9,608	14,217	15,223	16,955
Idaho	419,226	445,698	455,843	461,134	442,275	439,567	452,712	460,536

<sup>1</sup>Vendor sales in Bonner County.

<sup>2</sup>Software errors caused inaccurate data in 1996 only.

Source: Idaho Fish & Game, Craig Wiedmeier (1/2000).

## **Lake Pend Oreille**

Lake Pend Oreille is renowned for fishing. In its pristine state, the lake was a fishing paradise where huge native fish including bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and squawfish, were regularly taken. In years past, the United States Fishery Commission stocked the lake with nonnative fish to the detriment of the native species. (Wuerthner 80) Among the nonnative fish stocked in the lake are rainbow trout, whitefish, brook trout, and lake trout (also known as Mackinaw). The most sought-after fish are the lake's Kamloops rainbow trout and kokanee salmon. (Wuerthner 80)

Population estimates place the number of rainbow trout over 17 inches in length in Pend Oreille at 15,500 fish. According to Ned Horner, there "must be a 35 percent reduction in the rainbow population to have a chance of keeping the kokanee population going." All sizes of rainbows feed on kokanee, with predation by rainbows comprising 82 percent of the loss of kokanee attributed to being eaten by other fish. While bull trout and lake trout also consume some kokanee; however, their impact is not as significant because they live in deeper, colder water where they exhibit slower growth rates and consume far fewer kokanee than rainbows. If nothing changes, the kokanee population will collapse and there will be a corresponding collapse in the rainbow fishery. (Cooper)

With the kokanee population in peril, rainbow predators need to be reduced quickly and significantly. Rainbow regulations have been liberalized and anglers are encouraged to harvest more fish. Starting in January 2000, six trout, with no more than two rainbow or two cutthroat trout, will be permitted. (Horner)

## **Priest Lake**

Starting in January 2000, the lake will be open year-round for all methods of fishing. The limit will remain two fish of any kind. Harvest of cutthroat and bull trout will remain closed. For those interested in boat angling after the first of the year, the only usable ramp is generally at Priest Lake Marina in Kalispell Bay. (Horner)

## **Section 4.4 - Other Water Related Recreational Activities**

### **Boating/Waterskiing**

More than half of all surface water in Idaho is located in Northern Idaho. Lake Pend Oreille and Priest Lake offer year-round activities for boaters. Good access to ramps, marinas, floating and shoreline restaurants, and resorts enhance recreational boating on both lakes. Cocolalla Lake is also popular for small boats taking part in waterskiing and fishing. (Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce)

## **Canoeing/Kayaking**

Canoeing and flat water kayaking is popular on all of Bonner County waters; however, Kelso, Jewel, Freeman, Gamlin, and Round Lakes all offer passive boaters an opportunity to avoid motorized boats. Canoeing and flat water kayaking is popular in the thoroughfare up to Upper Priest Lake. Motorized boats are allowed to travel the thoroughfare, but it is a no-wake area. Though Bonner County rivers are not well-known for their whitewater, whitewater kayaking can be found on the Priest River below the Dickensheet unit of Priest Lake State Park in the spring. Priest River is canoeable by experienced boaters for 44 miles below the outlet of Priest Lake. The Upper Priest River has been proposed for classification as a Wild and Scenic River. (GORP)

## **Board Sailing**

Board sailing is popular on Bonner County waterways. Sailboards may be rented at the Windbag Marina on Lake Pend Oreille.

## **Parasailing**

Parasailing is offered on Lake Pend Oreille through Wind Walker Parasails in Sagle.

## **River Rafting**

Whitewater rafting can be experienced on the Priest River down river from the Dickensheet Unit of Priest Lake State Park in the spring.

## **Jet Skiing**

People use jet skis on all of Bonner County's lakes that allow motorized boats. Jet-ski operators are subject to all rules and requirements for motorized vessels on Bonner County waters.

(Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, 1998)

## CHAPTER 5 - OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES / FACILITIES

### **Section 5.1 - Downhill Skiing**

Schweitzer Mountain Resort offers downhill skiers and snowboarders 58 trails over 2,350 acres with one high-speed quad lift and five double chair lifts. The mountain has a top elevation of 6,400 feet and a vertical drop of 2,400 feet. Schweitzer Mountain Resort is located 11 miles northwest of the city of Sandpoint. Ski season usually runs from late November through early April.

### **Section 5.2 - Cross Country Skiing**

Schweitzer Mountain Resort offers 8K of groomed track for Nordic skiing and diagonal stride. Round Lake State Park, located 10 miles south of Sandpoint, has 10 miles of various groomed trails for Nordic and diagonal stride. (See Table 3.1 for other Nordic skiing trails.)

### **Section 5.3 - Golfing**

Bonner County has two 18-hole golf courses, Hidden Lakes Golf Resort in Sandpoint and the Stoneridge Country Club near Blanchard. The courses are open to the public. There are four 9-hole courses in Bonner County: the Ranch Club Golf Course in Priest River, the Elks Golf Course in Sandpoint, Priest Lake Golf Course, and Midas Golf Course in Sagle.

### **Section 5.4 - Shooting**

#### **Sandpoint**

The Leo Hadley indoor range is located in the city of Sandpoint adjacent to City Hall. This range is owned and operated by the Bonner County Sportsman Association. Organized competitions and hunter education are conducted on a regular basis.

#### **Sagle**

An outdoor trap shooting range is located on Gun Club Road just outside city limits. Shooting is usually every Sunday.

#### **Baldy Mountain Road**

A rifle and pistol range, owned and operated by the city of Sandpoint, is located on Baldy Mountain Road. The range offers shooting up to a distance of 200 yards. (Knowles)

## **Section 5.5 - Athletic Clubs**

Sandpoint West Athletic Club, located at 1905 W. Pine Street in Sandpoint, offers a 25-meter indoor pool, racquetball, wallyball, basketball, weight training, stair machine, stationary bikes, rowing machines, treadmill, aerobics, a sauna, and spa.

Natural Fitness, located at 1103 W. Superior in Sandpoint, has a complete line of cardiovascular, weight, and circuit machines. (Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce)

## **Section 5.6 - County Fairgrounds**

The County Fairgrounds is located in Sandpoint on approximately 40 acres. There are 11 buildings on the grounds that include the office, exhibit buildings and horse and livestock barns. There is an outdoor arena with one covered and two uncovered grandstands. The County Fairgrounds are used for many special events, including horse shows, the annual International Draft Horse Show, auctions, the annual County Fair, 4-H groups, and the annual Lost in the Fifties Dance and Car Cruise event.

## **Section 5.7 - Equestrian**

In addition to equestrian events that are held at the County Fairgrounds, there are many horseback riding trails in Bonner County. These include such trails as Peewee Trail and Pass Creek Pass/Shedroof Divide Trail, both of which are in the Priest Lake Ranger District. Sandpoint Ranger District offers trails such as Pend Oreille Divide Trail, Beetop-Roundtop Divide Trail, Kickbush Trail, Dixie Queen Trail, and Branch North Gold Creek Trail, just to name a few. The trails vary in length, difficulty, and condition. (See Table 3.1 for more horseback riding trails.)

Contact the North Idaho Back Country Horseman Association or the US Forest Service for more information on these and the numerous other trails that are in Bonner County (USFS).

## **Section 5.8 - Hunting**

Bonner County offers some of the finest big game hunting in the State of Idaho. Big game species include elk, whitetail deer, mule deer, black bear, mountain lion, and brown bear. Upland birds include ruffed grouse, forest grouse, quail, pheasant, and turkey. Waterfowl include Canada geese and Mallard ducks. (IDFG) Table 5.8 compares the hunting license sales in Bonner County to statewide licenses issued between 1992 and 1999.

Table 5.8 - Hunting Licenses Issued

<i>Resident and Non-resident Hunting Licenses/Permits</i>								
	<i>1992</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>
Bonner Co. <sup>1</sup>	2,495	1,865	1,953	1,802	2,548	2,505	2,455	2,781
Idaho	110,736	103,559	98,224	97,789	92,980	89,898	84,829	86,586

<sup>1</sup>Vendor sales in Bonner County.

Source: Idaho Fish & Game, Craig Wiedmeier (1/2000).

Mild winters in 1997 and a milder than average winter in 1999 have helped to boost deer numbers in the Panhandle. Allowing only bucks to be taken for a portion of the 1998 season helped deer populations to grow faster. The 1999 Panhandle deer season was a return to the traditional long, either-sex deer season.

Elk, in particular, have sustained a spectacular recovery from the early turn of the century. Hunting for the mining camps and year-round unregulated subsistence hunting had taken its toll on big-game numbers. In the early 1900s it was difficult to find elk anywhere. The elk season was completely closed in 1911 and did not reopen until 1945. And it was not until 1955 that elk hunting was permitted throughout North Idaho. (Wuerthner 18)

The 1999 elk season showed slight improvements over the 1998 season. Aerial surveys from late winter 1998 and summer 1999 indicate there is improvement in the cow-calf ratios over recent years. Since the calf production determines how many elk are available to hunters, this is one of the most important factors in setting hunting seasons. Recently, the Zone Tag system reduced the cow harvest by reducing the number of eligible hunters to take cow elk during the rifle season by more than 3,000 hunters.

### **Section 5.9 - Rock Climbing**

Bonner County offers two established rock-climbing areas. Schweitzer Rocks (a.k.a. Practice Rocks) is located approximately 5 miles north of Sandpoint. The area is privately owned and offers a mixture of climbing opportunities such as bouldering and crag. Grades are considered mixed to intermediate and the maximum height is 70 feet. The season runs from summer through autumn and camping is not allowed. (“Rock Climbing in Idaho”)

Granite Point on Lake Pend Oreille is a partially developed climbing area owned by the US Forest Service. The base of the climb is accessed by way of a 6-mile boat ride directly east across Lake Pend Oreille from Garfield Bay. Granite Point offers crag, face, and crack climbing types with mixed to intermediate grades to a height of 250 feet. The climbing season is summer only and camping is allowed. (“Rock Climbing in Idaho”)

### **Section 5.10 - Tennis**

Outdoor tennis courts can be found at the City Beach, Memorial Field, and Travers Park in the city of Sandpoint.

### **Section 5.11 - Ice Skating**

Good ice skating conditions are usually found at Round Lake State Park 12 miles south of Sandpoint. Park staff maintains both regular and speed-skating rinks.

### **Section 5.12 - Berry Picking and Mushrooming**

Huckleberry picking is a favorite activity in Bonner County, bringing visitors from all over. Priest Lake is nationally known to be one of the most popular areas for huckleberries. The picking season usually starts in July and lasts until early September. Other popular berry crops that can be found in the Bonner County area include thimbleberries, wild strawberries, blueberries, and currants.

Mushroom picking in Bonner County is also growing in popularity. Morels, shaggy manes, and corals are just some of the popular fungi in the area. The mushroom picking season can vary depending upon the weather and how much snow cover is in the area. The season can range from as early as April and extend into late summer. (USFS)

### **Section 5.13 - Snow Camping**

Round Lake State Park and Indian Creek State Park are open year-round. (Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation)

### **Section 5.14 - Dog Sled Racing**

The annual Pacific West Coast Sled Dog Races are held in February in Nordman. This event brings exhibitors and spectators from all around. Cross country races, freight pulling races, and ski-joring can all be seen at this annual event.

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