

**The Pack River
Watershed
Council
Presents...**

THE RIVER RANGER

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SPRING 2017

Featuring:

How Does Your
Property Flow?

Tree Seedlings

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Contact us at:
(208) 263-5310

How Does Your Property Flow?

Spring is finally upon us. Warmer weather, snow-melt, and heavy spring rains are softening and breaking up road surfaces. Several roads in the Sandpoint Ranger District have even been closed to prevent further damage. The newspapers have featured stories depicting mudslides and unstable hillslopes throughout the county. On March 17th, Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter added Bonner County to the state disaster declaration list.

Now is the perfect time to take a look around your property and check for proper drainage. You may have one or more culverts installed in your driveway draining ditches. Culverts may also be installed to drain low spots on your property or ephemeral or year-round creeks. These culverts over time can become blocked by sediment and rocks. Thick grass growing around culverts can further diminish flows.

Culverts should be routinely checked for blockages and sediment build-up. You should also check any ditches along your road to make sure they have a continuous down-sloping gradient and are not blocked by debris. You may notice that your culvert is under-sized and not efficiently allowing

water to pass. Culverts that are not properly sized and regularly maintained can eventually fail causing significant damage to roadways and delivering massive amounts of sediment downstream.

Erosion on road surfaces can also contribute to sediment loads which eventually move into our waterways. Rills can soon become gullies causing expensive damage to roads. If this is a problem,

you may need to install more frequent water-bars and rolling dips to direct water off the road surface.

You may have a creek that flows through your property. It is important that streams have a healthy riparian buffer to filter any sediment which may be travelling downhill.

Mature riparian trees and willows along stream-banks can also help to protect against bank failure and property loss.

And last but not least, take a look around at the vegetation on the rest your property. Upland vegetation can trap sediment, increase infiltration rates, and help stabilize hillslopes. If you are interested in planting more native trees, contact Linda O'Hare, BSWCD, at 208-263-5310x100 for next year's tree seedling order.



Undersized culvert

Tree Seedlings

Each year the Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District sponsors an annual tree seedling sale. This year the District sold over 96,345 seedlings!

We have increased the Western White Pine and Western Larch available for the 2018 planting season, and we hope to be able to fill all requests for

next season! Contact Linda O'Hare, BSWCD, at 208-263-5310x100 as soon as possible for next year's tree seedling order.

The order form for seedlings to be planted in 2018 is also available online at www.bonnernswcd.org/tree-sales.



“Because no matter who you are, no matter where you live, our parks, our monuments, our lands, our waters— these places are your birthright as Americans.”

~Former President, Barak Obama



WaterLife Discovery Center

Have you had a chance to visit the WaterLife Discovery Center yet? If not, you should definitely check it out.

The WaterLife Discovery Center is a habitat education and interpretive area on the shores of the Pend Oreille River near Sandpoint, Idaho. It is a self-guided educational center that combines a fish hatchery, nature trails, overlook bridges, wildlife watching areas, interpretive signs, and underwater viewing opportunities.

The property consists of 3.5 acres of developed interpretive exhibits and 6.5 acres of forested wetland with trails and interpretive signs. This area is home to white-tailed deer, moose, muskrat, mink, and river otters. Bald eagles, osprey and waterfowl grace the river while woodpeckers and songbirds prefer the wetland forest.

The WaterLife Discovery Center hosts several educational events. Every spring, the Lakes Commission and Idaho Fish and Game put together a field trip for local 2nd and 3rd grade elementary students. They enjoy hands on learning about Bull trout biology, macroinvertebrate life cycles, water quality, and wetland ecology.

The area was originally designed to be a fish hatchery. It was built in 1909 by Idaho Fish and Game with partial funding from Bonner County Sportsmen. However, the spring water used for the hatchery proved to be too cold for efficient

aquaculture. The hatchery was then used as a summer redistribution facility for rainbow trout.

In the mid 1990’s, Idaho Fish and Game met with concerned citizens and community groups to discuss options for the historic hatchery. The community wanted a place for people, young and old, to understand the role water plays in shaping our environment. The idea for an outdoor aquatic education center began to develop.



Underwater viewing area

Today, a partnership between Idaho Fish and Game, the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the local community has created the WaterLife Discovery Center. It is a unique grassroots project that has taken many years of planning and development. We invite you to take a closer look and learn what the area has to offer. For more information, see www.idfg.idaho.gov/education/waterlife-discovery-center.

Idaho Conservation Loan Program

The Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission invites landowners to apply for low-interest loans to install conservation measures on private property. Eligible projects address soil and water issues, like improving riparian areas or enhancing fish and wildlife habitat.

Eligible projects include irrigation equipment, no-till drills, animal feeding operation improve-

ments, livestock fencing, and stream bank protection. These low interest loans are for new conservation projects only.

For more information, contact loan officers, Terry Hoebelheinrich, terry.hoebelheinrich@swc.idaho.gov, or Cheryl Wilson, cheryl.wilson@swc.idaho.gov, or call 208-332-1790.

BOAT INSPECTION STATIONS KEEP EXPANDED HOURS

Idaho is playing hard ball again this year in the fight against quagga/zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species who think they can hitch a ride by boat across the country and hang out in our waters. The Idaho legislature has authorized stations to be opened from dawn till dusk again this season, targeting early morning and late night travelers. Idaho has been successfully operating mandatory boat inspection stations since 2009, but every year there are some minor kinks to work out. Expanded hours of operation is an important improvement and shows Idaho's commitment to this effort.

Stations in Southern Idaho began opening on March 10th and have inspected almost 2,800 boats since then. Eight mussel fouled boats have been discovered so far, all from Lake Havasu. Boats traveling from mussel infested waters such as Lake Mead, Lake Powell, and Lake Havasu are common visitors to Idaho's inspection stations. Invasive quagga/zebra mussels have been found in Arizona, Nevada, Utah, California, and most recently in Montana waterways.

These mussels have yet to be discovered in any Idaho waterbody and have not appeared in the Columbia River System to date. But they are no doubt a very real threat that needs our full attention. If mus-

sels were introduced to our waters, it would cost Idaho approx. \$100 million annually just to manage their impacts. Eradication would be very unlikely. These bivalves attach themselves to hard and soft surfaces and don't let go. Then they multiply at an exponential rate. Quagga/zebra mussels are gluttonous filter feeders who eliminate phytoplankton, ultimately destroying the entire food web. Our fishery here in North Idaho would suffer greatly and the quality of life we experience on our abundant lakes would change drastically.

Here in Bonner County we have three Inspection Stations opening May 19th: Samuels, Albeni Falls Visitor Center, and Clark Fork. These stations are managed by Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District and will be open from dawn to dusk (5:30-9:00).

For more information please visit our website at www.bonnierswcd.org or call (208) 263-5310.



Zebra Mussels encrusted on a native clam

Spring Calendar

Master Water Stewards Workshop:

May 13th 8:30 to 3:30 at the Waterlife Discovery Center, Sagle, ID. Contact Jim Ekins, 208-310-9634.

Native Plant Tour, Moyie area:

May 17th, 6pm UI Extension office, 6447 Kootenai St. Bonners Ferry, ID. 208-267-3235.

Pend Oreille Water Festival:

May 18 & 19th. An educational event for all 5th graders in Bonner County, Riley Creek Campground.

AIS Boat Inspection Opening Day:

May 19th until Labor Day September 4th.

Bonner County Farm Tour:

June 15th, 8:00 to 5:00. Cost is \$30, includes morning snack, lunch, and transportation. Contact UI Extension Office at 208-263-8511.

Thinning and Pruning Field Day:

June 17th, CdA. UI Extension. (208) 446-1680.

Bark Beetle Field Day:

June 30th, 8 to 5. UI Extension Kootenai County Office, 1808 N. 3rd St., CdA. uidaho.edu/BarkBeetle

Natural Resources Camp:

June 27th- July 2nd. The camp is for 12-14 year old students and is located near Ketchum, ID. Tuition is \$235 before May 20th. Contact Linda O'Hare at the BSWCD at 208-263-5310x100 for more info.

Scholarship Available!

Bonner SWCD will be providing a scholarship for a Bonner County student to attend the Natural Resources Camp (NRC) in Ketchum, Idaho on June 27 - July 2nd. This Camp is open to Idaho youth 12-14 years old. Bonner SWCD pays for the \$235 camp registration, and the students/parents provide transportation to and from Ketchum.

The NRC has been a summer program since 1960. Areas explored at camp include Wild-

life, Rangeland, Forests, Water, and Soil, as well as outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, archery, survival, and fireside sing-alongs.

Student applications need to be in by May 20th.

Contact Linda O'Hare 208-263-5310 ext 100 for more scholarship specifics. You can find more information on the Natural Resources Camp at www.bonnierswcd.org/natural-resources-camp.



Pack River Watershed Council

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c/o Bonner SWCD
1224 Washington Ave., Suite 101
Sandpoint, ID 83864



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208-263-5310

Bonner Soil & Water Conservation District & NRCS

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Sandpoint, ID 83864
208-263-5310

***“The mission of the Pack River Watershed Council
is to improve water quality and riparian habitat in
the Pack River watershed for people, fish, and
wildlife through education, collaboration, and
cooperative projects.”***

*Thanks to Avista Watershed Council Funding, we are able to print and
distribute this newsletter.*