

Lake Pend Oreille begins rising for spring

Contact: Casondra Brewster (206) 764-3750 or Cathy Hlebechuk (503) 808-3944

PORTRLAND, OR. - Lake Pend Oreille will begin to rise in response to increasing inflows. The water levels of Lake Pend Oreille are expected to reach its summer pool range of 2062.0 to 2062.5 feet by July 4. Lake Pend Oreille's elevation is being managed to provide flood risk management without aggravating potential natural conditions due to the late snowmelt this year. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates Albeni Falls Dam, which regulates the level of Lake Pend Oreille.

The Corps began passing the entire flow of the river through the Albeni Falls Dam spillway Friday morning. Boaters are advised to avoid the area downstream of Priest River on the Pend Oreille during high spring flows. The river flows at high velocity upstream of the dam and flows turbulently downstream while the Corps is operating at "free flow." These conditions could easily result in disaster for boaters approaching too close to the dam.

The Corps has been keeping the lake level low to provide room for the snowmelt. The lake has a natural restriction that caps maximum outflows. Space in the pool will allow the Corps to better manage lake levels and to avoid too rapid of a lake fill due to inherent uncertainties of inflow forecasts.

Current lake levels and yearly average lake elevations are available at any time on-line at:

<http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/nws/hh/basins/pend.html>.

The water supply forecast is generated by the National Weather Service Northwest River Forecast Center. For more information on water supply forecasting, please see

<http://www.wcc.nrcc.usda.gov/wsf/wsf.html>. For actual forecasts, please see

http://www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/water_supply/ws_fcst.cgi.