

Diamond Lake
Improvement
Association



Mission
Statement

To protect & Preserve
the Water, and Enhance
the Quality of Life on
Diamond Lake through
Planning, Visionary
Leadership, &
Dedicated Volunteers
for the Benefit of
Current & Future
Generations

September 16, 2011

Governor Chris Gregoire
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

In order to mitigate the risk of invasive species in Diamond Lake, in August, 2010, the Diamond Lake Improvement Association (DLIA) started its quest for a hot water boat wash/inspection station at the unimproved parking area above the boat launch at Diamond Lake by contacting the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Since WDFW are the stewards of the property for the State of Washington, it was logical to assume that they would be anxious to take proactive steps to help us preserve the health, wildlife and quality of Diamond Lake. In February, 2011, we received permission from the Regional Director, Steve Pozzanghera (see attachment A) "as long as the operation does not impede the ability of recreational users to access the public boat launch, paved parking area and public toilets." Other requirements were mentioned also.

Meanwhile DLIA did further investigation and planning for the project by:

- having demonstrations of pressure washers;
- contacting Diamond Lake Water & Sewer to install water for the washer and sewer for an on site lake host;
- contacting Pend Orielle Public Utilities for electricity to be brought to the area;
- meeting with gate companies to develop a way to enforce boat inspection with remote gate control;
- working with an excavator for the layout of the potential parking places, boat wash, traffic flow and natural vegetative swale;
- being advised by Pend Oreille County engineer regarding boat wash run-off and natural vegetative swale development;
- obtaining input from master gardeners regarding a natural vegetative swale;
- developing strategies and checking rules for signage with contractors;
- identifying a lake assist booklet coordinator;
- holding and attending continuing educational seminars on invasive species including weeds and mussels;

- contacting Idaho inspection station at Oldtown, ID and other lakes in the area that are already operating boat wash stations located in Idaho. (Our lake is located close to the border of Idaho, we could find none operating in the State of Washington);
- having several conversations with Kyle Winton “Eyes in the Woods” regarding surveillance and approved signage;
- obtaining several substrates from the Army Corps of Engineers in Idaho and strategically placing them around the lake to monitor for mussels;
- contacting Steve Shurlock and Steve Young, our Access Manager, regarding “Adopt an Access”;
- meeting with Pend Oreille County Conservation District and Pend Oreille County officials to acquire permission to work in the county right of way;
- obtaining an estimate from a local engineering company for a storm water management plan and site topographical survey (County requirement).

Most of the above contacts and meetings were made numerous times to work out particulars, gather estimates, and receive instructions and suggestions.

In October, 2010, with the help of Pend Oreille County Noxious Weed Director, Sharon Sorby, we requested a grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE). The grant was turned down because DOE did not recognize quagga/zebra mussels as an invasive threat therefore they determined that we did not need a “hot” water wash station for milfoil control, they did not understand the wash-off into the natural vegetative swale, and WDFW did not have written permission in to DOE on time.

DLIA’s major concern is the continual reintroduction of milfoil into our lake despite repeated locating, pulling and chemical treatment, and the threat of quagga/zebra mussels. Such invasions in Diamond Lake would destroy the recreational and wildlife values of this lake and all lakes and river systems below Diamond Lake. We are depending on our State to assist our efforts in combating invasive species of every kind in Diamond Lake, which serves as a point source of contamination to other Washington State waterways, by supporting our boat wash/inspection station.

In July, 2011, to our surprise, we received a letter from Brian Trickel of WDFW rescinding permission previously granted stating that WDFW will be re-developing the boat launch site and therefore “expect more users and the need for overflow parking on the upper lot...” (see attachment B) Due to “increase public use on the area” the WDFW no longer grants permission for the boat wash in the upper parking lot. Now, we have stopped all progress toward a boat wash/inspection station at our lake. We feel that our state has let us down in our fight against these invasive species. And the irony is:

- more boats because of a bigger and better boat launch;
- more milfoil, flowering rush, probability of quagga/zebra mussels;
- increased potential for the rapid destruction of the lake

...and a boat wash/inspection station can prevent all of this!

For those of you who have not had the opportunity to visit the site, there is a Boat Launch Road approximately 400' long with a considerable grade down to the lake at the end of which is the launch. At the lower improved launch site there is an area larger than the unimproved upper parking lot where trailers have room to turn and several spots for parking and restrooms are located. The unimproved upper parking lot, across the street from the road at the top of the hill, measures approximately 148' x 130'; this is where the proposed boat wash/inspection station will be located. With the boat wash plan we have developed there will still be ample parking for trailers in the upper parking lot in addition to the launch lot. (see attachment C & D)

The membership of our organization and our Board of Directors are in full agreement that the boat wash/inspection station is essential to protecting and preserving the water of Diamond Lake. We are extremely disappointed in WDFW for their withdrawal of permission to install a boat wash/inspection station at the upper unimproved parking lot and respectfully request reconsideration of this withdrawal. We are sending this letter to our elected representatives, other officials and media to make you all aware of the reversal of WDFW's original decision and request that you use any influence that you have to assist us in obtaining permission yet again to develop the area.

It is DLIA's mission statement to protect & preserve the water, and enhance the quality of life on Diamond Lake through planning, visionary leadership, and dedicated volunteers for the benefit of current and future generations. We who have been working on this endeavor are volunteers who have many other responsibilities in life. We have invested hundreds of hours into this venture to now be turned down completely. We investigated other property to locate a boat wash with no viable alternatives. We believe it is our obligation to appeal to all we can to gain support for the location of this boat wash/inspection station on the unimproved parking lot, land owned by our State.

Since our denial we have been keeping count of vehicles parking in the upper lot. This count has been taken since the end of July through August and beginning of September. We used the highest number found during the day even though sometimes the store located next door overflows into the lot, and on one Sunday in particular there was a party across the street and partygoers used the lot for overflow also. There is an average of 3 vehicles on Saturdays, ranging from 1 – 5; and an average of 6 on Sunday, ranging from 1 to 11(the party day) or other Sundays the most counted was 7.

Diamond Lake is a fairly small lake used for recreational swimming, fishing and water sports. It is part of the headwaters of several lakes in the area and eventually flows into the Little Spokane River. There are several hundred residents, part time and full time, who live on and around the lake and hundreds of other residents on the lakes and river systems below Diamond Lake that would be affected. Our tax base is the highest in the County and generates considerable revenue for our County and the State. If the invasive mussel enters our lake, it will render our lake useless for recreation, boating, fishing, and wildlife. It will reduce our property values affecting each resident, the County and the State.

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Our residents paid several thousands of dollars this year alone to fight milfoil and other noxious weeds like the yellow flag iris in our lake. None of the money has come from the County or State. This season just next door in Idaho there have been 24 boats found with the invasive mussel ready to be introduced into our waters. As you can see we sincerely care for our precious water and are willing to do all we can to maintain it.

We cannot stress strongly enough how determined we are to continue protecting our pristine waters by obtaining permission and funding for this crucial endeavor. Please look into this situation and help support DLIA in its effort to install a hot water boat wash/inspection station at the undeveloped upper parking lot at the boat launch at Diamond Lake. We need your support to reverse this short-sighted WDFW decision. Please contact us at your convenience with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Geri Guinn, President
On Behalf of the Board of Directors and Members
Diamond Lake Improvement Association