

SECTION 10

BOATING AND RECREATION

This fact sheet addresses the impacts boating and recreation can have on water quality and how *you* can make a difference with **Best Management Practices (BMPs)**. BMPs are actions you can take to protect our natural resources. **The ultimate goal of this information is to prevent negative impacts to water quality.**

1. Read the facts and information in the following pages.
2. Fill out the risk assessment worksheet (p. 10-6) in order to analyze your individual situation.
3. Fill out the action worksheet (p. 10-7), then **take action!**

Play Smart

You likely live in this beautiful area for the abundant recreational activities it provides: boating, water-skiing, camping, swimming, and fishing. Continue to enjoy these activities, but at the same time, put in place some simple BMPs to keep the water clean for generations to come. The waterways in the Coeur d'Alene Basin are becoming increasingly populated and preventing water pollution and preserving water quality are especially important (Figure 10-1).

A number of potential pollutants are associated with boating and recreation. These include: human waste from long term boating trips and camping, petroleum spills during boat maintenance and operation, **erosion** resulting from large wakes and speeding boats, and **aquatic invasive species (AIS)** introduction and spread.

The BMPs described in this section may seem inconvenient at a time when you just want to relax on the lake or you feel a time constraint, but please keep in mind that a real inconvenience would be polluted water. Thank you for doing your part.



Figure 10-1. *Best management practices will keep Idaho's water bodies clean for generations to come.*

Personal Watercraft

Personal Watercrafts (PWCs) are small jet propelled boats designed to carry one to three passengers on top rather than inside. These watercraft are considered motorboats and are subject to the same regulations as motorboats. PWCs *must* follow no-wake guidelines (see "No-Wake Zones Prevent Erosion," p. 10-4).

When operating your PWC, consider the effect you may have on the environment (Figure 10-2).

- Operate in water at least 30 inches deep, to prevent disturbing bottom sediments and aquatic vegetation.
- Avoid causing erosion. Operate at a slow speed, and do not create a wake when operating near shore.
- Do not dock or beach your PWC in reeds and grasses. This could damage fragile environments and encourage the spread of AIS such as Eurasian watermilfoil.
- Take extra care when fueling in or near the water. Oil and gasoline spills are detrimental to the aquatic environment. Fuel on land if possible, with a catchment device underneath in case of spillage.
- Never use your PWC to disturb, chase, or harass wildlife.



Figure 10-2. *Operate your personal watercraft in a manner that considers the environment.*

Boat Sewage and Waste

Discharge or dumping of sewage or other wastes from any vessel into State waters is prohibited.

(Idaho Code 67-7505)

Untreated sewage (black water) is a pollutant in surface water because it can contain disease causing bacteria and viruses leading to illness such as dysentery and infectious hepatitis. Discharged sewage water and gray water also cause aesthetic degradation and can contain high levels of *nitrogen* and *phosphorus* that can stimulate *algae* growth in lakes.

Although many boats have onboard sanitation devices, it is important to become familiar with the many vault toilets, restrooms, and pump-out stations around the lake, and whenever possible, use these land facilities rather than onboard ones. The *Our Gem* map showing onshore facilities can be obtained from the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe (see Resource Directory, p. 10-5).

Reducing Sewage and Gray Water Impacts

- Use onshore restrooms when docked and before casting off. Plan ahead for restroom stops.
- Do not discharge untreated sewage in any lake, river, or stream.
- Always use a sewage pump-out facility to empty holding tanks (Figure 10-3).
- If pump-outs are not available at your marina, ask them to have one installed.
- For sanitation systems that require treated chemicals, look for chlorine- and formaldehyde-free products.
- Use onshore facilities for dirty dishes and showers on shorter day trips.
- Use phosphate-free and nontoxic soaps.
- Use alternative cleaners. Baking soda, lemon juice, and vinegar all perform as well as commercial cleaning products.



Figure 10-3. Marine pump-out station.

Marine Sanitation Devices

Federal law requires all installed toilets to be U.S. Coast Guard Certified. Marine sanitation devices (MSD) are rated I, II, or III.

- **Types I and II MSDs** treat waste with special chemicals to kill bacteria. If you have a Type I or II MSD, it must have a holding tank for untreated waste and a “Y” valve must be secured in a closed position while operating in all state and tribal waters.
- **Type III MSDs** provide no treatment and are either holding tanks or portable toilets. Collected waste must be taken ashore and disposed in a pump-out station or onshore toilet.

Large Boats and Houseboats

Many large boats and houseboats have installed toilets. Installed toilets must have a holding tank for sewage (black water).

Idaho Panhandle Health District Code (IDAPA 41.1.200) prohibits any boat containing wastewater facilities to be on district rivers or lakes unless the facilities are sealed to prevent untreated or treated sewage discharge or spilling.

Pump-Out Stations

Discharge of human waste into all state and tribal waters is prohibited. Surface waters, such as lakes and streams, are considered state waters. Human waste must be pumped into a boat pump-out station (Figure 10-3). Many pump-out stations are located throughout the Coeur d'Alene Basin. Become familiar with these locations and use them. The *Our Gem* map showing pump-out locations can be obtained from IDEQ and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe (see Resource Directory, p. 10-5).

Pump-out locations in the Coeur d'Alene Basin

Coeur d'Alene Lake

- Third Street Docks
- Eleventh Street Marina
- Silver Beach Marina
- Arrow Point
- Neachen Bay
- Carlin Bay Resort
- Rockford Bay
- Gateway Marina, Harrison
- Conkling Bay Resort
- Heyburn State Park—Chatcolet and Hawley's Landing

St. Joe River

- Aqua Park

Spokane River

- Templin's Marina
- Yacht Club

Boat Maintenance and Operations

Numerous risks to water quality are associated with boating. Boats require fluids for maintenance that can have detrimental impacts to aquatic life. When caring for boats, a significant amount of solvents, paint, oil, and other pollutants can potentially seep into groundwater or be washed directly into surface water. Many boat cleaners contain chlorine, ammonia, and phosphates, which can harm plankton and fish. Oil spills from motors and refueling contain petroleum products harmful to fish, wildlife, and human health.

Reduce pollution from boats and marinas

- Select nontoxic cleaning products.
- When replacing fluids such as oil, fuel, and coolant, always use safety measures, such as a drop cloth or bucket, to prevent chemicals from entering water.
- Carefully fuel boat engines using a funnel and fuel-absorbing materials. If your local marina doesn't provide these products, encourage them to do so.
- Keep boat motors well-tuned to prevent fuel and lubricant leaks and improve fuel efficiency. Because the bilge is continually pumping potentially contaminated water into the lake, it is critical that your engine is clean and well maintained.
- Stow it, don't throw it! Keep your trash onboard and out of the water. This includes cigarette butts, fishing line, and any food or drink packaging.
- No power loading! Using the motor to load your boat onto and off of the trailer stirs up sediment at the end of ramp creating a large hole where trailers can become stuck (Figure 10-4).

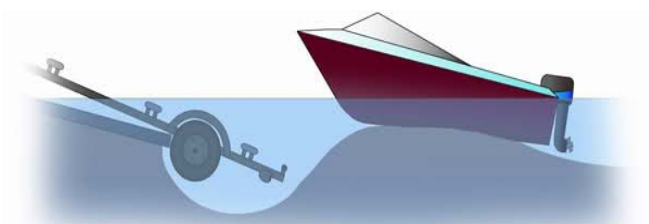


Figure 10-4. Power loading stirs-up sediment and creates large hole at the end of boat ramp.

Aquatic Invasive Species

AIS are also referred to as *nuisance* and *exotic* species, and they are one of the greatest threats to our water resources. AIS often travel from one waterbody to another by attaching to watercraft, recreational equipment, and animals. Call the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) if you see anything suspicious (see Resource Directory, p. 10-5). See Section 9, Aquatic Invasive Species, for detailed information on this topic.

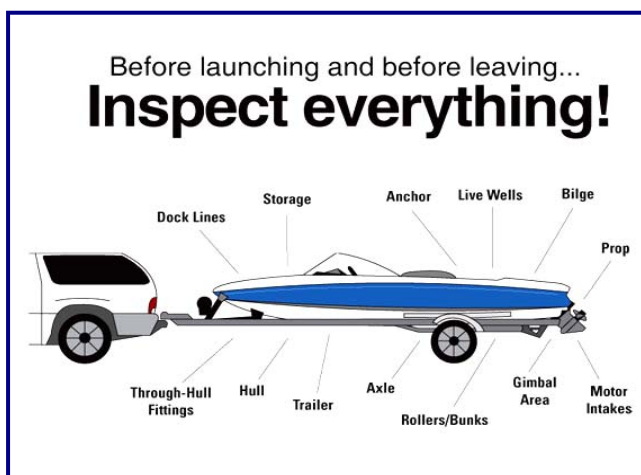


Figure 10-5. Use best management practices before launching and before leaving water bodies to ensure you are not transporting aquatic invasive species.

Clean

Remove all plants, animals, and mud. Discard away from waterbodies, storm drains, and ditches. Thoroughly wash everything, including crevices and other hidden areas.

Drain

Thoroughly drain your boat before leaving the area, including wells, ballast, and engine cooling water.

Dry

Allow time for your boat to completely dry before launching in other waters. If you have been in a known zebra and quagga mussel-infested waterbody, dry your boat for at least 30 days (Figure 10-5).

No-Wake Zones Prevent Erosion



The impact of waves continually hitting the shoreline cause it to erode and wash away (Figure 10-6). When shorelines erode, the damage decreases property value, degrades fish habitat, decreases riparian habitat, and causes excess nutrient loading, which encourages

the growth and spread of algae blooms and AIS.

No-Wake Zones (5 mph) in State Waters

- 200 feet from any shoreline, dock, pier, structure, or any person in the water within Coeur d'Alene Lake; 100 feet from the shoreline in the Coeur d'Alene River.
- Within 100 feet of any other vessel (15 mph).
- The area surrounding all bridge structures.
- Within 100 feet of a dive flag.
- Wherever a "No-Wake Zone" sign is posted.

No-Wake Zones in Coeur d'Alene Tribal Waters

The southern third of the lake is under the jurisdiction of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, except for Heyburn State Park. Be aware that different rules and regulations may apply within those boundaries.

- 100 feet of any shoreline, dock, pier, other structure or any person in the water.
- Observe a reasonable and prudent speed but not in excess of 15 mph within 100 feet of any other vessel.
- 20 mph at night where the speed is not otherwise restricted.



Figure 10-6 Bank erosion caused by boat wakes and flooding. Bank lacks a healthy vegetative buffer.

Recreation Along the Shoreline



When using the waterfront for recreation and leisure, make sure your activities do not cause lasting damage to the shoreline or water. Cleaning up, washing, burning, and waste disposal on the shoreline needs to be done responsibly to keep these resources beautiful for future use.

Follow these BMPs when camping near and swimming in waterbodies:

Camping

- Use the restroom/latrine whenever one is provided. If none is available, bury human waste a minimum of 150 feet from the water's edge.
- Never dispose of fish guts or other waste in the water. It attracts pests and adds nutrients to the water.
- Never wash in the lake or river; wash dishes, hair, clothes, and yourself at least 150 feet from the water's edge. Use only biodegradable soap.
- Handi-wipes work well for cleaning, but pack them out!
- Properly dispose of all garbage, including litter you find. Pack it in, and pack it out.
- In areas with established fire rings, keep your fire within designated areas. Ashes washed into water introduce unwanted phosphorus.
- Camp at least 150 feet from the lake shore, stream banks, and riparian areas.

Swimming

- Do not use soap or shampoo in the water.
- Do not use the water as a bathroom.

Off-Road Vehicles

The use of off-road vehicles, such as all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), mountain bikes, and snowmobiles can have a severe effect on lakes and rivers by increasing erosion, *turbidity*, and *sedimentation*. Always stay on well-maintained trails, and stay away from sensitive areas during spring melt when the ground is thawing and most susceptible to rutting and erosion.

Resource Directory

Boating and Recreation

Kootenai County

Sheriff

5500 N. Government Way
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815
(208) 446-1300

Parks and Waterways

10905 North Ramsey Road
Hayden, ID 83835
(208) 446-1275

Shoshone County Sheriff

717 Bank Street
Wallace, ID 83873
(208) 556-1114

Benewah County Sheriff

701 W. College Avenue, Suite 301
St. Maries, ID 83861
(208) 245-2555

Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Tribal Police

125 10th Street
PO Box 408
Plummer ID, 83851
(208) 686-2050

Lake Management Department

Coeur d'Alene Office
424 Sherman Avenue, Suite 306
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 667-5772

Plummer Office

850 A Street
PO Box 408
Plummer, ID 83851
(208) 686-5302

Fish and Wildlife Programs

401 Anne Antelope
PO Box 408
Plummer, ID 83851
(208) 686-5302

State of Idaho

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ)

Coeur d'Alene Regional Office
2110 Ironwood Parkway
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 769-1422

Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

2270 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, ID 83712
(208) 332-8500

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR)

2885 Kathleen Avenue, Suite 1
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815
(208) 769-1511

Other Resources

Boat U.S. Foundation
www.boatus.com/foundation/

100thMeridian Initiative
<http://100thMeridian.org>

Protect Your Waters and Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!
<http://Protectyourwaters.net>

Earth911
<http://Earth911.com>

Suggested Reading

Boat Green: 50 Steps Boaters Can Take to Save Our Waters. Ford, C.W. 2008. New Society Publishers. New Gabriola, BC.

Risk Assessment Worksheet

Boating and Recreation

Assessment Worksheet 1 - Boating and Recreation

The assessment worksheet below will help you identify potential environmental risks. For each question indicate your risk level in the right-hand column. Some choices may not correspond exactly to your situation. Choose the response that best fits. When finished, turn to the Boating and Recreation Action Worksheet on page 10-7, and record your medium and high-risk practices. The goal is to lower your risks. Use the BMP recommendations provided in this section to help you determine the best solution.

	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK	YOUR RISK
Boat maintenance	My boat is maintained by a professional mechanic before boating season begins, ensuring the motor doesn't leak oil and fluids.	I have my boat maintained every couple of seasons.	I don't maintain my boat until there is a noticeable problem.	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High
Boat fueling	I carry fuel-absorbing products with me at all times, and I have encouraged my local marina to carry similar products.	When fueling, I am careful not to overflow or spill.	I have never been concerned with gasoline spilling in the water. I pump directly over water.	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High
Aquatic weed prevention	I always clean and inspect my boat and equipment before and after launching to prevent spreading aquatic invasive species to other waterbodies.	I check my boat and equipment only when time allows.	I never clean and inspect my boat and equipment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High
No-wake zones	I know the no-wake zones are 200' from the lakeshore and 100' from the banks of the Coeur d'Alene River. I always follow this rule.	Mostly I abide by no-wake rules, but sometimes I let it slip.	I have never known where the no-wake zones are.	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High
Disposal of boat waste	I use onshore facilities to pump out my boat or dispose of my portable toilet waste. or I use onshore restrooms.	I dispose of gray water (from bathing and washing dishes) into the lake or river.	I dispose of sewage into the lake or river, or my Y-valve is unsealed and leaky.	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High

Action Worksheet Boating and Recreation

Write all high and medium risks below.	What can you do to reduce the risks?	Set a target date for action.
<i>Sample:</i> Bathing in the lake with soap.	Don't take baths in the lake, but if necessary, use biodegradable soap. Look at your local stores for biodegradable soap.	When it is warm enough to go swimming.