

History of Luby Bay Cabin

Building the Luby Bay Cabin

Young men with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built the Luby Bay Cabin in front of you in 1935. Forest Service architect Clyde Fiscuss designed the rustic cabin to make use of local building materials and to blend in with the natural landscape. Its history reflects the many ways Luby Bay and Priest Lake changed over the 20th century from an isolated lake to a popular recreation area.

A Home for Forest Service Families



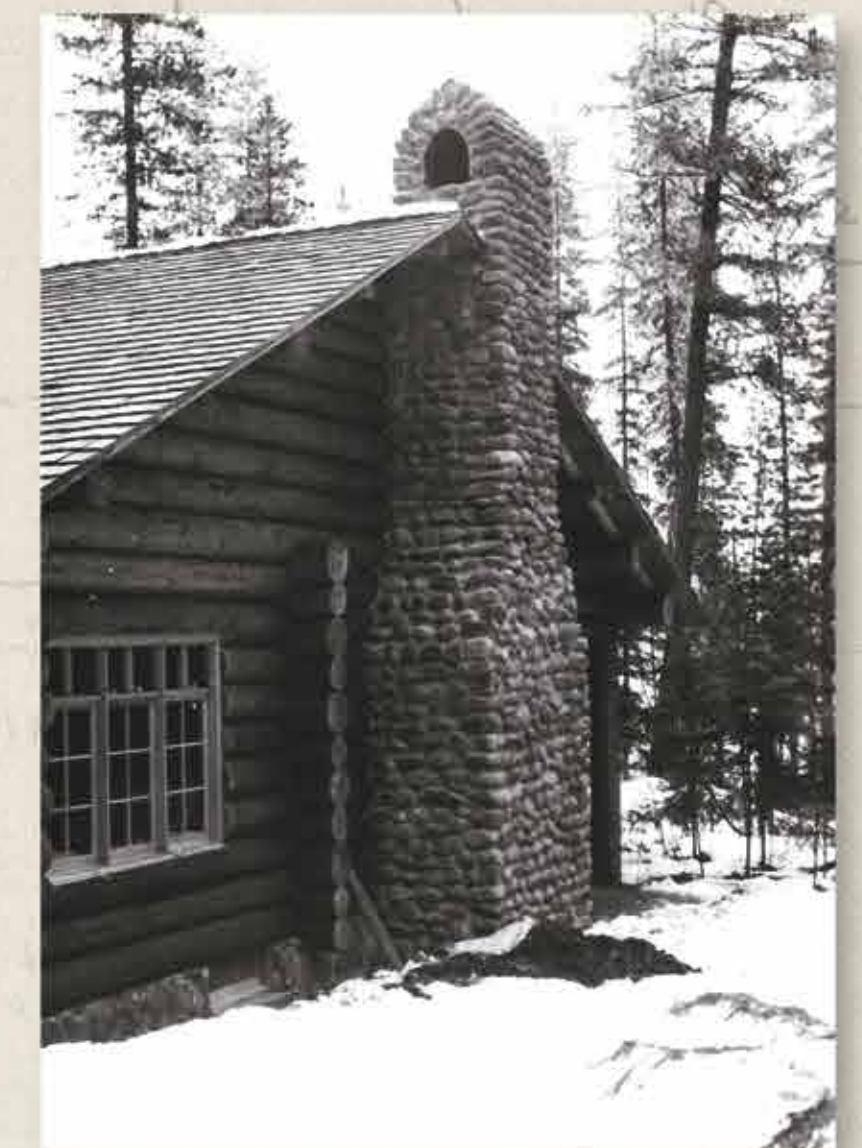
Houseboat as the Luby Bay Guard Station

Vacationers flocked to Priest Lake in the 1920s, so the Forest Service stationed a ranger along the shore to assist them. Jim Ward took on the job, and his family moved into the Luby Bay Guard Station, a decrepit houseboat pulled up on the beach. They were delighted when the CCC log cabin with running water replaced the houseboat. Forest Service families continued to live in the sturdy cabin year-round until 1989.



Cecil and James Wylie (left and center) helped build the Luby Bay Cabin

About 30 young men from the Kalispell Bay Camp came for two summers to work on the cabin under the direction of local experts like Fulton Messmore. He instructed the CCC recruits how to cut and notch the western larch logs, then plane and varnish them. He taught them to split cedar shakes for the roof and use rocks they gathered to create a remarkable fireplace. The Forest Service deemed the Luby Bay Cabin as "one of the best pieces of work to be found anywhere."



1920s

1935

1900s

Guarding Priest Lake



Fred Williamson, with Claire Luby, manned the Luby Bay Guard Station

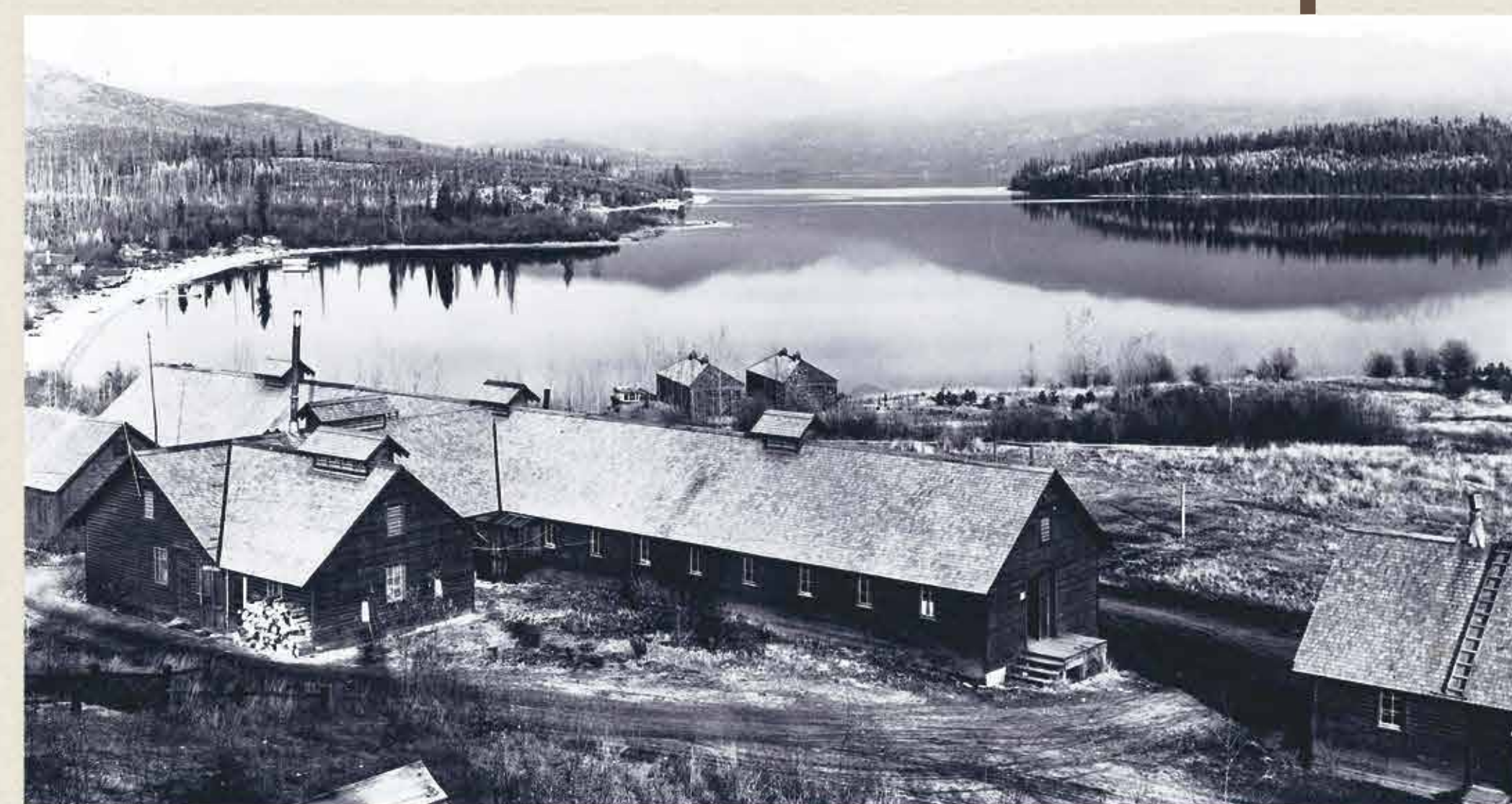
The Forest Service began using this site in the 1900s for a summer guard station. Rangers developed the Beach Trail you are standing on so guards like Fred Williamson could patrol the shoreline and climb up the ridges to look for signs of fire that threatened the new national forest.

1910s

Cottages in the National Forest

The Recreation Residence program began at Priest Lake in 1907 when vacationers could get annual permits to build rustic cabins. This log cabin sits within the Luby Bay Summer Cottage Tract, a grouping of privately owned cabins on land administered by the Forest Service. While annual fees and regulations changed over the years, permit holders' cabins are still required to blend in with the forest so the shoreline vistas remain natural.

1933



After Kalispell Bay Camp closed in 1938, it served as Blister Rust operations headquarters.

Civilian Conservation Corps transforms Priest Lake

Franklin Roosevelt created the CCC as part of his New Deal to fight back against the Great Depression. Most of the 200 young men stationed at nearby Kalispell Bay Camp worked on building roads, clearing snags, planting trees, and fighting fires. Some focused on recreational facilities by improving the Luby Bay campground; developing Reeder, Outlet, and Osprey campgrounds; expanding the Beach Trail, and constructing this cabin.

1990

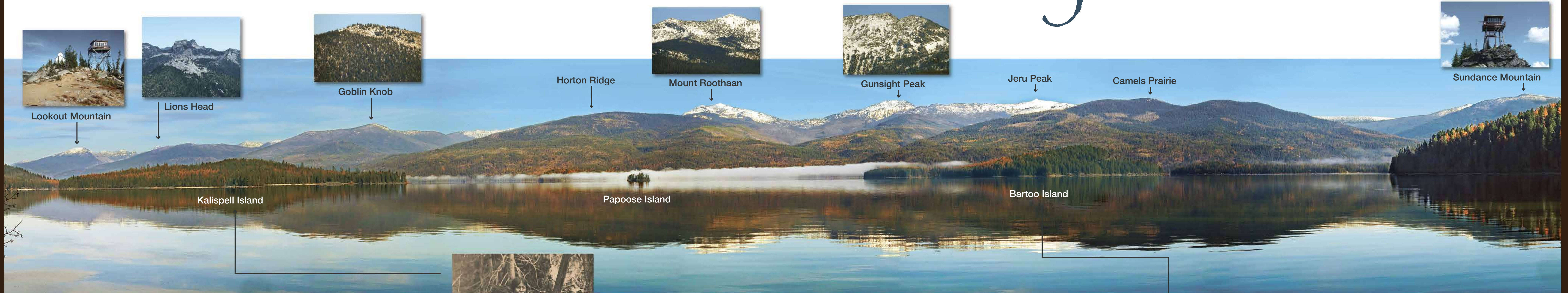
Becoming the Priest Lake Museum

We invite you to walk up the historic slate stepping stones to explore the Luby Bay Cabin. Inside you will find the original living room and kitchen along with changing exhibits highlighting area history and nature. The Priest Lake Museum, in a unique partnership with the Forest Service since 1989, provides exhibits, programs, and publications on the region's heritage at the cabin. The museum is open from Memorial Day through September.

For more information visit the Priest Lake Museum and check out the book *Wild Place: The History of Priest Lake, Idaho*.



A View of History

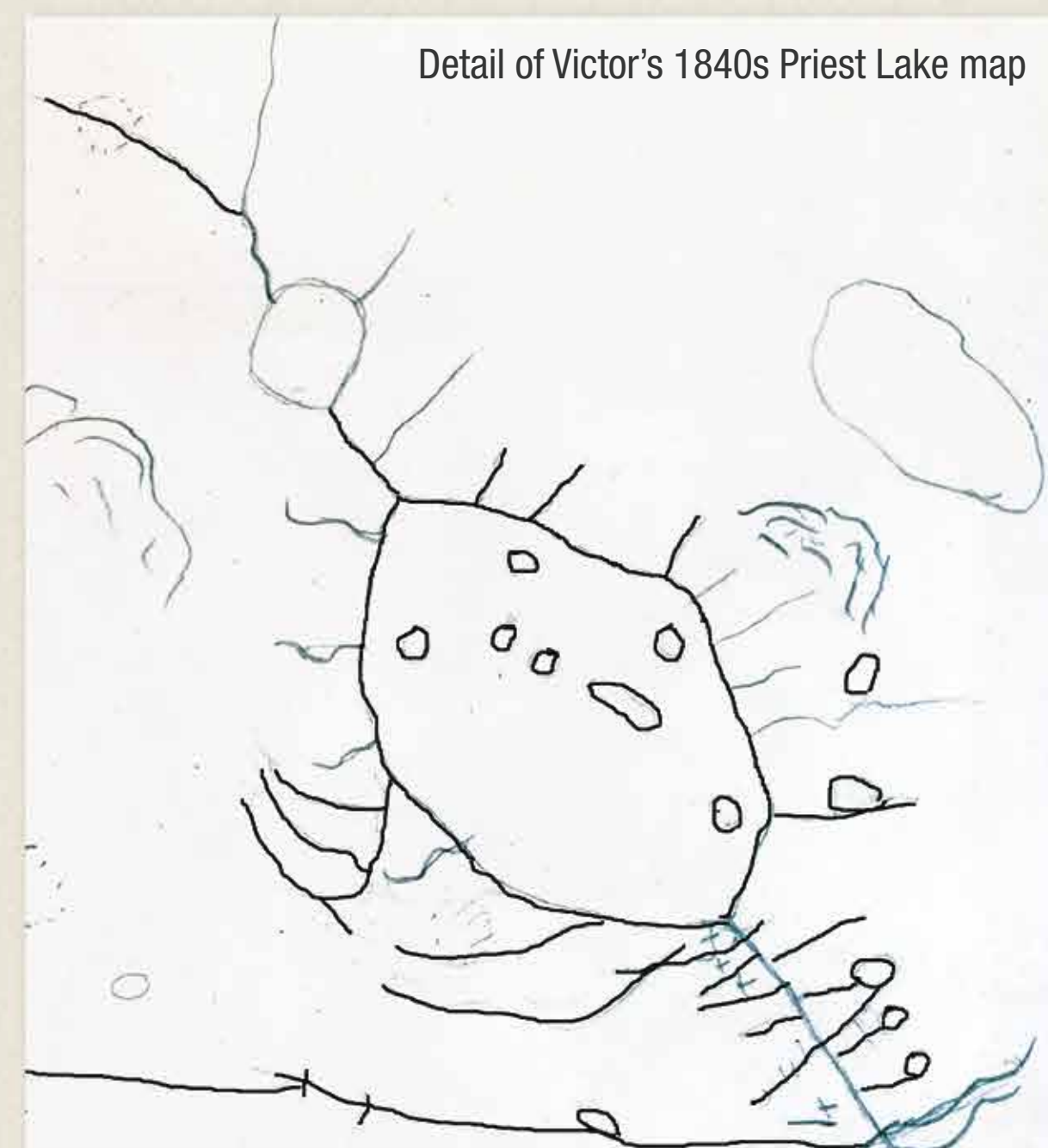


The rugged Selkirk Mountains frame the east side of Priest Lake and reveal the origins of the area. The lake sits in a large basin dug out by glaciers that scoured the valley floor about 10,000 to 15,000 years ago. The more resistant granite rock created the lake's islands like Bartoo and Kalispell. The glaciers rounded and smoothed lower hilltops like Horton Ridge and Camels Prairie. Alpine glaciers, formed on the higher mountains, carved out jagged peaks such as Roothaan and Lions Head. Elevations range from 2438' at lake level to over 7000' at the highest mountain peaks.

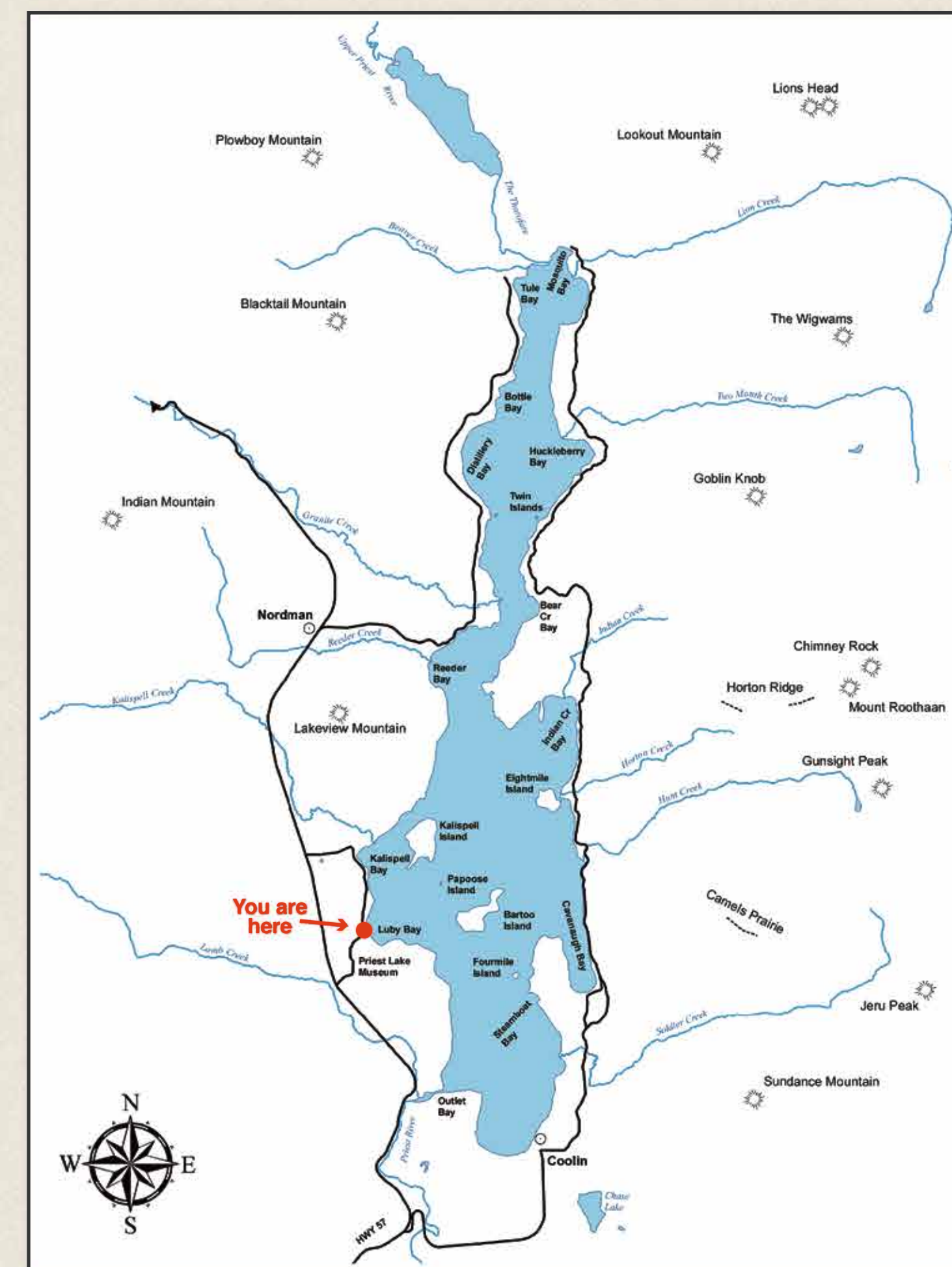


Kalispel camped at Soldier Creek, 1887

Kalispell Island takes its name from the tribe that traveled seasonally over the mountains from the Pend Oreille River. Their trail came down to Priest Lake at Kalispell Bay.



Chief Victor drew the first accurate map of Priest Lake for Jesuit missionary Father Peter John De Smet in about 1844. Victor emphasized the streams that flowed into the lake because of their importance to the tribes who used them seasonally for fishing, hunting, and gathering berries. De Smet named the lake Roothaan after his boss, the Jesuit Superior in Rome. The name never stuck for the lake but a Selkirk peak memorializes Roothaan.



Priest Lake, with the Thorofare connecting the Upper Priest Lake, stretches for 25 miles. The U.S. Forest Service administers public lands on the west side while the Idaho Department of Lands manages most of the east side.

Bartoo Island — Spokane machinist George Bartoo tried to homestead on the lake's largest island about 1895. Unfortunately, congressional changes allowed the Northern Pacific Railway to claim Priest Lake land in 1898, including Bartoo's island. He abandoned the lake, but his name remained tied to the island.

Sundance Mountain rises above Coolin at the south end of Priest Lake. Tradition holds that the Kalispel named the mountain, whose face reflects the setting sun. A lightning strike on August 23, 1967, started one of the most devastating fires in Idaho history. Two firefighters died, and a huge swath of forest, 6 miles wide and 25 miles long, burned.



Sundance fire threatening Coolin

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