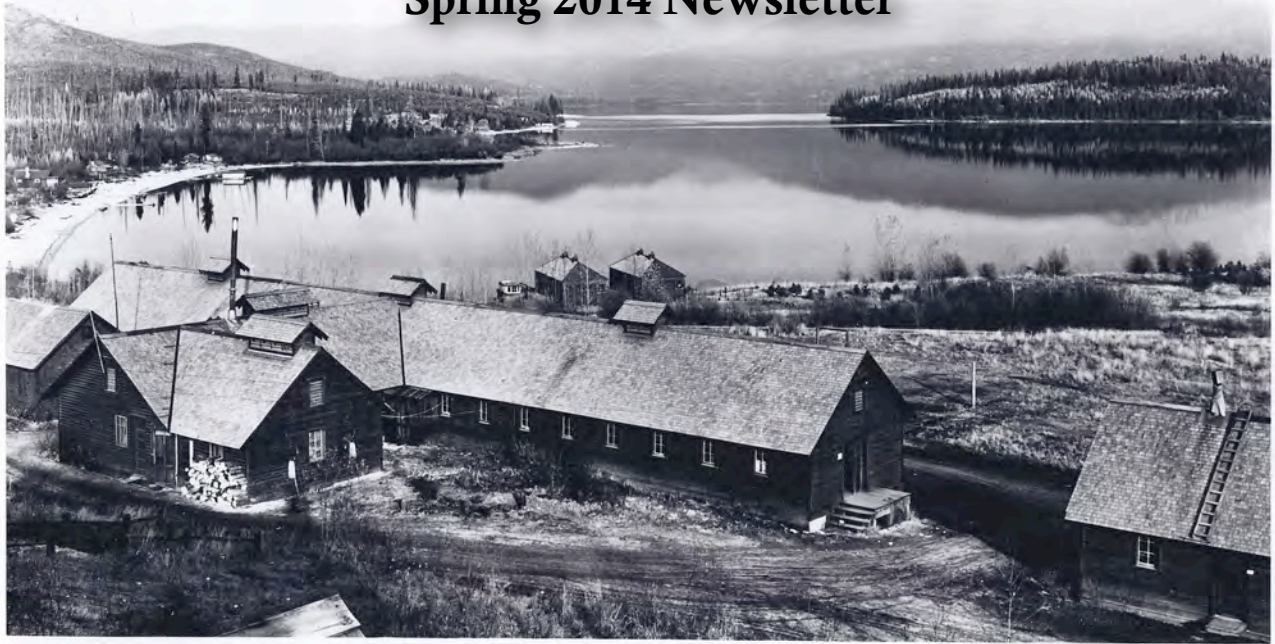


Priest Lake Museum

Spring 2014 Newsletter



CCC Leaves Legacy

How many 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps projects around Priest Lake can you identify? The impact of their work in the Priest Lake area is still evident after eighty years – roads, lookouts, healthy forests, campgrounds, clear streams. The list goes on, yet few realize that much of the infrastructure that serves our lake was transformed by Franklin Roosevelt’s “New Deal” program founded during the depression era.

Beginning in 1933 the federally funded CCCs provided a massive labor force of unemployed and unmarried youths who needed jobs and meaningful educational opportunities. Hundreds of men from New York, New Jersey and the Midwest got off the train at Priest River and were trucked to Priest Lake to begin a six-month stint clearing charred forests, fighting fires, building trails and roads and planting trees.

This camp on Kalispell Bay was one of 13 camps in the Priest Lake-Priest River area. The 200 recruits housed here transferred out after a six-month stint under the shared supervision of the military and forest service. One of their first projects in the area was to clear the fire-ravaged trees (seen in background) from the 1926 forest fire and replant with pine seedlings.

Camps Sustain Conservation Goals

Camps were established at Kalispell Bay, Cavanaugh Bay, Kalispell Creek, Four Corners and the Priest River Experimental Station to focus on conservation efforts. Later the Forest Service expanded their mission to include improving recreational facilities. Smaller temporary or “spike” camps sprang up at Kalispell Creek, Indian Creek, Coolin, Gleason and Reynolds Creek for short-term jobs like trail building, fire fighting or road construction. These tent camps could accommodate up to 200 men with mess hall, latrines and other supporting structures.

Continued on

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Dear Museum Friends,

As I complete my fourth year as president of the museum association, I am pleased to report the museum is in excellent shape – thanks to the support and hard work of the capable and dedicated board of directors and volunteers. The association’s financial position has never been stronger. The museum building received a new coat of stain last fall and looks great - as do the exhibits and the nature garden.

We are excited to report the manuscript for the new Priest Lake history book, written by Kris Runberg Smith, has been accepted for publication by the Washington State University

Press. Publication is scheduled for June 1, 2015. In her research Kris discovered a treasure chest of new historical information and unpublished photographs, which should make the book very popular with everyone interested in Priest Lake’s history.

In January, long serving board member Linda Anderson passed away. Linda’s smile and willingness to help wherever she was needed will be missed. Barb Conboy has been appointed to complete Linda’s term on the board.

On behalf of the board of directors we are grateful to our members, volunteers and

donors for your continued support of the Priest Lake Museum. I also want to thank Jeanne Tomlin and Kris Runberg Smith for preparing the annual newsletter. This newsletter will be Jeanne’s final project as editor.

My best wishes for another wonderful summer at Priest Lake.

Tom Weitz, President



Tom Weitz emerging from the entrance to the Continental Mine No. 4 tunnel.

Early Reviews for the Museum’s New Priest Lake History Book

The Priest Lake Museum Association was founded to preserve and promote the rich heritage of the surrounding region. The newsletter is published annually and edited by Jeanne Tomlin.

“Dr. Smith has written a wonderful, solid history of a fascinating corner of our state. I found myself marveling over and over again at new information, previously untold stories and unfamiliar archival collection.”

“The author has made use of a wide variety of primary sources and documents in telling this history, which will appeal to anyone involved with Priest Lake and Idaho history in general.”

“I was particularly drawn in by the small stories that populate the narrative.”

“I was fascinated by the author’s information about how so much of the lake become state property.”

“This is a well-researched, engaging history full of human interest appeal about a part of Idaho that deserves such attention.”



One of the most visible CCC projects remaining is the Priest Lake Museum located at Luby Bay. The rustic log cabin built in 1935-36 housed forest rangers until 1989. Using native materials, CCC crews cut the notched logs, gathered rock for the chimney and fireplace and slate for the front porch. A small CCC mill near Nordman provided the flooring and furniture.

Under supervision of the Forest Service, CCC crews expanded the campground at Luby Bay and opened up the lakeshore picnic area. Recruits cleared brush and fallen logs, thinned trees, provided an underground water system, improved roads and built picnic tables, stoves and sanitation facilities. They also developed campgrounds at Outlet, Osprey, Reeder Bay, Indian Creek and Granite Creek.



42-912-OUTLET BAY FOREST CAMP - PRIEST LAKE, IDAHO - PHOTO BY LEON SAURIG

SPECIAL EXHIBIT: PROHIBITION

Prohibition and Moonshining at Priest Lake

Have you ever wondered how “moonshine” whiskey was made? The museum’s special exhibit on Prohibition and Moonshining at Priest Lake shows you how. Interesting photographs and objects, including three stills, from Priest Lake’s moonshining era are on display in this temporary exhibit. Lewis “Pete” Chase’s hideout and still, where his famous *Uncle Pete’s Monogram* whiskey was made, are recreated in the exhibit. The exhibit was made possible by the generous donations and loans of various objects and by the time and efforts of several dedicated museum board members and volunteers. The stills were gifted or loaned by Harold Balazs, Joseph Fulton and Jill Nunemaker. The bottles, loaned by the Floyd Reeves family, were found in a buried cache near the mouth of Kalispell Creek.



With shared supervision from the Forest Service and the U.S. Army, the program provided structure, training, education, recreation, healthy meals and a monthly wage of \$30. The men were required to send all but \$5 home to help their families. Often the remaining money was spent on beer and cigarettes during weekend excursions to Priest River and Newport.

Economic Support for Area

Not only did the taverns benefit from the economic boost of the CCC recruits but so did grocers, gas stations and hardware stores as most supplies for the camps were purchased locally. At times there were more than 13 CCC camps between Priest Lake and Priest River, focusing mostly on tree planting, blister rust eradication and trail building. Some say this federal support kept area towns alive during the depression.

A typical workday required the recruit to get up at 6 a.m., make his bed, clean the barracks and be ready for breakfast at 6:45. Work began an hour later and they returned to camp by 3:45 at which time they changed to clean shirts, pants and tie for lowering of the flag and dinner.

Sports and Educational Programs

Recreation and educational opportunities were



Foreman John Sudneckovich taught recruits how to procure and place the telephone poles and string the lines. With emphasis on safety, he showed the crews how to use and maintain tools and to tighten wires. Improved communication to Priest River and around the lake resulted in a more efficient system for reporting and fighting fires.



CCC crews assigned to road construction learned to survey roads, dynamite stumps and to drive and maintain equipment. Early roads improved by these crews were Reeder Bay including access and parking at Elkins Resort, Eastside road from Cavanaugh Bay to Indian Creek, Lamb Creek and Squaw Valley. Most area trails were cleared by recruits for access to forest fires or lookouts and signs were added.

abundant. Baseball and basketball were popular sports with competition among the camps but swimming, boxing and pool occupied others. Education classes ranged from algebra and auto mechanics to photography and cabinet making. Evening entertainment often included movies, traveling vaudeville troupes and talent shows, plays and sing-along. Camp newsletters showcased sports news, cartoons, poems, announcements and inspirational editorials by camp commanders.

By Jeanne Tomlin

Continental Mine

Last summer four museum board members and Kris Smith were invited to tour the historic Idaho Continental Mine as guests of Roland



Owner Roland Hall pointing out lead- silver vein to museum president Tom Weitz.

and Linda Hall, co-owners of the mine. Located eight miles north of Upper Priest Lake, the mine was discovered in 1890 by Fred Sutter and Billy Huston and was the largest and most successful mine in the Priest Lake area, with most of the production occurring between 1914 and 1955. Albert “A.K.” Klockmann, longtime owner and operator of the mine, wrote the *Klockmann Diary – The Quest for North Idaho’s Legendary Continental Mine*, recommended reading about the discovery and development of the mine.

Our trip began by meeting the Halls and several of their friends in Bonners Ferry. From there we travelled about three hours north and east over county and gated Forest Service roads to the mine property. The original road to the mine followed Boundary Creek, weaving in and out of Canada and ending near Porthill. However, the route we took kept us just south of the Canadian border.

The mine is on private land surrounded by public lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service. We camped below the mine workings, near where the married miners’ homes once stood. After our tents were set up, Roland Hall led us to the entrance of the

Pam Martin, Kris Smith, Michael Kain and Carlos Landa where mill once stood. The powerhouse and mine workings are in the background.



main tunnel that was used to access the underground workings and haul lead-silver ore from the mine.

Equipped with rubber boots and flashlights, we crawled into the mine and walked back in the tunnel for about 2000 feet into the heart of the old mine. We saw many features of

the mine including ore loading chutes, old hand tools, and stables used for the horses that pulled ore cars in and out of the mine. The late afternoon and evening was spent near the top of the mountain where we explored the original surface outcroppings of the mine, saw the remains of Billy Huston’s first cabin, and enjoyed a wonderful dinner of BBQ elk steaks, salads and desserts. We stayed at the top of the mountain long enough to take in the spectacular views and watch a beautiful August sunset.

The next morning we explored the site of the old mine office and mill buildings, and viewed one of the Hall’s photo albums containing historic photographs of the mine. Many of these photographs are now in the Priest Lake Museum’s collection

by Tom Weitz.



YOUR FAMILY BELONGS IN THE MUSEUM

The real treasures of our museum are old family photos like this one of Ike and Sue Elkins in the 1940s. The Hungates have shared rare generational photos at Priest Lake going back to early 1900s. The wonderful Wilmer album depicts early cabins, picnics and summer residents beginning in 1911. Special thanks to all who brought us your photographs and your memories.

IF YOU HAVE PHOTOS TO SHARE please bring them to the Priest Lake Museum at Luby Bay or Pam Martin at The Entrée Gallery on Reeder Bay road. If you prefer, we will copy the images and return them. Explore the museum's images online at http://www.plmuseum.org/files/virtual_exhibit/vex1/index.

STILL TIME TO SUPPORT THE PRIEST LAKE HISTORY BOOK

We invite you to support an exciting book to be published by the Priest Lake Museum in collaboration with Washington State University Press. A lasting legacy, this is a comprehensive, illustrated, and documented history of Priest Lake. To make a financial pledge or donation, please complete and return this form before June 15:

Name as you would like it to appear: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

____ Benefactor \$1000 and over ____ Supporter \$100 to \$499

____ Sponsor \$500 to \$999 ____ Contributor \$1 to \$99

Mail to: Priest Lake Museum Association, P.O. Box 44, Coolin, ID 83821.

Help Illustrate The Book

In all the museum's photographs, we only have one picture of the bears at the dump. Can you help us with these or other images we should consider?

Be A Volunteer Host

As Host Coordinator I would like to publicly thank the cadre of volunteer hosts who help keep the museum's front door open from May through September. Without their dedication and love for Priest Lake and its history, the 3,000 plus visitors each season would not be able to fully enjoy all that the museum has to offer.

Here is a sampling of comments from the museum's guest book:

Loved the moonshining exhibit; Always a treat; Wish we had more time; Great place to bring our guests; Thank you to the host; Sweet---saw a picture of Grandpa on the wall!

Our hosts look forward to your visit and will enjoy sharing memories of "the lake". If you would like to become a host, I'd love to hear from you. You can work a three or a six hour shift. Many hosts volunteer for two or three shifts a season.

Please contact me at 208/443-0210 or dwidman@moosebytes.net.

Elaine Widman, Host Coordinator

Priest Lake Museum
Association
P.O. Box 44
Coolin, Idaho 83821

Priest Lake Museum is a volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our financial support comes from memberships, monetary/in-kind donations and the sale of Priest Lake-related books, DVDs and other Museum-related items. There is no paid staff. The Museum is maintained and operated by a dedicated corps of volunteers.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

YES, I'd like to become a member (or renew an existing membership)!

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------|
| _____ Gold Club | \$500 or more | _____ Silver Club | \$400 - \$499 |
| _____ Baritoe Island | \$ 300 - \$399 | _____ Kalispell Island | \$200 - \$299 |
| _____ Eight Mile Island | \$100 - \$199 | _____ Four Mile Island | \$ 50 - \$ 99 |
| _____ Twin Islands | \$25 - \$ 49 | _____ Papoose Island | under \$25 |

YES, I'd like to make an additional donation of \$_____

This gift is: In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Please acknowledge this gift to:

Name: _____

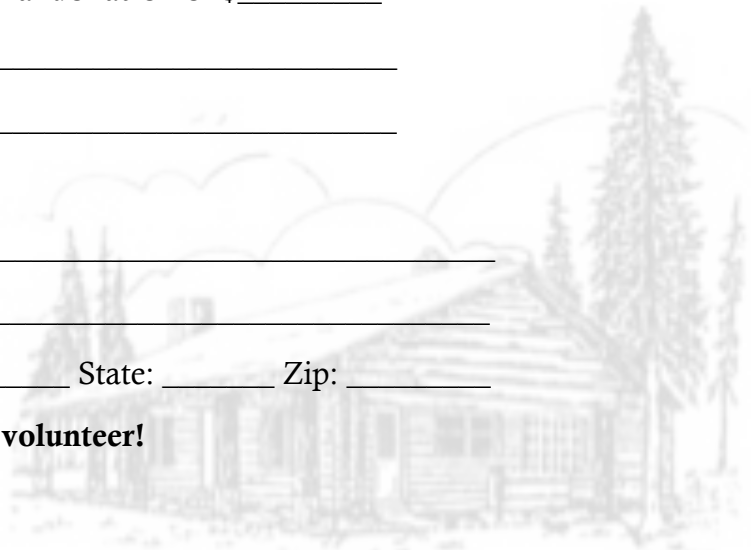
Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

YES, I'd like to become a (new) volunteer!

I'd be interested in:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| _____ Hosting | _____ Nature Garden & Facilities |
| _____ Display | _____ Newsletter |
| _____ Other | |



Museum Hours

The Priest Lake Museum is open from Memorial Day weekend through the end of September. Museum hours are 10 to 4 daily, Tuesday through Sunday from mid-June through Labor Day, and 10 to 4 on weekends in early June, and in September after Labor Day. The museum is closed Mondays, except holidays.

Volunteer Opportunities

Host volunteers are needed for the 2014 season. If you are interested in hosting for a few hours at the museum, please complete the form in this newsletter, or contact the Volunteer Host Coordinator at 208-443-0210 or 509-993-4445.

Volunteers are also needed to transcribe oral history recordings, help with our collection management system, and assist with the nature garden.

2014 Board Members

Michelle Barnes
Barb Conboy
Kay Coykendall
Mary Driscoll
Bob Faulkner
Arley Sue Hagman
Lois Hill
Tom Holman
Michael Kain
Carlos Landa
Pam Martin
Mary Toutonghi
Tom Weitz
Don Widman
Elaine Widman
Chuck Willits
Debbie Butler,
U.S.F.S. Liaison

Priest Lake Museum Association

P.O. Box 44
Coolin, ID 83821



Be sure to visit the museum this summer and check out the exhibit on prohibition!