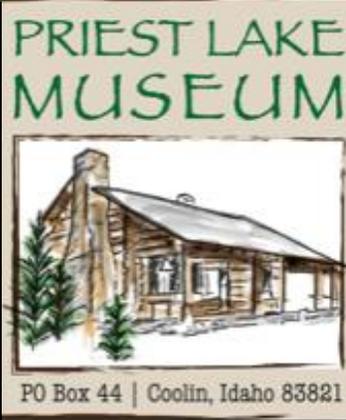


# Priest Lake Museum

Spring 2021 Newsletter



## While We Were Closed ...

*Kalispel Tribal members and museum board members getting ready for a boat tour were from the right J.R. Bluff, Jack Nisbet, Johnny Arlee, Carlos Landa, Stan Bluff, Jessie Isadore, Glen Nenemah, and Tom Weitz – The museum's new logo – Millie and Ward Adams at The Cedars Tavern*

Last summer, we had to keep the Priest Lake Museum closed most of the season because of the pandemic and we missed our delightful hosts and the hundreds of visitors exploring our exhibits! But we were fortunate to pursue a number of significant developments. These included redesigning our website along with updating the logo, working with the Kalispel Language Survival School on a couple of projects to bring the Tribe's voice back to Priest Lake, and searching for history on one of the most colorful characters, Millie Adams.

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### Open with a New Look

With Covid restrictions, it gave us a new resolve to make our collections, photographs, films, and oral histories more accessible beyond our summer

season. We created a new website that helps visitors find us, but we also put many of our collections online! We will continue to expand this summer with virtual exhibits and maybe even podcasts. Check out the website where you can find our summer schedule, Nell Shipman movies, and a tab to join the museum online.

The Priest Lake Museum is open this summer with our regular hours and days starting May 28 after last summer's hiatus! Come see the museum exhibit "Fools Gold: Mining at Priest Lake" and check out our new Nature Garden signs. Plan to join us for our exciting schedule of July events around the lake and be sure to explore our new website.

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Continued on

## Dear Museum Friends,

As I sit at my desk reading last year's letter I'm realizing what a roller coaster ride of a year the museum has had. I wrote you full of optimism that, while opening late, the museum would be operating as it has for the last 30 years, including the more recent heritage talks and hikes.

By July, the board decided to drop the talks and hikes and open the museum by appointment only, thereby decreasing risk to our hosts and the public. The net result was that, rather than welcoming over 3,000 visitors in 2019, our numbers dropped to less than 150. It felt rather defeating, but then something really cool happened. We were able to focus on long term goals for the museum. The following three projects have seen the most benefit: the story of the Kalispell Tribe at the lake, the fire lookout project and our new website.

The museum has worked for a number of years to have the story of the Kalispels told but we couldn't get traction. The subject came up with author and historian Jack Nisbet after his heritage talk in 2019. Jack has worked with the Kalispels for a number of years and he saw an opportunity to help. In September 2020 we hosted a number of Tribal Elders for a boat

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

trip around the lake and they suggested starting with these two projects; interpretive signs displaying their time at the lake and naming our nature garden plants in the Salish language. Since then we have worked with the Tribe, Jack, and board member/ horticulturist Arley Sue Hagman to bring this to reality. We have scheduled an open house for the nature garden project for Thursday July 15.

The Fire Lookout project has also been a long time in the making. Ray Kresek's Fire Lookout Museum in Spokane will be closing in the next few years and he has been looking for a home for parts of his collection. We've had our eyes on his full size lookout and by partnering with Idaho Department of Lands have found it's future home at their Cavanaugh headquarters. Thanks go out to past president and current board member Tom Weitz for leading this effort.

With the space constraints at our historical building, we have been moving our collection into virtual reality. This allows visitors from all over the world to access the museum and learn about our neck of the woods. Historian Kris Runberg Smith worked with Cornerstone Design to revamp our website which went on line last fall.

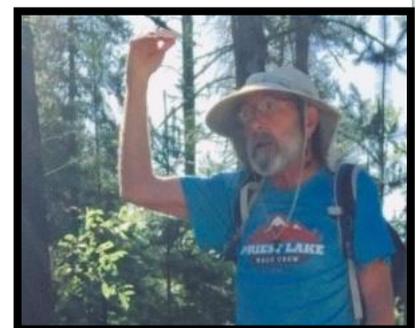
Our Facebook page also continues to be a success.

All of these projects not only consume hundreds of hours of volunteer time but also have monetary costs. We are asking for help to cover these costs. An extra line is included in our membership renewal section for additional donations.

Looking forward, we plan on opening the museum with our regular schedule, but still under Forest Service Covid protocols. The mining exhibit will continue through this season and the heritage series is scheduled throughout July as are the hikes.

I can't close this letter without thanking our board members, hosts, and supporters. I'm truly blessed to have the opportunity to work with all of you.

All Best, *Pancho*



# Walking & Talking History

## Summer Schedule

<p><i>July</i> <b>7</b></p>	<p>Community Church Fellowship Room Hall @7:00  <b><i>Mighty Priest Lake Women</i></b> presented by Kris Runberg Smith</p>
<p><i>July</i> <b>8</b></p>	<p>History Hike – Milepost 36.3 south of Nordman@ 9:00. Easy  <b>Historic Bismark Ranger Station Site Hike</b></p>
<p><i>July</i> <b>14</b></p>	<p>Inn at Priest Lake @7:00  <b>Priest Lake and the Period of Contact:</b>1807-1860  presented by Jack Nisbet*</p>
<p><i>July</i> <b>15</b></p>	<p>Priest Lake Museum Nature Garden @11:30  <b>Native Plants and the Kalispel Tribe</b> presented by Jack Nisbet and Kalispel Tribal members</p>
<p><i>July</i> <b>15/18</b></p>	<p>Kalispell Bay Day Use Parking Lot @9:00  <b>Kalispell Bay Mines Hike</b></p>
<p><i>July</i> <b>21</b></p>	<p>Community Church Fellowship Room @7:00  <b>The Continental Mine</b> presented by Scott Hill</p>
<p><i>July</i> <b>22</b></p>	<p>Beaver Creek Trailhead Parking Lot @9:00. Easy 3 miles  <b>Navigation Trail to the Upper Lake Hike</b></p>
<p><i>July</i> <b>28</b></p>	<p>Inn at Priest Lake @7:00  <b>Straight Lines and Squiggles:</b> How Idaho Got its Weird Shape  presented by Keith Petersen*</p>
<p><i>July</i> <b>30</b></p>	<p>Museum Parking Lot @9:00. Easy 2 miles  <b>Woodrat Mine Hike</b></p>

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## The Languages of the Nature Garden

The Priest Lake Museum welcomed Kalispel Tribal members for a boat tour around the lake last. The group located traditional sites used by the Kalispel for countless generations. We are excited to work with the Kalispel Language Survival School on our Nature Garden that boasts of over 30 plants native to the Priest Lake region. For generations, the Kalispel made use of the area's roots, berries, and plants as part of their seasonal round. To honor this rich legacy, we relabeled the garden plants in Salish, English, and Latin. Join us on July 15 @ 11:30 as we celebrate the new labels and learn more from Tribal members about generation living close to the Earth. Our next project with the Kalispel Language Survival

Fireweed  
 q<sup>w</sup>oq<sup>w</sup>o<sup>t</sup>qne<sup>l</sup>p  
*Chamerion angustifolium*



School is developing outdoor interpretative signs at the museum and on Soldier Creek. It is part of an effort to restore the generational traditions of the Kalispel people at the lake using their own voices and language.



## Mining for Millie

This winter, writer Sarah Goettsch went mining for a more authentic narrative of Millie Adams, the colorful proprietress of The Cedars, a tavern that today bears her name along Highway 57. Stories abound at the lake of Millie's outfits (mostly dirty muumuus), her language (on par with any logger's), her drinking (a lot), and her general notoriety. But where'd the woman beneath the muumuu come from? Sarah traced her to a childhood in Chicago among Russian-Czech-Slovak immigrants, then west to Seattle during the Great Depression, where we believe she met Ward Adams. The two moved to the Newport area and opened several taverns along Highway 2 before purchasing The Cedars in 1946.

We are looking for people who remember Millie breaking up a bar fight or donating to the PTA. Maybe your grandparents shared stories about her floating houseboat on the lake, or the dogs Sheba and Thor? Email [thepriestlakemuseum@gmail.com](mailto:thepriestlakemuseum@gmail.com) so Sarah can contact you about your recollections and photographs! Thank you to everyone who has already graciously given their time to our research efforts. We can't wait to hear your stories.