

The Priest River Bioregional Atlas

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Preface

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¹ The information provided in this atlas is subject to change – please verify all information prior to any decision making processes based on the contents of any section in the atlas.

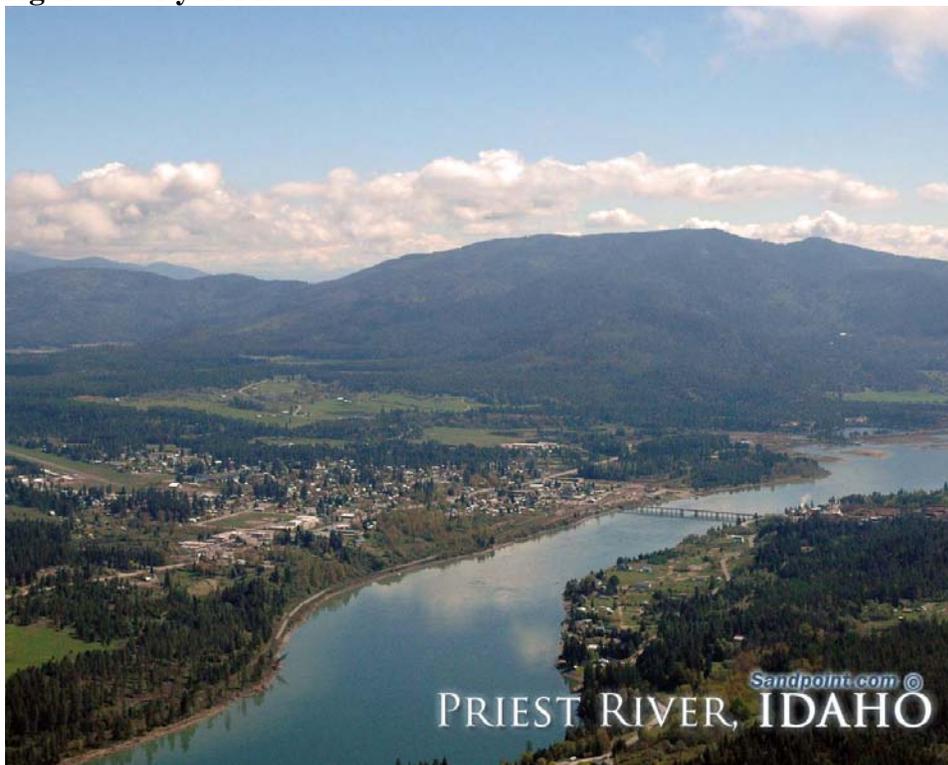
Danielle Clelland and Jesse Buster

INTRODUCTION

Priest River is a community brimming with possibilities. Nestled within Idaho's North Country, it boasts a bounty of natural amenities and a small town atmosphere that can rarely be found elsewhere. Within its boundaries are two rivers, the Pend Oreille and the Priest, which are home to abundant wildlife and provide excellent recreation opportunities including boating and swimming. Surrounding mountains offer further opportunities, providing exceptional skiing and ample trails for hiking.¹

This city has a strong community spirit and thriving community life that places a high value on education and related activities. The community also boasts many highly active political and non-governmental institutions, well-developed health and safety organizations, and an efficient and improving transportation and infrastructure system. The community is strongly based on its unique timber and natural resource-based history, but is also striving for a progressive and innovative way to entwine its past with its present and future.

Figure 1: City of Priest River



Source: <http://www.sandpoint.com>

Community development has been a major point of discussion as the Priest River Advisory Group and other vocal community leaders have stepped forward to help guide Priest River on its journey to a more equitable and sustainable future. This Bioregional Atlas contains within it an overview of important elements of Priest River and the surrounding region. It is intended to aide

in this process by providing a community profile that outlines some of the community's most outstanding assets and opportunities.

Overview of Priest River

Priest River is located in Northern Idaho within Bonner County and has a current population of approximately 1800.² Within it is the intersection point of US Highway 2 and State Highway 57 and it is situated only 7 miles from Newport, Washington, and 23 miles from Sandpoint, Idaho to the east.³

Surrounding Priest River is acres of prime forest land. For this reason, Priest River has historically been a timber community, heavily dependent upon natural resources for economic stability. As the timber industry continues to suffer decreasing prosperity in present times, Priest River has lost many of its employment opportunities and has suffered economically. Priest River has thereby been presented with the challenge of transforming its economy and livelihood.

Bioregional Approach

Many past, current, and future problems we face cannot be appropriately or adequately addressed within the existing political boundaries arbitrarily imposed on the land. These issues include environmental health, water use and management, social and financial equity, infrastructure such as housing, transportation, energy, food, waste, and many more which ultimately influence the overall well being of society and the environment. In response, a bioregional approach addresses these critical issues with a more balanced and sensible means.

A bioregion can be defined loosely as, "A unique region definable by natural (rather than political) boundaries with a geographic, climatic, hydrological, and ecological character capable of supporting unique human and nonhuman living communities....variously defined by the geography of watersheds, similar plant and animal ecosystems, and related, identifiable landforms...human cultures that grow from natural limits and potentials of the region"⁴.

Bioregionalism is the understanding that humans are not separate from the ecosystems they occupy, but that they are merely a part of them. It is in our interest to protect these ecosystems to ensure our survival. The bioregional approach addresses the intricate interrelation of every action and practice, and that a holistic approach is necessary to promote the greater sense of well being. This approach is guided by a principle called the triple-bottom-line, which balances economic viability, social equity, and environmental health, and each must be addressed equally to optimize life and survival.

Summary of Atlas Sections

This section provides a brief overview of each of the sections included in the Bioregional Atlas. These sections are: Biophysical; Protected Areas; Cultural Landscapes; History; Agriculture; Political and Nongovernmental Institutions; Land Use; Infrastructure; Transportation; Demographics; Economics; Housing; Education; Health and Safety; and Community Life.

Biophysical

The biophysical section is an important part of the atlas because it describes the natural state of the region, the physical attributes, and available resources. Often this holds clues as to why the

area was initially developed and what is important to the community. This section describes many aspects of the physical region including the geology, hydrology, vegetation, climate, topography, elevation, etc. and helps explain the context in which we view all the other sections of the atlas. Knowing what resources are available makes it easier to identify areas of opportunity for the community as well as critical areas that may need to be better protected and should be kept in mind while doing any planning for the region. The nearby Priest River Experiment Station is useful to the atlas because it has monitored and documented many aspects of the biophysical community, primarily vegetation, since the founding of the community. Understanding the history and values of these resources in the community make us better qualified to plan and protect the region as a whole.

Figure 2: Priest River Bioregional Landscape



Source: <http://pimage3.homesandland.com>

Protected Areas

Protected areas are those natural landscapes preserved for the benefit of environmental health and natural amenities for public use and well being. These lands include natural forest lands and the various water bodies set aside to protect their integrity or other beneficial purpose for natural systems, economic industries, recreation, and cultural and historical significance. The focus of this section is to evaluate those different stakeholders and how they use and manage these lands for the greater benefit.

Cultural Landscapes

The Priest River area has been a natural collecting place for people dating back to the pre-historic times. Spearheads have been found from the prehistoric era where people would hunt for the now extinct species, the Woolley mammoth and giant bison. The Priest River area is rich with cultural heritage and the process of preserving and passing on this historical cultural knowledge nurtures the relationship with this geographic place. Residents of today can foster their present connection to this place through deepening the understanding of the residents and history of the past.⁵

History

“No place is a place until the things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments”⁶ Each place has a sense of history that reflects the intersection of past events of a personal and public nature. A sense of history locates us in time and space. It

provides us with the knowledge of where we came from, who we are, and why we are here. It fills in the gaps in our personal memories and family stories that help us understand our place. Through examining and appreciating our history we explore fundamental questions concerning personal and community identity and our relationship to the environment.

Understanding a sense of history can also shape perceptions of the historic preservation of life-place by facilitating communities to define and protect their unique character created from the past that influences the present, which will improve the future. This section reviews key elements of Priest River and Bonner County Pre-Settlement and Settlement History, and examines that history's place in the present.

Agriculture

From an historical perspective agriculture was vital to the development of human civilization. Without the capacity to produce food beyond the needs of the family, humans would have done little more than develop societies that sustain their individual needs for nourishment and survival. Trade and economy evolved following the development of sustainable food sources.

Advances in agriculture provided socio-economic changes within societies. This discipline includes a variety of techniques such as plant raising and domesticating animals. It also includes the specialties of plant breeding, selective breeding, and horticulture. This chapter will discuss the key element of agriculture in Priest River and Bonner County.

Political and Nongovernmental Institutions

This section explores the institutions and organizations in Priest River. Government agencies or departments that have a presence in Priest River through their influence in the county or region are also identified. The politics in this region are predominately conservative, with a strong emphasis on private property rights and local control.

Land Use

The land use section includes a brief overview of the current zoning designations in Priest River in order to give an idea of how land uses are defined and organized in the city Zoning Ordinance. Following this section is a discussion of the Historic District, an essential piece of Priest River's history as well as its future. This district has a long history and a large portion of it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Descriptions of a few key structures including the Beardmore and the Hotel Charbonneau and their individual histories are included in this section.

The next section is the Priest River Urban Renewal Agency (URA), a major part of Priest River's ongoing transformation. This section briefly describes the agency's history, purpose, and goals. Following the discussion of the Priest River URA will be an overview of some recent major developments and annexations in Priest River that have or will likely have major impacts on the city. Finally, this section concludes with a brief discussion of the implications of all of these land use changes for Priest River creating a cohesive community vision and turning its current transitory phase into an opportunity for positive changes.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure can be defined as the basic physical structures needed for the operation of a society, and facilities necessary for society to function. The term typically refers to the technical structures that support a society, such as water, transportation, energy, communication, and solid waste management. The infrastructure can be either publicly owned or privately owned but all of which is regulated at some point on the federal, state, and local levels.

Figure 3: Albeni Falls Dam on the Pend Oreille River



Source: <http://222.scawild.org>

Transportation

Transportation in Bonner County and Priest River consists of automobile travel, bicycles, walking, trains, airplanes, and public transportation. With a County Transportation Plan published in 2004, and current efforts being focused on a Priest River Transportation Plan, it is apparent that the people in Bonner County and Priest River value well-designed transportation systems which address all modes of travel and include public involvement.

Demographics

This section covers the number and distribution of people in Priest River as compared to Bonner County. To illustrate changes in population that have occurred, population characteristics from 1970 to the 2000 US Census are given for comparison. Priest River has an overall trend of increasing population since the 1970s. There is an overall trend of more females to males in Priest River, opposite of trends seen in Bonner County and Idaho. There is an age gap in Priest River between the ages of 25-50, indicating an out-migration once residents reach production years, and an in-migration of retirees. Priest River is predominantly white, along with Bonner County and Idaho.

Economics

Priest River has been going through an economic transformation in the past few decades, as many former logging towns in the western United States, characterized by the closing of mills in the area, the loss of timber jobs, and an increased reliance on tourism. This coupled with a global economic downturn has placed a great deal of economic stress on the City of Priest River. Despite some of these economic setbacks, Priest River has been reinvigorating the downtown, creating plans to take more economic advantage of the waterfront, and working as a community to identify additional areas for economic development. This section presents a basic economic profile of Priest River as well as gives additional information that could be used to help steer economic policy.

Housing

The housing section of the Priest River Atlas looks at general housing data in Priest River and Bonner County including current housing stock, supply and demand in the region, and the condition and maintenance of housing in the area. Health and safety issues such as lead poisoning, asbestos, radon and mold are also considered. Other topics in this section include housing cost and the availability of affordable housing in the area, housing type, renter and owner occupied housing statistics, as well as seasonal and recreational use housing.

Education

Education in the Priest River area primarily serves school aged children and teenagers. This section begins with the schools that are located in Priest River and reviews school demographics and resources provided by the schools. In addition to public schools, there is home schooling, as well as private schools that serve a small number of residents in the area. These schools provide a small number of extracurricular activities for their students, but there are many resources provided by schools for students who are seeking higher education. This section also provides resources from higher education institutions in the region and county. The latter half of this section focuses on challenges for education in Priest River including lack of funding and the lack of extracurricular activities in the area, followed by opportunities in and around Priest River for educational opportunities.

Figure 4: Priest River High School



Source: <http://www.sd83.k12.id.us/>

Health and Safety

Health and safety are important aspects of a thriving community. This section identifies the facilities in or around Priest River that service the life, health, and safety of the community, including: medical facilities, health care clinics, assisted living facilities, and police services and facilities. Another important aspect of community health and safety, especially communities in densely forested areas, is fire management. This section also identifies local fire (rural and wild land) and emergency medical services.

Community Life

An active community life is vital to the success of a community. Community life includes outlets where citizens can congregate, recreate, share ideas, and become involved. This section indicates social activities in which the citizen's of Priest River are already engaged, gathering

places and areas of pride, areas of existing and potential community involvement, and also highlights social networks within Priest River. It continues by stressing how important a healthy community life is for citizens and the sustainability of the community; and lastly addresses areas of improvement.

Sources:

¹ <http://www.priestriver.org/> [Does this page exist? I can't access it.]

² <http://www.priestriver.org/>

³ <http://www.priestriver-id.gov/history.html>

⁴ Thayer, Robert L. *Life Place: Bioregional Thought and Practice*. University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, 2003.

⁵ "City of Priest River Comprehensive Plan" (City of Priest River, 2005).

⁶ National Parks Service, "History Page" <http://www.nps.gov>

Biophysical

Introduction

The biophysical section is an important part of the atlas because it describes the natural state of the region, the physical attributes, and available resources. Often this holds clues as to why the area was initially developed and what is important to the community. This section describes many aspects of the physical region including the geology, hydrology, vegetation, climate, topography, and elevation helping to explain the context in which we view all the other sections of the atlas. Knowing what resources are available makes it easier to identify areas of opportunity for the community as well as critical areas that may need to be better protected. These areas should be kept in mind while doing any planning for the region. The nearby Priest River Experiment Station is also useful because it has monitored and documented many aspects of the biophysical community, primarily vegetation, since the founding of the community. Understanding the history and values of these resources in the community make us better qualified to plan and protect the region as a whole.

In This Section:

- Location
- Climate
- Air
- Geology
- Hydrology
- Flora
- Fauna
- Conclusion

Location

Priest River is part of Northern Idaho and is found at latitude 48°11'0"N and longitude 116°54'34"W, and is at an elevation of 2,077 feet. Located centrally in that region, Priest River has access to a diverse range of the region's resources including primarily timber and access to waterways. Located in Bonner County, Priest River is surrounded by Boundary County to the north, the state of Washington to the West, Kootenai and Shoshone counties to the South, and Montana to the East. Priest River has an area of approximately 1.6 square miles and sits along Highway 2 between Sandpoint, Idaho and Newport, Washington. The nearest large urban area in the region is Spokane, WA, 55 miles to the west.ⁱ

The town of Priest River is surrounded by an abundance of water sources and sits at the confluence of two sizable rivers, the Pend Oreille River and Priest River. Each of these rivers stems from nearby lakes and converges in town before continuing to flow west, eventually connecting up to the Columbia River, which drains into the Pacific Ocean. North of town approximately 30 miles is Priest Lake, a large highly recreated lake spanning close to 19 miles in length. To the east approximately 22 miles is Lake Pend Oreille near Sandpoint, ID.ⁱⁱ

Figure 1.1: Map of Idaho Panhandle



Source: Road Trip USA

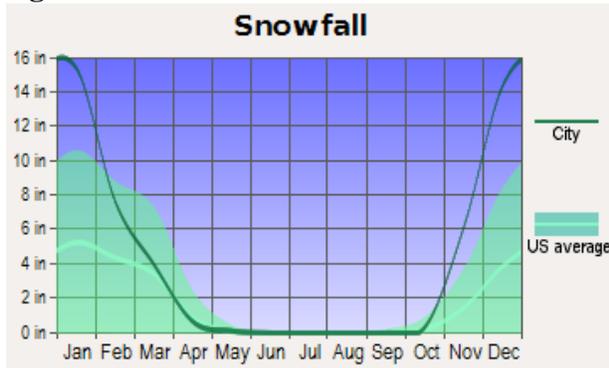
Climate

Idaho has a varied climate based on the particular region, however, generally the state is temperate and experiences all four seasons with significant temperature changes between the summer and winter months. There are four primary factors that affect an area's climate: latitude, altitude, wind, and distance to the ocean. The farther north from the equator, the cooler the temperature will be. Similarly, the higher the altitude, the cooler the temperature will be as well.

Because Priest River is both further from the equator and higher in elevation than many other areas in Idaho, especially southern Idaho, thus the area experiences much cooler seasons.ⁱⁱⁱ

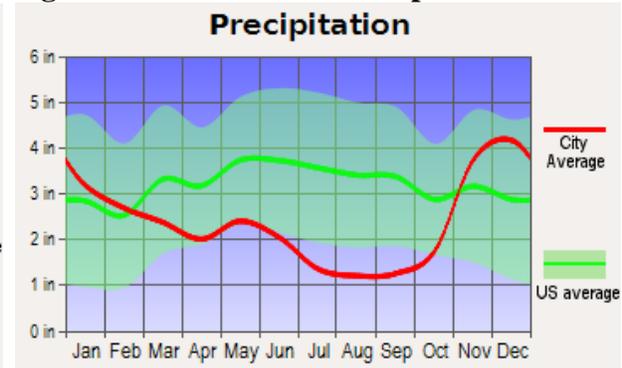
Despite Priest River’s location in an inland state, the weather in the area is still affected by the Pacific Ocean to the west. Storms are blown in from the Pacific Coast because there are no large mountains in the way to block the winds. This causes Priest River to have a modified maritime climate with high amounts of precipitation, primarily in the form of snowfall during the winter months.^{iv} Priest River receives 16+ inches of snow each winter on average, significantly higher than the US average. Precipitation in the form of rainfall, however, is minimal with two inches or less on average during the summer months.

Figure 1.2: Priest River Snowfall



Source: City Data

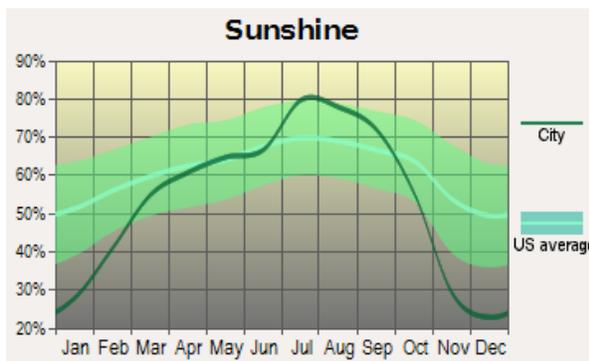
Figure 1.3: Priest River Precipitation



Source: City Data

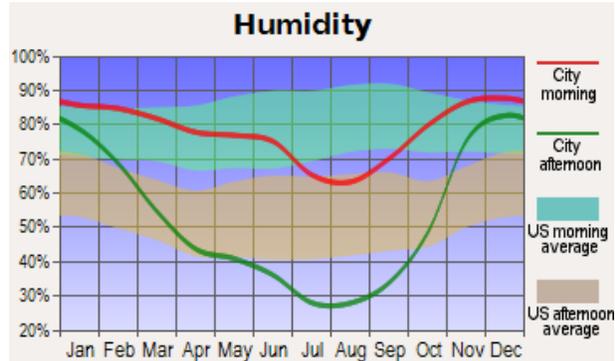
Priest River experiences all four seasons. Winter temperatures average in the 20s with highs during the summer averaging in the 70s and 80s. Summers have higher than average sunshine with sunny days nearly 80% of the time and dark winters with less than 30% sun. Humidity is lower during the summer than the winter months, which have nearly 80% humidity.

Figure 1.4: Priest River Sunshine



Source: City Data

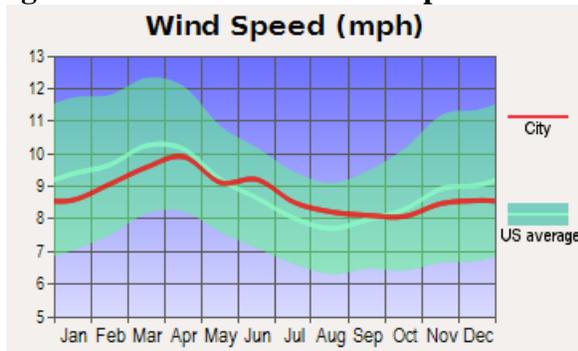
Figure 1.5: Priest River Humidity



Source: City Data

Wind speeds in Priest River are roughly the same as the US average with winds year round remaining primarily between 8 and 9 miles per hour with peak winds during the spring reaching up to 10 miles per hour.^v

Figure 1.6: Priest River Wind Speed



Source: City-Data

Air

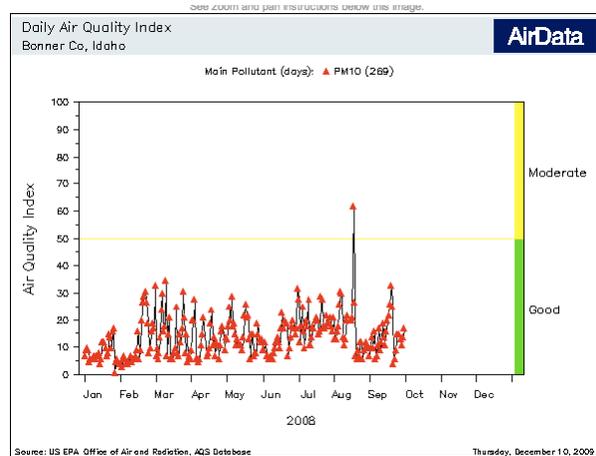
The Environmental Protection Agency has set National Ambient Air Quality Standards for six criteria pollutants; these include ozone, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, sulfur, lead, and nitrogen oxides. In the Priest River area there is a low amount of air pollution, the largest contaminator particulate matter. ^{vi} Particulate matter is generally worse during the summer and fall due to prescribed fires and wildfire in the region. ^{vii} Other pollutants can also blow into the region year round from higher pollution areas such as Spokane, a large urban area to the southwest. Overall, the area has high air quality. ^{viii}

Figure 1.16: Northern Rocky Mountain Air Quality Index



Source: EPA

Figure 1.17: Bonner County Air Quality



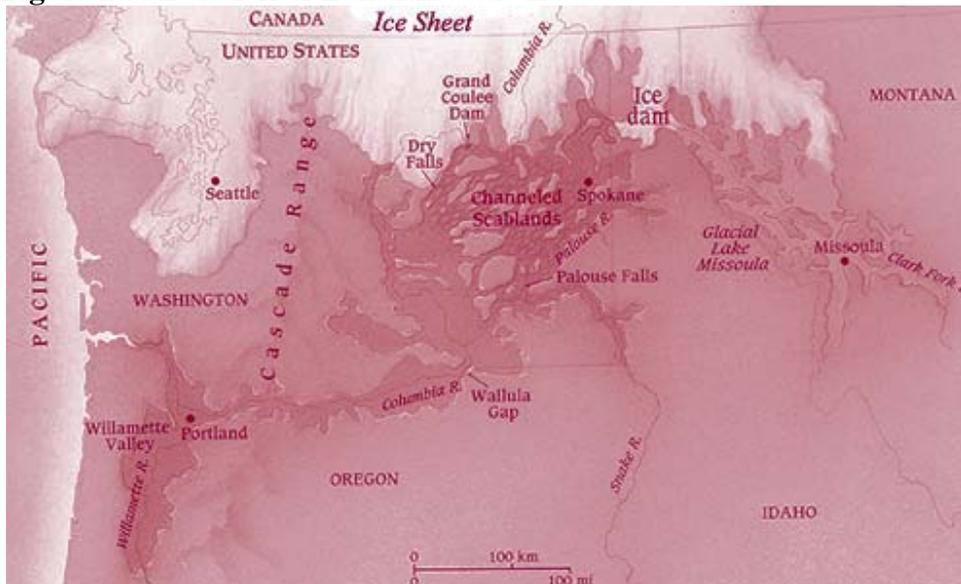
Source: EPA

Geology

The geology of Bonner County is highly varied, with a significant portion of the county's geology resulting from the effects of the Lake Missoula floods between 15,500 and 13,500 years ago.^{ix} During the last glacial advancement huge ice sheets moving south from Canada into the Purcell Trench of Northern Idaho created a large ice-dam blocking the Clark Fork River near present-day Lake Pend Orielle creating Glacial Lake Missoula. This large ice dam was 2,500 ft. tall,^x and held back more than 500 cubic miles of water, more than the current volumes of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario combined.^{xi} Eventually the massive pressure from the lake lifted up the ice dam causing it to break and release water at flows "equal to 9.46 cubic miles per hour."^{xii} Water raced across the Northwest at speeds between 30-50 miles per hour, tearing up the ground, and transporting sediment and rock hundreds of miles.^{xiii} The lake repeated the process as new ice dams moved south and then burst, re-flooding the region more than forty times.^{xiv}

In 2009 congress passed the National Park Service's proposed creation of an Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail. The trail would "be a network of marked touring routes extending across parts of Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, with several special interpretive centers located across the region."^{xv} The trail would pass through Priest River and serve to educate the public about the historic geological events that took place in the region.

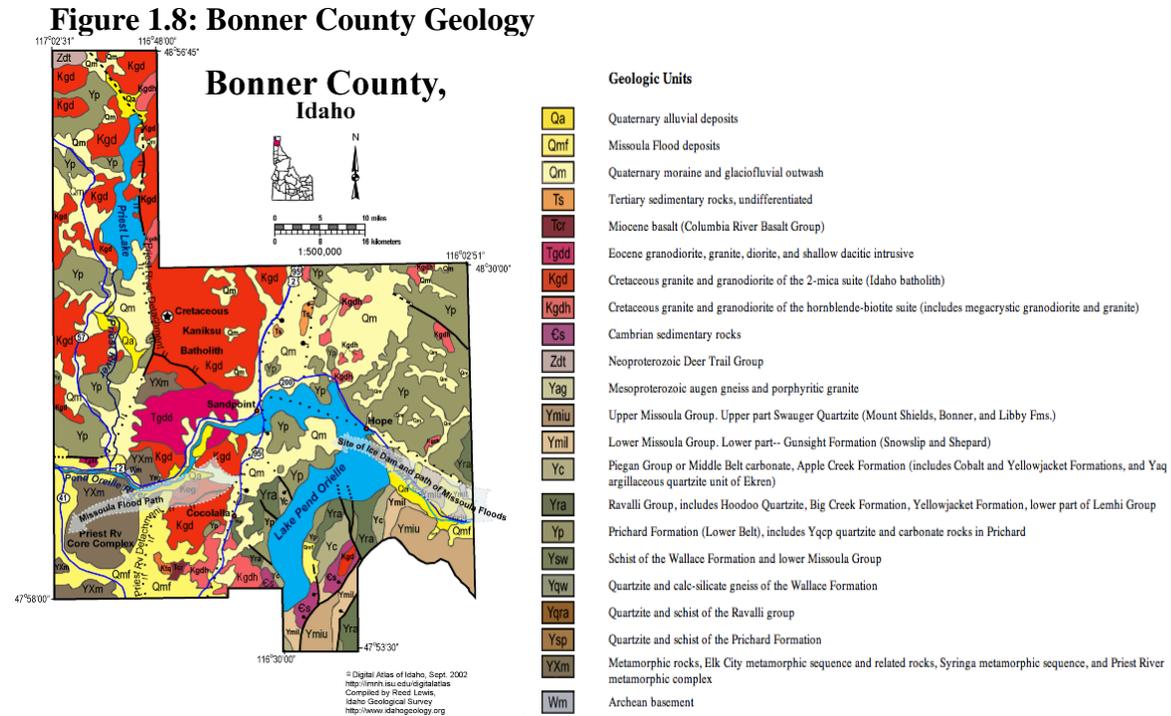
Figure 1.7: Location of Lake Missoula floods



Source: *Digital Atlas of Idaho*

The area where Priest River is today was created by deposits from the Missoula Flood thousands of years ago as it drained over the site of the town. Surrounding this area is the Priest River complex which is quite common throughout the Northern and Western reaches of Bonner County.^{xvi} This complex is composed of highly metamorphosed rock and is bound by the detachment fault, which travels north through the county along the east edge of Priest Lake.^{xvii} The Kaniksu Batholith is also common throughout Bonner County; batholith is a prevalent geological form in the Bitterroots region of Idaho as well as Northern and Central

Idaho. The Idaho Batholith is “a large body of intrusive igneous rock exposed over an area of at least 100 km²,” and developed in this area approximately 80 million years ago.^{xviii} On top of the rock, the soils continue to leave traces from the Lake Missoula, see figure 1.8. Gravelly sands and sandy loams deposited by the floods thousands of years ago lay 60-100 cm thick. The soil is “classified as Ochreptic Fragixeralf - Mission series.”^{xi} The outer most surface is silty clay loam 28-38 cm thick also derived from sediments deposited by the lake. This type of soil is very low in organic matter, which makes it a poor soil for raising crops; it also has a high clay content and therefore does not drain well.^{xx}



Source: Digital Atlas of Idaho

Hydrology

Priest River is part of the Columbia River drainage; the watershed encompasses most of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, as well as parts of Montana and southwestern Canada. All of the surface water north of Priest River flows south into the Pend Oreille River, which flows northwest, eventually connecting up with the Columbia River and flowing out of Oregon into the Pacific Ocean.

Numerous streams, lakes, and rivers make up the Priest watershed, which takes up the entire northwest portion of Bonner County crossing over into Boundary County slightly in the north and Washington to the west. The main water bodies in this area are Upper Priest Lake, Priest Lake, and Priest River, however, there are twenty or more water bodies in the area totaling over 400 miles as listed in Figure 1.9 below.^{xxi} The overall water quality of the surface water is quite good although there is a temperature problem in the majority of these streams. Many factors

contribute to increasing stream temperatures including agriculture, timber harvest, storm-water runoff, and land development.^{xxii}

Figure 1.9: Priest Watershed water bodies and contaminants

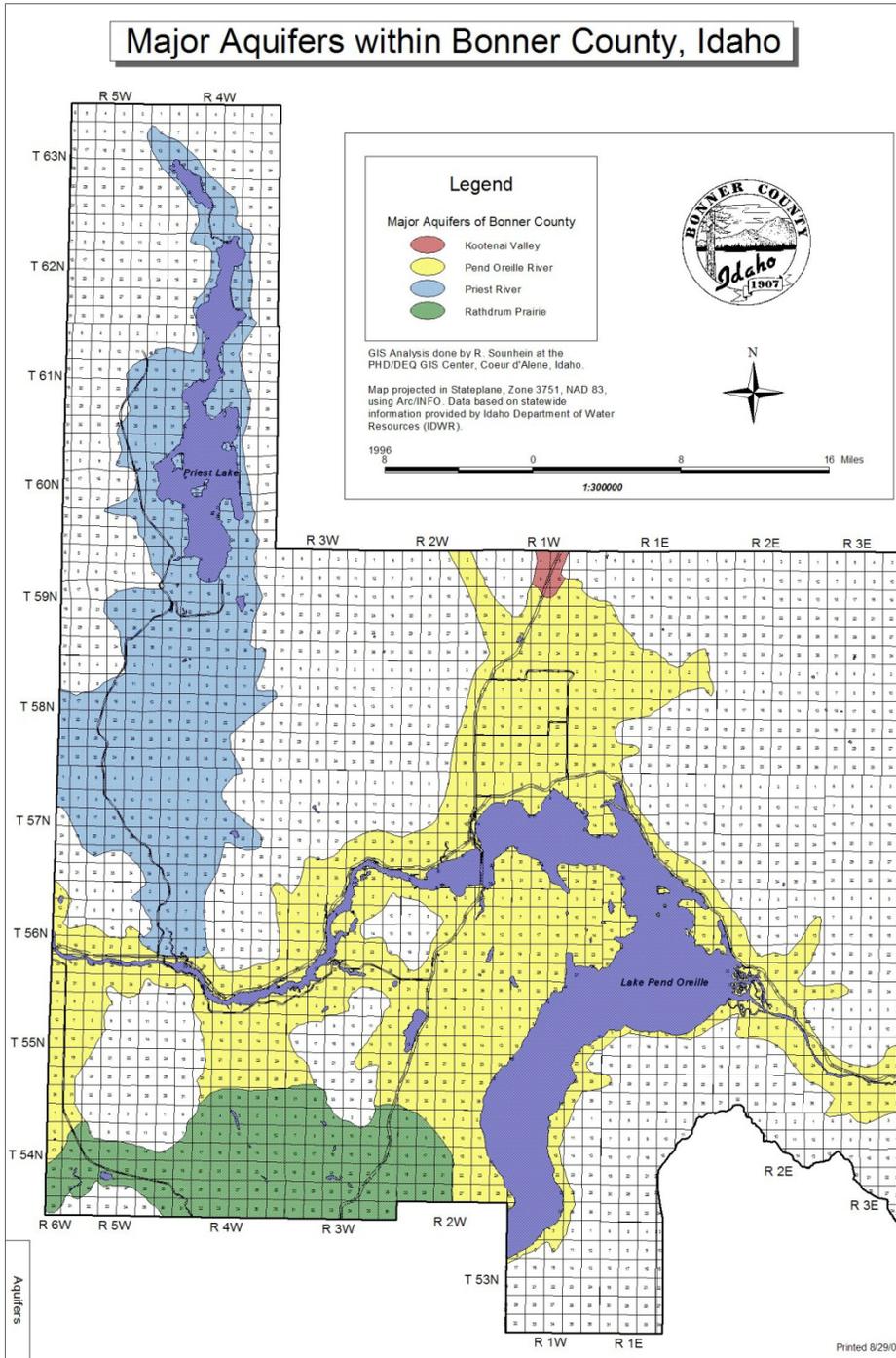
Impacted Water Bodies/ ² (ID 17010215)	Stream Miles*	Bacteria	Nutrients	Sediment	Temperature	Dissolved Oxygen	Other or Unknown
Beaver Creek	1.66				X		
Binarch Creek	13.16				X		
Blue Lake							
Chase Lake							
Goose Creek	5.23						X
Granite Creek	13.94				X		
Hunt Lake							
Hughes Fork	63.71				X		
Indian Creek	21.62				X		
Kalispell Creek	12.18				X		X
Kent Lake							
Lamb Creek	27.94				X		X
Lion Creek	32.42				X		X
Lower Priest River	35.96				X		X
Lower West Branch Priest River	22.72				X		
Middle Fork East River	35.41				X		
North Fork East River	2.22						
Priest Lake	48.88						
Reeder Creek	23.27				X		
Soldier Creek	1.78				X		X
Standard Lakes							
Trapper Creek	24.19				X		
Two Mouth Creek	27.77				X		
Two Mouth Lakes							
Upper Priest Lake							
Upper Priest River	47.34				X		
Upper West Branch Priest River	11.78				X		X
Total Stream Miles:	473.18						

*TMDL has been completed for Priest River Subbasin

Source: Natural Resource Conservation Service

Ground water in the region is comprised of three main aquifers: Priest River, Pend Oreille, and Rathdrum Prairie. The Priest River aquifer starts in the north of the county encompassing Upper Priest Lake and continues south to the town of Priest River. The Pend Oreille aquifer stretches the width of the county beginning in Montana and continuing west into Washington following the Pend Oreille River and bisecting the town. The third main aquifer, Rathdrum Prairie, does not actually supply water to Priest River but covers a significant portion of the county not far to the south.

Figure 1.10: Bonner County Aquifers



Source: Bonner County Idaho

Flora

US Department of Agriculture has designated Plant Hardiness Zones across the entire US; this index describes which plants will thrive based on a certain set of growing conditions. The United States is divided into 10 zones based on multiple “factors present in the area that would influence plant growth, [including] day length, radiation, temperature, frost, heat, rainfall, and [soil] pH.”^{xxiii} The different zones range from 1-10 with 1 being the lowest average minimum temperature and 10 being the highest average minimum temperature.^{xxiv} Priest River is found in Hardiness Zone 4 and the tree and plant species found in the region are accustomed to growing in Northern Idaho’s cooler climate and poor soils. The area surrounding Priest River is surrounded by forests with a wide variety of tree species including a mixture of those found in Boreal, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific Northwest forests. Figure 1.11 below includes a list of all the trees found in the region as well as edible and medicinal plants.

Figure 1.11: Trees & Edible/Medicinal Plants of Northern Idaho

Trees	Edible & Medicinal Plants
Douglas Fir (Red Fir)	Camas
Engelmann Spruce	Shortstyle Onion
Grand Fir (White Fir)	Fireweed
Lodgepole Pine	Wild Ginger
Mountain Hemlock	Meadow Salsify
Pacific Yew	Rose
Ponderosa Pine (Yellow Pine)	Yellow Pond Lilly
Subalpine Fir	Cattail
Western Hemlock	Yarrow
Western Larch (Tamarack)	Evert’s or Elk Thistle
Western Red Cedar	Serviceberry
Western White Pine	Wild Strawberry
Whitebark Pine	Oregon Grape
Black Cottonwood	Huckleberry
Quaking Aspen	Field Mint
Western Paper Birch	

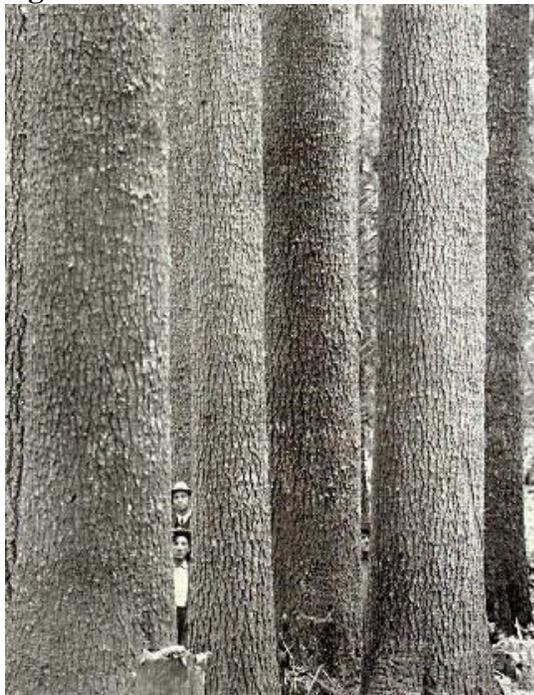
Source: Idaho Panhandle National Forest

All of these species have been important in the Priest River region over the years. Edible and medicinal plants are important to the Native American tribes who first settled in the area and continue to be important to the local traditions and culture. The trees in the area have also been extremely important to the region’s economy, many being sold commercially. The Priest River Experimental Forest approximately fifteen miles north of town was created specifically for the purpose of studying the wide variety of tree species found in this region.

The US Forest Service opened the Priest River Experiment Station in 1911 because the agency saw a need for forest research as the timber industry continued to grow. The forests near Priest River have trees from each of the commercial species that were being logged as well as a nice representation of all the tree species growing in the Rocky Mountain Area, including an abundance of Western White Pines which were the “prized tree species for construction.”^{xxv} The

experimental station has a weather station which collects data as well as 6,400 acres of land covered in varying tree species of all different age classes. Only minimal cutting takes place in order to maintain a healthy forest, ensure age diversity of the species, and to create the specific conditions needed for any research project being carried out at the experiment station. During the late 1990s, there was an outbreak of bark beetle killings at the station but they were treated and have not been much of a problem since. The bark beetle infestation usually occurs where the forests are very dense, which is another reason the USFS continues to thin some of the trees at the research station. Priest River has been lucky since forest fires have not presented much of a problem and the most damaging fire that has gone through the area was in 1910. Since then there have not been many fire issues. The forests are naturally divided into two sections, the drier southerly aspect, which has not burned in approximately 20-30 years, and the wetter northerly aspect, which burned approximately 150 acres in 1922 and more recently, 7 acres in 2008.^{xxvi}

Figure 1.12: Western White Pines at the Priest River Experimental Forest



Source: Priest River Experimental Forest

Fauna

Northern Idaho's diverse and plentiful forests provide much critical habitat for wildlife in the area. This region is home to a variety of big game species including deer, elk, moose, mountain goat, wolf, black bear, and mountain lion. There are also numerous game birds, furbearers, and fish available in the region for hunting and fishing, which are an important resource for both the economy and culture.

Several threatened and endangered species are also in area, most notably is the Woodland Caribou. Northern Idaho has the only population of this species in the lower forty-eight states and protecting its critical habitat is important for keeping this species in the region. There are other species that have critical habitat within Bonner County, although they are not necessarily

on the US Fish & Wildlife Service’s threatened or endangered species list. Black Terns, Flammulated Owls, and Goshawks are all birds that have critical nesting areas that need to be protected according to the US Fish & Wildlife Service and Idaho Department of Fish & Game. Streams and rivers in the region are also home to cutthroat and bull trout, an endangered species, and should also be considered when determining critical habitat to protect in the county.

Figure 1.13: Game species in the Priest River area

Game Mammals	Game Birds	Furbearers	Fish
Deer	Duck	Hare	Trout
Elk	Goose	Otter	Salmon
Moose	Turkey	Beaver	Bass
Mountain Goat	Pheasant	Marten	
Wolf	Partridge	Mink	
Black Bear	Crane	Bobcat	
Mountain Lion	Dove	Muskrat	
	Snipe	Raccoon	
	Coot	Coyote	
		Fox	
		Weasel	
		Skunk	
		Badger	

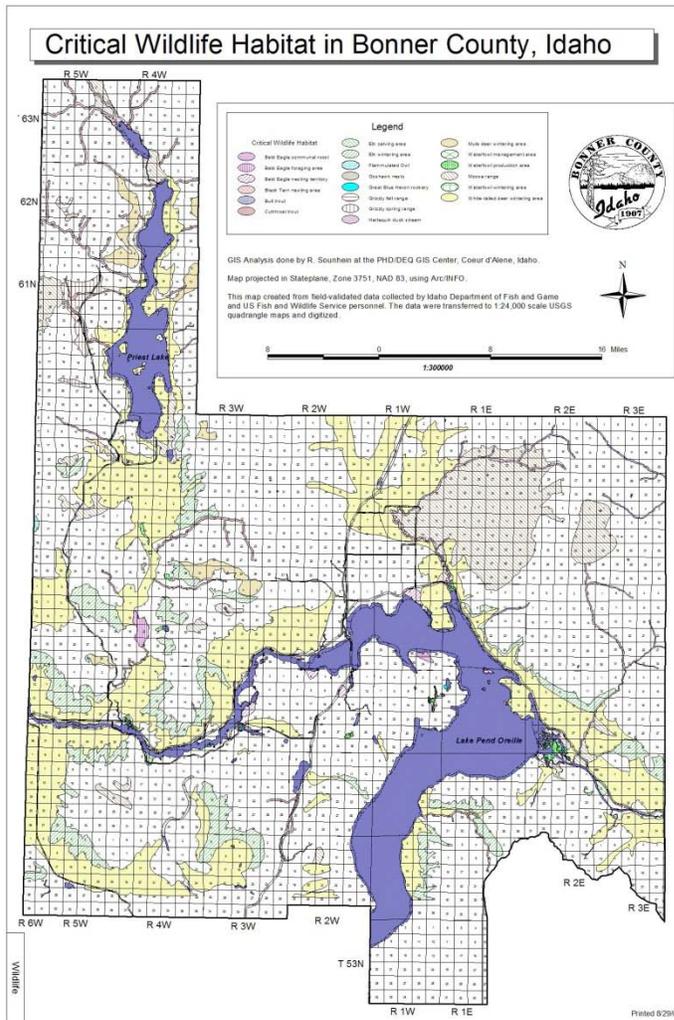
Source: Idaho Fish & Game

Figure 1. 14: Threatened & Endangered species in the Priest River area

Threatened and Endangered Species
Woodland Caribou
Grizzly Bear
Northern Lynx
Bald Eagle
Bull Trout

Source: Idaho Fish & Game

Figure: 1.15: Critical Wildlife Habitat in Bonner County



Source: Bonner County Idaho

Conclusion

Priest River is surrounded by a wealth of resources and has utilized many of these since its founding. The region has many forests with a wide variety of plant and animal species. These forests provide important assets to the community including timber and habitat for rare and game species alike. There is wide availability of water resources including two rivers flowing through town and two lakes within thirty miles. As Priest River continues to create a new vision for the future, the primary concern for the community is how best to continue using the resources available in a way that is sustainable for the environment as well as the local economy and culture. Understanding the region at a landscape scale will help the community become better custodians of the land. Even though this biophysical section of the atlas only details the availability of the resources in the region, it should be used to provide baseline information and context for all the other sections in this atlas, and be considered by the community when developing plans for the future.

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- ⁱⁱⁱ Idaho State University. Digital Atlas of Idaho. <http://imnh.isu.edu/digitalatlas/index.htm#> (accessed December 2009)
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- ^x Glacial Lake Missoula and the Ice Age Floods. A Geological Catastrophe. Glacial Lake Missoula Org. <http://www.glaciallakemissoula.org/story.html> (accessed November 2009)
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- ^{xix} USDA Forest Service. Rocky Mountain Research Station. Forestry Sciences Lab. http://forest.moscowfsl.wsu.edu/smp/ltsp/ltsp_locations_PR.html (accessed December 2009)
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Protected Areas

Figure 2.1: View of Lake Pend' Oreille



Source: <http://sandpointid.net/Pics-Wildlife/Summer-Lake-Pend-Oreille.jpg>

Introduction

Priest River and the surrounding areas are characterized by the prominent natural resources common in Northern Idaho. The mountainous region, with its beautiful forests, lakes, and rivers continue to provide a landscape of natural, cultural, and historical significance. Initially, what these areas offered were economic viability for the surrounding communities through silver and gold mining and also the timber harvest, but have since opened to more opportunities,¹ including year-round recreation from water based recreation and winter sports, to traditional recreation such as hiking, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, camping, sightseeing, and biking. As markets forces and other influences have significantly decreased the timber industry, recreation and tourism may very well be the dominant economic driver for areas such as Priest River as visitors come to experience the great amenities around the community.

Priest River is located in Bonner County, the second most northern county in Idaho. The county itself consists of 1,112,064 acres.² Of the land in the county 492,593 acres is federal, which primarily consists of national forest land (472,575 acres).³ Much of the federal land, as well as portions of state and other agencies' land is protected to some degree from development and other uses, to provide wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. It is crucial that these natural areas of the region be preserved to retain the character they have long established and opportunities they continue to offer.

In this section:

- U.S. Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Idaho Department of Lands
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- University of Idaho
- State Parks
- Local Campgrounds
- Private Land Conservation
- Conclusion and Recommendations

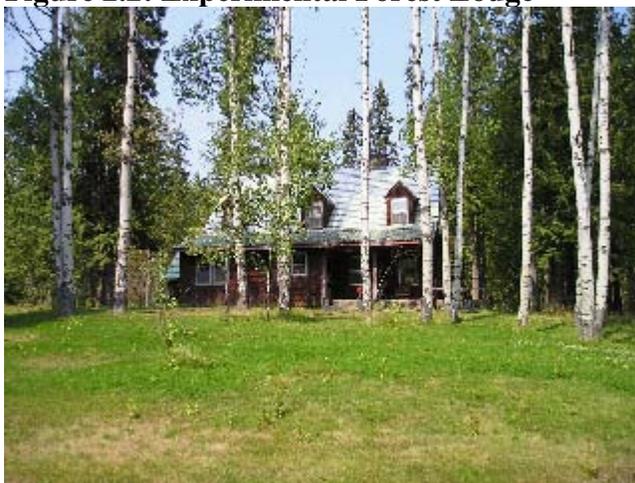
U.S. Forest Service

Of the 492,593 acres in Boundary County, 472,575 acres consists of national forests managed by the United States Forest Service, a U.S. Department of Agriculture agency responsible for managing and protecting public spaces within the country's forests and grasslands.^{4 5} The Forest Service conducts protection, management, and research of the natural resources, and engages in cooperation and collaboration with state and local governments and other entities.

The national forest land in Bonner County is within the Kaniksu National Forest, one of three forests (including St. Joe and Coeur d'Alene National Forests), which make up the greater Idaho Panhandle National Forest covering 2.5 million acres overall. Within this forest include two of Idaho's three largest lakes, Lake Pend Oreille and Priest Lake. The Kaniksu National Forest is divided up into five ranger districts including Sandpoint, Bonners Ferry, Priest Lake, Coeur d'Alene, and St. Joe. The Sandpoint Ranger District is the more immediate to Priest Lake and manages the forest lands based on the 1987 Forest Management Plan, which is proposed for revision in the near future.⁶ The Forest Service also administers roadless areas under the Final Rule, which designates large portions of land as roadless areas to prevent development and other uses.⁷ This excludes however, the necessary road construction or improvement for fire management and protection by the Forest Service.

The Priest River Experimental Forest which consists of 6,400 acres is located in the Kaniksu National Forest. This is part of the Rocky Mountain Research Station which is a larger regional body focusing on climate change research strategies, biodiversity issues, and habitat protection.⁸ Within the experimental forest are two natural areas for research, the Canyon Creek and Wellner Cliffs Natural areas which are set aside for their prominent natural setting, biodiversity, and significance.⁹ Research is conducted by specialists from many different areas including University of Idaho, Montana State University, Washington State University, as well as various Washington and Idaho State agencies.¹⁰

Figure 2.2: Experimental Forest Lodge



Source: http://forest.moscowfsl.wsu.edu/ef/pref/pref_facilities.php

A great deal of the federal land in Bonner County is managed by the Forest Service with a high level of protection. This enables healthy environmental systems to improve and enhance the environmental quality, offer wildlife habitat as well as different forms of recreation. The lands are protected from development and other uses which remove or damage the natural landscape to preserve this great amenity in Northern Idaho.

Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) owns 11,152 acres of the federal land in Bonner County.¹¹ The BLM is primarily responsible for carrying out many different programs for the management and protection of lands for different uses including grazing, energy, conservation, wildlife habitat, timber and mineral extraction, and many others, some of which generate high revenue returns (e.g. land leasing for mineral extraction).¹² The agency manages lands based on the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which recognizes the value of the land and requires multiple use management.¹³ “BLM’s land use plans are called Resource Management Plans (RMPs). RMPs are prepared for relatively large areas of public lands, called planning areas that tend to have similar resource characteristics. These planning areas usually coincide with BLM’s field office boundaries.¹⁴ The RMP provide a general means of management and protection for BLM lands to preserve their integrity.

The BLM lands in this area are administered by the Coeur d’Alene Regional.¹⁵ Much of this land in Bonner County is used for timber and mineral extraction, recreation (including off highway vehicle use), and wildlife habitat, notably bald eagles. Although there are no immediate areas of wilderness protection around Priest River, the Selkirk Crest Wilderness Area near Bonner’s Ferry consists of land inherent to the regional landscape and is offered a high level of protection.¹⁶ Although there are various uses within the BLM lands, ranging from wildlife habitat to mineral extraction; there are different levels of protection which retain the lands in the interest of the natural systems and public good.

Idaho Department of Lands

Of the 170,053 acres of State land in Bonner County, 167,640 acres are endowment lands used to generate revenue for public institutions such as public schools and other beneficiaries.¹⁷ These lands are aimed towards the highest possible financial generation, and primarily consist of timber harvesting, but also include land lease or trade “...in such a manner as will secure the maximum long term financial return to the institution to which is granted...”¹⁸

There are various supervisory areas in the region including Pend Oreille, Priest Lake, Mica, Cataldo, Kootenai Valley, and St. Joe. The Pend Oreille supervisory area is nearest Priest River, and consists of roughly 70,000 acres.¹⁹ Although these lands are used to acquire revenue, and are somewhat susceptible to trade and development, current protection of the lands is ensured as the highest value comes of land leasing and timber harvesting, in which somewhat preserves the natural character, although they are not greatly meant for public usage via recreation.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Of the state land in Bonner County, Idaho Fish and Game owns 1,415 acres, much of which exists along Pend Oreille, Priest Lake, and other bodies of water.²⁰ The Fish and Game manages its lands under the Idaho Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, which aims to promote, protect, and enhance habitat areas for wildlife and biological systems.²¹ The Fish and Game manages the various lands and conducts research through the Idaho Conservation Data Center, which research information is attributed to other agencies for the purpose of conservation and management of habitat.²²

Figure 2.3: View of Lake Pend Oreille



Source: www.maps.google.com

There are various fish and wildlife management areas in Northern Idaho. The Fish and Game Preserves nearest Priest River primarily exist along Lake Pend Oreille. These include the North Shore, Priest River, Carey Creek, Riley Creek, Hoodoo Bay, Morton Slough, and many other wildlife management areas.²³ These areas are set aside with a high level of protection for wildlife habitat and biologic diversity and natural systems enhancement, but are also designated for public use for viewing the wildlife. The Fish and Game works closely with various government agencies for best practices and research purposes for preserving and managing these areas. The Fish and Game areas are a good means for the public to interpret and experience wildlife and the natural environment, which enhances a greater understanding and desire to protect the natural landscape.

University of Idaho

The University of Idaho Experimental forest consists of 195 acres of land adjacent to the USFS Experimental Forest.^{24 25} The University Of Idaho College Of Natural Resources administers the forest area for multiple purposes including research, field laboratory for hands on training regarding biodiversity, health, and best management.²⁶ The land is also maintained to promote wildlife habitat and natural systems enhancement practices such as biodiversity, watershed evaluation, and recreation. This land is used much like the USFS lands, and consists of a similar level of protection, which preserves the integrity of the land for beneficial purposes.

Figure 2.4: Students and faculty conducting field work at the experimental forest



<http://www.cnr.uidaho.edu/expforest/education.htm>

State Parks

State parks are managed by the Idaho Parks and Recreation whose aim is to improve Idahoan's quality of life through outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship.²⁷ Numerous State parks throughout Bonner County, which consist of 803 acres.²⁸ Primarily they manage their lands under the 2006-2010 Idaho Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, which provide a guideline to promote outdoor recreational opportunities with high concern for natural resource stewardship.²⁹ “It is the intent of the legislature that the department of parks and recreation shall formulate and put into execution a long range, comprehensive plan and program for the acquisition or leasing, planning, protection, operation, maintenance, development and wise use of areas of scenic beauty, recreational utility, historic, archaeological or scientific interest, to the end that the health, happiness, recreational opportunities and wholesome enjoyment of life of the people may be further encouraged”.³⁰ The agency works with other governing bodies and stakeholders through land acquisition, leasing, and other means to promote protection and enable recreational access to the scenically beautiful areas.

The State Parks near Priest River include the pristine Priest and Pend Oreille Lakes. These include Priest Lake State Park, Indian Creek State Park, Round Lake State Park, and Farragut State Park. Each offers the scenic beauty consistent in the region with multiple recreational opportunities including boating, camping, hiking, and so forth. These lands are highly protected with minimal developments to provide recreational facilities and infrastructure to the public.

Local Campgrounds

Near Priest River are various campgrounds which provide recreational amenities to visitors and residents. Among these include Albeni Falls Campground, Albeni Cove Campground, Priest River Campground, and Spirit Pines Spring Point, with many more on a larger scale radiating away from Priest River. These areas consist of recreational facilities for camping integrated into the natural settings. Although the actual sizes of these lands are not readily available, each is located along Lake Pend Oreille, which offers a great opportunity for users to experience nature.

Private Land Conservation

Private land ownership consists of the second largest amount of land in Bonner County comprising 440,780 acres.³¹ There are various means for private lands to be conserved, primarily through land trusts, non-profit organizations that purchase, accept donations, or partake in conservation easements to protect the land from development. There are various non-profit organizations that participate in land conservation throughout Bonner County and the larger region. The Selkirk Conservation Alliance is among one of the more prominent, who collaborate with government agencies, other organizations, and private landowner to encourage and promote land conservation.³² Other conservation groups who work in the immediate and larger region include Bear Aware British Columbia, Clark Fork-Pend Oreille Conservancy, Conservation Northwest, Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Idaho Conservation League, Kootenai Environmental Alliance, Panhandle Environmental League, Pend Oreille Basin commission, Rock Creek Alliance, and the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative. Each of these works collaboratively with different agencies and stakeholders to promote conservation of natural areas.

Another opportunity for private landowners to participate in land conservation and also acquire financial incentives is to collaborate with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The NRCS is administered through the USDA and provides financial assistance to landowners through land rental and cost sharing to reintroduce native plantings to mitigate problems which are damaging critical natural resources (e.g. erosion into stream corridors).³³ Different programs include Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Healthy Forests Reserve Program, and Emergency Watershed Program.³⁴ Each of these provides a means for protection of private lands with financial incentives to encourage conservation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Priest River, like many other Northern Idaho communities, is characterized culturally and historically by the surrounding natural resources. These natural resources have attracted settlement due to the economic opportunities they have provided. Although some of these industries are diminishing, the natural amenities still offer opportunity to support these communities. It is crucial to promote preservation and conservation of these lands for the benefits they provide including natural wildlife habitat, healthy ecosystems, recreation, and scenic beauty. This is especially true with inevitable growth and demand for resources.

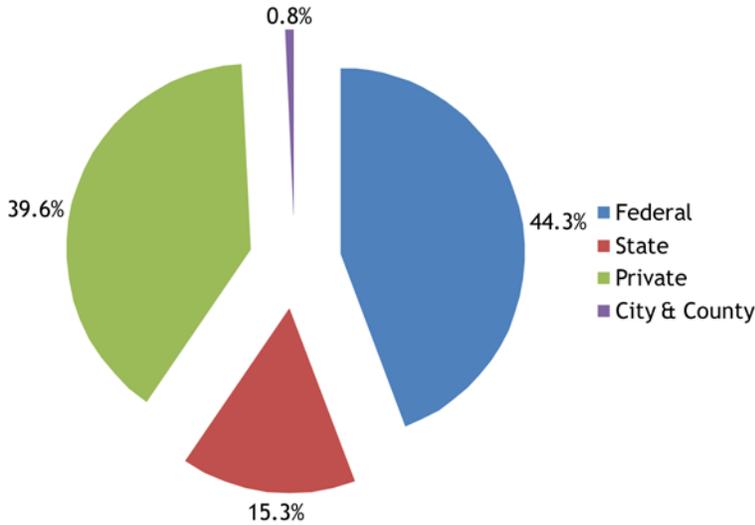
The different agencies that manage protected areas for preservation should continue to collaborate and plan for and manage these lands to ensure the longevity of these areas. There are various programs, financial incentives, and other intrinsic benefits of doing so. Overall these promote the general wellbeing of the natural environment and human existence within.

Table 2.1: Protected Lands in Bonner County

Management Agency	Total Acres	Allowed Uses	Level of Protection
U.S. Forest Service	472, 575	Timber, Grazing, Recreation, Wilderness, Wildlife Habitat	Moderate/High
Bureau of Land Management	11, 162	Grazing, Timber, Mining, Recreation, Wildlife Habitat	Moderate/High
Idaho State Department of Lands	167, 640	Grazing, Timber, Mining, Recreation	Low/Moderate
Idaho State Parks and Recreation	803	Recreation, Wildlife Habitat	High
Idaho State Fish and Game	1,415	Fish Habitat, Interpretive Sites	High
University of Idaho	195	Research, Wildlife Habitat	High
Local Campgrounds	Unknown	Recreation, Wildlife Habitat	High
Private Land Conservation	Unknown	Various	Various

Figure 2.5: Bonner County Land Distribution

Percent of Total Land Ownership



Source: <http://commerce.idaho.gov/>

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- ¹ U.S. Forest Service, "Idaho Panhandle National Forest Homepage," <http://www.fs.fed.us>, Retrieved 11/22/2009
 - ² Idaho Department of Commerce, "County Profiles: Bonner," <http://commerce.idaho.gov/>, retrieved 11/21/2009
 - ³ Ibid
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 - ⁶ Richard Kramer Sandpoint District Ranger, Personal Interview 9/22/2009
 - ⁷ U.S. Forest Service, "Idaho Roadless Conservation System," <http://www.fs.fed.us>, Retrieved 11/22/2009
 - ⁸ U.S. Forest Service, "Rocky Mountain Research Station," <http://www.fs.fed.us>, Retrieved 11/22/2009
 - ⁹ U.S. Forest Service, "Priest River Experimental Forest," <http://www.fs.fed.us>, Retrieved 11/22/2009
 - ¹⁰ Ibid
 - ¹¹ Idaho Department of Commerce, "County Profiles: Bonner," <http://commerce.idaho.gov/>, retrieved 11/21/2009
 - ¹² Bureau of Land Management, "BLM About Us," <http://www.blm.gov/>, Retrieved 11/23/2009
 - ¹³ Bureau of Land Management, "Federal Land Policy Management Act," <http://www.blm.gov/>, Retrieved 11/23/2009
 - ¹⁴ Ibid
 - ¹⁵ Bureau of Land Management, "BLM Planning," <http://www.blm.gov/>, Retrieved 11/23/2009
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 - ¹⁷ Idaho Department of Commerce, "County Profiles: Bonner," <http://commerce.idaho.gov/>, retrieved 11/21/2009
 - ¹⁸ Idaho Department of Land, "Overview," <http://www.idl.idaho.gov>, Retrieved 11/25/2009
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 - ²⁰ Idaho Department of Commerce, "County Profiles: Bonner," <http://commerce.idaho.gov/>, retrieved 11/21/2009
 - ²¹ Idaho Fish and Game "ICWCS," <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov>, Retrieved 11/23/2009
 - ²² Idaho Fish and Game "IDCDC," <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov>, Retrieved 11/23/2009
 - ²³ Idaho Fish and Game "Pend Oreille Wildlife Management Area," <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov>, Retrieved 11/23/2009
 - ²⁴ Idaho Department of Commerce, "County Profiles: Bonner," <http://commerce.idaho.gov/>, Retrieved 11/21/2009
 - ²⁵ Stan Galloway IDL Land Resource Supervisor, Personal Contact via Phone Call, Retrieved 11/30/2009
 - ²⁶ UI College of Natural Resources "UIEF Overview," <http://www.cnr.uidaho.edu>, Retrieved 12/5/2009
 - ²⁷ Idaho Parks and Recreation, "What We Do," <http://www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov>, Retrieved 11/24/2009
 - ²⁸ Idaho Department of Commerce, "County Profiles: Bonner," <http://commerce.idaho.gov/>, Retrieved 11/21/2009
 - ²⁹ Idaho Parks and Recreation, "Strategic Plan," <http://www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov>, Retrieved 11/24/2009
 - ³⁰ Ibid
 - ³¹ Idaho Department of Commerce, "County Profiles: Bonner," <http://commerce.idaho.gov/>, Retrieved 11/21/2009
 - ³² Selkirk Conservation Alliance, "Overview," <http://www.scawild.org/>, Retrieved 11/28/2009
 - ³³ Natural Resource Conservation Service "Overview," <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>. Retrieved 11/21/2009
 - ³⁴ Ibid

Cultural Landscapes of Priest River

Introduction

The Priest River area has been a natural collecting place for people dating back to pre-historic times. Spearheads have been found from the prehistoric era where people would hunt for the now-extinct species the woolley mammoth and giant bison.¹

The Priest River area is rich with cultural heritage and the process of preserving and passing on this historical cultural knowledge nurtures the relationship with this geographic place. Residents of today can foster their present connection to this place through deepening their understanding of the residents and culture of the past.

In This Section:

- Definition of Cultural Landscapes
- Kalispel Native Americans
- The Northern Pacific
- Migrants to the area
- Economic Foundation of Priest River
- Rich with Resources
- Currently Preserved Cultural Landscapes
- Possible Preservation of Cultural Landscapes

Definition of Cultural Landscapes

The National Park Service defines cultural landscapes as “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.”² Cultural landscapes can be varied and they include designed landscapes, historic sites, vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes. The *designed landscape* has been designed by a person and can be a natural or man-made environment. This could be the design of a park, plaza, building, or garden. *Historic sites* are places that have direct association with a person, activity, or event. A *vernacular landscape* is a landscape that reflects the land use of the people present in that area. This landscape can be defined by an individual and or a community and “reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of those everyday”.³ The final landscape is the *ethnographic landscape*. This landscape defines the heritage of an area and or region, and includes a variety of natural and cultural resources. Cultural landscapes can fit into more than one of these four described categories; it is important to understand the diversity and multifaceted character that defines historical places. The Cultural Landscape Foundation goes on to describe that cultural landscapes “provide a sense of place and identity; they map our relationship with the land over time; and they are part of our national heritage and each of our lives.”⁴ Preserving cultural landscapes will increase local knowledge and help increase community pride. Priest River can work towards transforming the present community into a vibrant cultural center celebrating their history. Residents and visitors alike could benefit and enjoy the preservation of these landscapes.

Kalispel Native Americans

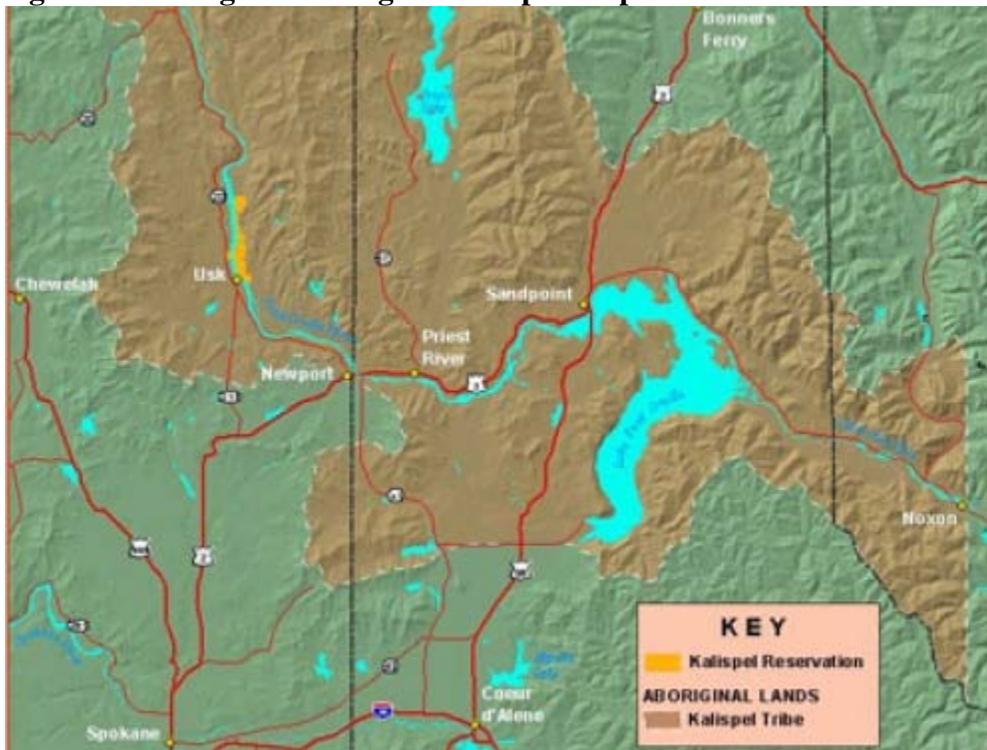
The word Kaniksu comes from the language of the Kalispel Native Americans and means “black robe” or “priest.”⁵ The Kalispel spoke a variation of Salish, a native language of the area, which is one of the most endangered languages in the world. Only three people are fluent in this language and on April 24, 2009 an article in the Spokesman Review reported, “It wasn’t until 11 Kalispel elders died within three months a few years ago that the tribe realized the urgency of its mission to preserve its Salish dialect”.⁶

The Kalispel people originally occupied the Priest River area and traveled along the waterways. The Kalispel people were divided into the upper and lower tribes and were closely related to Coeur d’Alenes and other Interior Salishan peoples. Albeni Falls was a popular fishing location and was the approximate area of division between the upper and lower Kalispel people.⁷ The mobile nature of the Kalispel people increased the intermingling among different regional natives. The native people of this area were known by the European Settlers as “paddlers” because of their ability to navigate the waters and their use of bark canoes.⁸ “The Seneacquoten historic marker on Highway 2, eight miles east of town, marks the Indian Campground and river crossing where the old Indian Trail to British Columbia joined the wagon road from Walla Walla, Washington”.⁹

The range of the Kalispel people once covered the Bonner County region and crossed into Washington State. The current reservation of the Kalispel people is located in Washington and

can be identified by the orange area on the map (see figure 3.1). The brown area is the Kalispel historic indigenous lands.

Figure 3.1: Indigenous Range of Kailspel People



Source: Kalispel Tribe of Indians Webpage [://www.kalispeltribe.com/maps/album/Reservation-Maps](http://www.kalispeltribe.com/maps/album/Reservation-Maps)

The Kalispel people would hunt and gather food throughout the historic indigenous range. Dr. George Suckley recorded his observations of the Kalispel people in 1853 and reflects on their habits:

In the summer the Indians live principally on fish, which they catch not only in weirs and fish traps, but by hook and line and by spearing. They also collect camas and bitter roots, and a berry, called in some of the eastern States the sugar-berry or sugar-pear. These they dry separately, and also in cakes, with moss, for winter use. This food affords nourishment merely sufficient to sustain life. In the autumn, in addition to hunting venison and bear, they dry meat and fish for winter use¹⁰

The Kalispel people were one of the first traceable human settlements to live in this area and they create an important layer of heritage for this region.

The Northern Pacific

The construction of the Northern Pacific railroad is one of the driving forces of European settlers and the formation of more established towns and cities in Northern Idaho. People came to the

area to build the railroad and some of them stayed and formed small mountain communities. The following is a description given by the newspaper *Independent* in 1882 describing a camp located in Bonner County. The camp is called Cabinet Landing on the Clark Fork River.

Near the end of the track, may be seen the largest moving city in the world. Never during the present era of railroad building has there been witnessed such a scene as this which now presents itself at the end of the track. Here are at least 5,000 persons, all men except twenty five, and all bent on making money. There are tents, shanties, caves, and "wickyups" of all shapes and sizes. Order or regulation as far as streets are concerned, there is none. The valley is too narrow for a compact town site for 5000 inhabitants, hence the tents and shanties are scattered. I counted fifty one gin mills, or saloons, a dozen general merchandise tents, and about the same number of boarding tents.¹¹

The Northern Railroad served as a vehicle to transport timber and other resource extractions from Northern Idaho. With the construction of the rail line, new communities formed in this region.

Migrants to the area

The Roman Catholic Church had a presence in Northern Idaho and it is stated by Reverend James F. Estes that these priests "labored long and hard with the Indians of North Idaho." Estes goes on to say that there was a priest in this area during the days of the Northwest Territory; the Indians began to call Priest Lake, Lake Kaniksu. Kaniksu, meaning "priest" or "black robe," to the settlement known as Priest River. When the Northern Railroad came to this area in the late 1800's it referred to Priest River as Valencia, but when another town in Idaho had taken the name of Valencia, the name Priest River was adopted.¹²

Figure 3.2: Priest in Bonner County



Source: Priest River Chamber of Commerce - [.priestriver.org](http://priestriver.org)

The Great Northern railroad brought many Italian settlers to this area that remained and formed a community along Settlement Road. Some of the earliest family names were Bossio, Veltri, Naccarato, Maio, Anselmo, Mauro, and Saccomanno. Some other "first settlers" in this area and

builders of the community were: Mr. Judge, Henry Keyser, John Canton, Thomas Benton, J.C. Finstad, M.S. Lindsey, Charles W. Beardmore, and C.C. Lamley.¹³

Henry Keyser was a German settler of this area and he purchased his land from the Kalispel Indians about 1888. The Keyser Land was in the area of “The Settlement” just east of Priest River and it had its own school and church.¹⁴ The Kalispel Indians would frequent the Settlement and use Keyser’s land as a fish camp. Mr. Venn Stewart, a resident of Priest River in the 1960’s, recalls the Kalispel people. “The Indians used to come back there and camp during fishing and hunting season in the spring and fall. They never stayed permanently. They moved from here down to the Kalispel Valley, below Cusick and Usk, on the east side of the river.”¹⁵ The Keyser house is an important landmark for the Priest River area and represents one of the first homesteads of this area. The house has been moved to its current location in downtown Priest River. It is used for educational purposes, preserving the knowledge of the traditional timber practices and tools.

Figure 3.3: Earlier photo of Keyser House



3.3 Source: City of Priest River - [://www.priestriver-id.gov/history/photos.html](http://www.priestriver-id.gov/history/photos.html)

3.4 Source: Priest River Chamber of Commerce - [.priestriver.org](http://priestriver.org)

Figure 3.4: Keyser House at current location in town



While the Keyser family was one of the first homestead families, Charles Jackson owned the general merchandise store in 1890 and was the first person to lay out the town of Priest River in 1901. Mr. Judge was the judge and deputy sheriff 1897-1902, and Charles Beardmore was a successful businessman in this town with businesses ranging from the timber industry to providing tourist accommodations.

Figure 3.5: Early Priest River, pre-automobile



3.5 Source: Priest River Chamber of Commerce - [.priestriver.org](http://priestriver.org)

Figure 3.6: Priest River Auto-Era



3.6 Source: City of Priest River- [://www.priestriver-id.gov/history/photos.html](http://www.priestriver-id.gov/history/photos.html)

St. Anthony's Mission church was erected in 1914 and at first, served as both the schoolhouse and the church. Monthly masses would be held there with priests that would travel from Spokane. The priest from the St. Catherine of Sienna Church in Priest River conducted the services for a period of time. Unfortunately, in 1951 St. Anthony's needed repair and was torn down. A picnic area is located on the grounds of the old St. Anthony church today. The schoolhouse was in three different locations throughout its history in the Settlement. The school system was consolidated in 1939 and the Settlement school system joined the town of Priest River. A schoolhouse has been restored on Settlement Road and is currently the Knights of Columbus hall. Every year in May the community gathers in this area and celebrates the "Settlement Picnic." The first picnic is believed to have occurred in 1915 as either a celebration of the church dedication, or in celebration of the Italian army joining the side of the Allies during the Great War.¹⁶

Economic Foundation of Priest River

The Priest River area thrived on the logging industry the greater first half of the nineteenth century; and logging continues, but at a smaller scale in this region today. Although mining, agriculture, and tourism are part of the Priest River's past, the rich history of this place is based on timber. The early-day practices of timber harvest, reliance on the railroads, and the river drives can be seen by "physical evidence, including the remains of hillside flumes and holding dams along the streams" explained the Chamber of Commerce in a pamphlet created in the 1960's.¹⁷ The traditional ways of logging was practiced from 1901 to 1949 and the Priest River Chamber of Commerce states, "The greatest drive ever brought down the river was in 1931. The 'river pigs' rode herd on 50,000 cedar poles and an estimated 125,000,000 feet of logs that year."¹⁸ The Priest River area is unique and has held onto the traditions of the original logging days. Marylyn Cork states, "As far as is known, the drive was the last log drive to take place in the lower 48 except for the Clearwater drive, also in Idaho."¹⁹ Many of the traditional logging skills are passed onto the youth in this area and are celebrated annually at the Timber Days festival. This festival began in 1901 and is embraced today as an annual festival in the City of Priest River.

Figure 3.7: Timber Days Festival



Source: Priest River Chamber of Commerce - priestriver.org

Priest River was the starting ground for people wishing to visit Priest Lake and access what is now the Kaniksu National Forest. While Priest River was predominantly the stomping ground for loggers and the city reflected this culture; it also hosted tourists wishing to visit and explore the rich forested area surrounding Priest River. Alvin Vinther recalls on his experience passing through Priest River while traveling to Priest Lake in 1907. With respect to lodging in Priest River, Vinther reflects “Bedbugs were prevalent in all logging towns then, and this was an ‘open’ one. The bars were full of lumberjacks and the streets bustling with people and drunks. Fist fights were so common you hardly paid them any attention. In those days if a lumber jack disagreed with another ‘jack’, they didn’t argue; they just started to slug each other.”²⁰ Upon their early departure from Priest River they ate a good breakfast and loaded onto an open wagon pulled by 4 horses. They traveled 25 miles in 13 hours with one stopping point at the halfway house where they were fed a meal and the horses were changed out. Alvin describes quick bathroom breaks occurring along the way when the drivers of these wagons would stop to let the horses rest and the people on the wagons would jump off to stretch their legs. The women and children would head one direction to use the restroom, while the men would go the other direction. People would relieve themselves in the forest and reload the wagon to continue on their journey.²¹

Priest River was and is a logging town, and with this heritage it has a history of drinking and prostitution. Priest River was home to many whorehouses and these houses stayed open and were part of the Priest River community until 1956. Reverend James F. Estes states that “In open defiance of state law, a house was being operated in Priest River. But what was even more, the house advertised in the state magazine of the state patrol, of the state of Idaho.”²² Estes organized a petition and eventually the community organized and shut down the house with red curtains in 1956.²³

Rich with Resources

Priest River was the starting ground for people wishing to visit Priest Lake and access what is now the Kaniksu National Forest. While Priest River was predominantly the stomping ground for loggers and the city reflected this culture; it also hosted tourists wishing to visit and explore the rich forested area

This area was and is recognized for its bountiful natural resources with diverse flora and fauna. This area was and is prized for the production of softwoods such as the Inland Red Cedar and the Idaho White Pine, this area is plentiful with wildlife for harvesting and viewing. The Chamber of

Commerce publicized the variety of fish present in this area in the late 1950's and 60's. They found record sized fish in the Priest Lake area, north of Priest River. The variety of fish included: Dolly Vardens, Kokanee, Mackinaw, and Cutthroat trout. A 51 pound Mackinaw trout was recorded in this area and it became quite the angler hot spot in the 1960's.²⁴ The Chamber of Commerce publicity material, *Kaniksu Waterways*, appealed to the tourism industry. Priest River has the potential to diversify on the economy of this area. The town is rich not only with natural resources, but interesting historic places, landscapes, language, and stories to be preserved and interpreted to the public, therefore strengthening the sense of place in this area.

Currently preserved Cultural Landscapes

The Priest River community has some structures listed with the National Register of Historic Places with the National Park Service. Currently Hotel Charbonneau (Lorraine Hotel), Priest River Commercial Core Historic District, Priest River Experimental Forest, Priest River High School, and the Settlement School are all listed with the register. Gathering and inventorying all types of cultural landscapes is important to preserve the character and history of this town for future generations.²⁵

Possible Preservation of Cultural Landscapes

The Priest River area is rich with natural resources and in the past has attracted tourism to the area by publicizing the variety of outdoor recreation activities found in this area. The opportunity to find peace away from the busy sounds of city life still remains today and Priest River could extend the invitation for visitors to find Priest River, and the surrounding area, as a rustic respite area away from the busy ways of cities. It is important to understand and preserve the integrity of Priest River and hold onto the "culture" of this place while attracting business and tourism to the area. Priest River once was and continues to be a "gateway" to Priest Lake and the wild and scenic places found within Kaniksu National Forest. Preservation of the log slides, logging history and landscapes, natural forests, swimming holes, pubs, restaurants, and hotels are important to preserving the integrity of Priest River. Integrating historical names into new and old business establishments can help preserve the logging and rowdy past of this place. Fish weirs, railroad camps, and native camping grounds, as well as other historic and current cultural landscapes can be identified and interpreted. The economic foundation of Priest River was built on the lumber industry, but as the demand for lumber decreases it is important for the Priest River area to diversify its economic base. Through the preservation of Priest River's history and cultural landscapes, the community can build a strong sense of place in which to attract new businesses and residents.

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- ¹ “City of Priest River Comprehensive Plan” (City of Priest River, 2005).
- ² Charles A. Birnbaum, “Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes,” *Protecting Cultural Landscapes*, September 1994, <http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief36.htm>.
- ³ “What are Cultural Landscapes? | The Cultural Landscape Foundation,” *The Cultural Landscape Foundation*, <http://www.tclf.org/landscapes/what-are-cultural-landscapes>.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ “Kaniksu Waterways” (Chamber of Commerce Priest River, Idaho), Special Collections.
- ⁶ Kevin Graman, “Salish speakers gather | Spokesman.com | Apr 24, 2009,” *The Spokesman-Review*, April 24, 2009, <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2009/apr/24/salish-speakers-gather/>.
- ⁷ “City of Priest River Comprehensive Plan.”
- ⁸ Keith Landreth, Keo Boreson, and Mary Condon, *Northern Pacific* (Eastern Washington University Reports in Archaeology and History 100-45, 1985).
- ⁹ “Kaniksu Waterways.”
- ¹⁰ Landreth, Boreson, and Condon, *Northern Pacific*.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² James F. Estes, *The Early Days of Priest River* (Special Collections U of I, 1961).
- ¹³ Alvin C. Vinther, *Kaniksu and Tales of Priest Lake and Priest River*, First. (Printed in the United States, 1976).
- ¹⁴ Marylyn Cork, “The First Home Town Primer” (Bonner County Historical Society, July 1974).
- ¹⁵ Estes, *The Early Days of Priest River*.
- ¹⁶ Cork, “The Settlement - The Italians at Priest River.”
- ¹⁷ “Kaniksu Waterways.”
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Marylyn Cork, “Priest River, Idaho - History,” <http://www.priestriver-id.gov/history.html>.
- ²⁰ Vinther, *Kaniksu and Tales of Priest Lake and Priest River*.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Estes, *The Early Days of Priest River*.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ “Kaniksu Waterways.”
- ²⁵ “National Register,” *National Register of Historic Places*, December 8, 2009, <http://nrhp.focus.nps.gov/natreghome.do>.

History

Figure 4.1: Man Sitting on Log



4.1 Source: [://www.priestriver-id.gov/history/photos.html](http://www.priestriver-id.gov/history/photos.html)

Figure 4.2: River Pigs



4.2 Source: [://www.sd83.k12.id.us/PRE/Quest/logging.htm](http://www.sd83.k12.id.us/PRE/Quest/logging.htm)

Introduction

“No place is a place until the things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments”¹ Each place has a sense of history that reflects the intersection of past events of a personal and public nature. A sense of history locates us in time and space. It provides us with the knowledge of where we came from, who we are, and why we are here. It fills in the gaps in our personal memories and family stories that help us understand our place. Through examining and appreciating our history we explore fundamental questions concerning personal and community identity and our relationship to the environment.

Understanding a sense of history can also shape perceptions of the historic preservation of life-place by facilitating communities to define and protect their unique character created from the past that influences the present, which will improve the future. This section reviews key elements of Priest River and Bonner County Pre-Settlement and Settlement History, and examines that history’s place in the present.

In this section:

- Pre-Settlement 1700 - 1890
- Settlement 1891 - 1973
- History’s Place in the Present

Pre-Settlement 1700 - 1890

The first inhabitants of present-day Priest River and Bonner County were the Kalispel Indians. The Kalispel Indians were a peaceful tribe who adapted well to the local resources. They established year round settlement near what is known today as Laclede. They were predominately established in this location until the introduction of the horse. This led to changes in Kalispel culture by providing a faster mode of transportation that allowed the Kalispel to participate in buffalo hunts across the Rocky Mountains and to have contact with the Plains Indians, who taught them how to use buffalo hides for their shelter. The Kalispel tribe remained in the region.²

In 1809, David Thompson of the Hudson Bay Company traveled to Northern Idaho to survey the area for the purpose of map making. He started the Kullyspell Trade House in present day Hope, Idaho, which paved the way for fur trappers and traders for the second inhabitants of Bonner County. The fur trading industry flourished in the area through the 1840s and 50s, followed by the arrival of Isaac Steven representing the transcontinental railroad survey. Stevens explored possible railway routes through this northern section of Idaho.

In the early 1860s a variety of explorers came into or passed through the area. British and American surveyors camped in Bonner County while making calculations to determine the establishment of an international boundary. During this period gold was also discovered in British Columbia and Montana, which led to thousands of miners following trails through this section of Idaho to various places in the Northwest. However like the fur trade industry, mining was only temporary.

Figure 4.3: Henry & Elizabeth Keyser's Wedding Day



Source: [://www.priestriver-id.gov/history/photos.html](http://www.priestriver-id.gov/history/photos.html)

Northern Idaho began to see more changes in the 1880s as the Northern Pacific began construction of its railroads. Towns across the region sprung up near the railways while the countryside flourished with settlers who purchased land from the railroad companies for \$2.60 an acre³ In 1888 Henry and Elizabeth Keyser of Germany along with others, homesteaded just east and across the river in an area known as Keyser's Slough. However this first settlement area was short lived due to extremely high levels of snowfall in the winter of 1890. Travel throughout Bonner County came to a halt, cattle

died from exposure, and area residents were forced to move to higher ground after the spring flooding.⁴ Settlers moved across the river to what is now present-day Priest River.

Settlement 1891 - 1973

Valenica was the original name given to Priest River. However according to an 1892 Pend Oreille Review article, the Great Northern Railway changed the settlement's name to Priest River because a Valencia already existed in Idaho. "Priest" is said to derive from the Kalispel word "kaniksu" meaning black robes referring to the missionaries.⁵

Figure 4.4: Italian Men in Settlement



Source: [://www.priestriver-id.gov/history/photos.html](http://www.priestriver-id.gov/history/photos.html)

The timber industry has been Priest River's main economic resource since the town's beginning. The rich and plentiful Northern Idaho forests enticed Midwest timber companies to move in shortly after the Great Northern and Spokane International railway companies began construction in 1892. The town of Priest River was incorporated the year before in 1891. During this time, a group of Italians including two large families of six and four brothers, who had immigrated first to Canada, answered a Great Northern advertisement for laborers. Not long after the men requested wives from Italy and the new families settled east of town in a section known as the Italian Settlement. The Italian settlement had its own schoolhouse and church, until the school districts were forced to consolidate in the 1930s.⁶

When Humbird Lumber Company and several other logging companies settled in the area in the 1900s to 1920s, Bonner County and Priest River saw the largest economic boom. Using the river to move the logs to the mills, was the timber industry's perfect solution to transportation. It was impossible to build mountain roads or trucks to carry the weight of the timber. Therefore, the steep mountain slopes were used as chutes to slide logs down the hill to the river. During winter months sleighs were used to haul the logs to the river landings. The log drive on the river depended on when the snow melted. When snow levels raised the river to high water levels, the log drive began.⁷ For decades Priest River was a rich lumber community. A vital piece of this town's past is the annual log drive celebration, which began in 1901. Its ties to the timber industry are the reason this celebration continued for fifty years in Priest River.

Priest River's downtown construction began in the early 1900s. The county's economy thrived in the 1920s, when mill owner Beardmore built the first few buildings, including a hotel, a few stores, and a post office. In 1973, Priest River experienced a horrific fire that destroyed several buildings in the downtown area. Those businesses including the post office reopened in other parts of town.

History's Place in the Present

Despite American culture having a sense of disconnect from its history, citizens seem to spend a great deal of their leisure time participating in ceremonies and festivals; interpreting historical films, literature, music and art; and visiting historic sites and museums. Through these activities, history's relevant lessons can be preserved. Knowing our history helps us understand our connections from the past to the present and understand our place within the larger region. Our sense of belonging may foster a feeling of community pride and help us connect to our community and region.

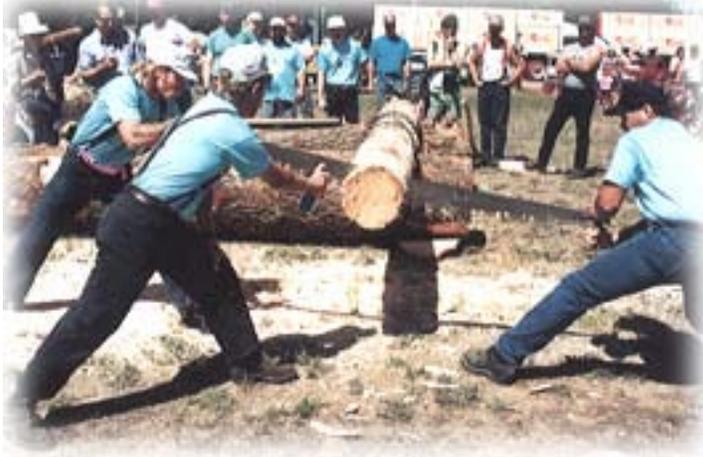
Figure 4.5: Beardmore Building



Source: riverjournal.com

Priest River is in a transitional period and some of these connections will not be able to serve this community in the same manner in the future. What defined Priest River in the past is its logging tradition. While defining Priest River now it is important to recognize how the present is linked to the past. What aspects of historical Priest River still exist? These links can be found in a number of areas such as natural resources, religion, community involvement, festivals, celebrations, traditions, and historic buildings and sites. Links to the past in present day Priest River may be found at the Catholic Church that sponsors an Italian food drive, Italian pastries are made during holidays, and the annual Timber Day's Festival. Downtown Priest River has several historic buildings that are listed on the Historic National Register. Even though Priest River will be opening a new chapter in its history, remembering and celebrating the links to the past will help the individual and the community. This new chapter will facilitate a sense of identity and belonging to a community that is searching for a new personality.

Figure 4.6: Timber Days Festival



Source: [.priestriver.org/images/timber_days.jpg](http://priestriver.org/images/timber_days.jpg)

Priest River & Bonner County Timeline

1700	Kalispel Indian Settlement
1805	Lewis & Clark Arrived in Idaho
1809	Kullyspell Trade House (Hope)
1821	Hudson Bay Co. took over Kullyspell Trade House
1840-50s	Fur Trade Industry
1844	Missionaries Arrived
1850	Transcontinental Railway Surveys
1860-61	British & American Surveyors Camped while determining an International Boundary
1862	Homestead Act
1863	Gold Discovered in Northwest
1888	Henry Keyser Homesteaded
1890	Priest River First School
1891	Priest River First Post Office Great Northern Railway Surveyed Great Northern Advertized for Laborers
1892	Great Northern Railway Construction Began Italian Railway Laborers Came Priest River Growth Stimulated
1900	Charles Beardmore Arrived
1901	First Log Drive
1902	Keyser built first downtown business block
1903	Great Fire Destroyed downtown
1920	Timber Industry Boom
1932	Humbird Lumber Advertized for Laborers
1939	Italian & German Schools consolidated
1973	Fire Destroyed Downtown

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1. Glassberg, D. (2001) *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*
 2. Cork, Marilyn. (1991) *Beautiful Bonner: History of Bonner County*. Dallas, TX: Curtis Media Corp.
 3. *ibid.*
 4. Estes, James R. (1961) *The Early Days of Priest River*.
 5. Cork, Marilyn. (1991) *Beautiful Bonner: History of Bonner County*. Dallas, TX: Curtis Media Corp.
 6. Cork, Marilyn. No Date. *The Settlement – The Italians at Priest River*.
 7. Crow, P. No Date. *Log Drive on the Priest*.

Agriculture

Figure 5.1: Grassland



Source: www.secondspace.com/.../18/81/F9/16T_01.jpg

Introduction

From an historical perspective agriculture was vital to the development of human civilization. Without the capacity to produce food beyond the needs of the family, humans would have done little more than develop societies that sustained their individual needs for nourishment and survival. Trade and economy evolved following the development of sustainable food sources.¹

Advances in agriculture provided socio-economic changes within societies. This discipline includes a variety of techniques such as plant raising and domesticating animals. It also includes the specialties of plant breeding, selective breeding, and horticulture. This chapter will discuss the key element of agriculture in Priest River and Bonner County.

In this section:

- Agricultural History 1900 - 1949
- Horticulture 1950 - Present
- UI Extension and Master Gardener's Program
- Agriculture's Future in Priest River and Bonner County

Agricultural History 1900 - 1949

The history of agriculture in Priest River and Bonner County has not changed much over time because of the region's mountainous terrain. There has always been a small farming presence. However, a high percentage of Bonner County is covered by steep slope, which is unsuitable for farming.

After purchasing their homesteads from the railroad companies, early settlers had to clear the land of stumps left by the timber industry before they could begin farming. Clearing the land was expensive and some farmers had very limited means. Therefore, they often had only small patches of land between stumps for cultivation.² The typical farm size was forty to eighty acres. Only a few farms were over one hundred acres. The abundance of harvests depended on the spring floods. To supplement their farming income, farmers also worked in the timber mills.

Crops planted during the early 1900's consisted of grass hay such as clover and timothy; root plants including carrots, parsnips, mangels, and turnips; and potatoes. The grass hay was feed for cattle, hobbyhorses, and logging horses. The root crops were usually grown for family use.³ In the 1950s there were a few dairy and beef operations across the region. The milk was sold to creameries in Washington State and other states in the Midwest for butter and condensed milk. Kale was grown to feed the dairy cows.

Horticulture 1950 - Present

Horticulture derives from the Greek word "*horti*" meaning grass and the word "*culture*" meaning "the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends on the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations."⁴ Horticulture is both an industry and a science involving continuous research on plant propagation, cultivation, production, breeding, genetics, biochemistry, and physiology that occur on small-scale farms. There are eight areas of study within this discipline, including arboriculture, floriculture, landscape horticulture, olericulture, pomology, viticulture, and postharvest physiology. Such plants as fruits, berries, nuts, vegetables, flowers, trees, shrubs, and turf are grown and studied by horticulturists.

Evidence of horticulture was traced to Ancient Greece. Horticulture's development is the result of societies shift from nomadic to stationary communities. Priest River and Bonner County began to see a shift from small farming to horticulture in the 1950s. Christmas tree farms, nurseries, and high value specialty crops were on the rise in Bonner County by the 1970s. Christmas tree farming has been a long established business in the Pacific Northwest. These trees are suitable for growing in Bonner County's mountainous terrain, and require high precipitation. The acreage for a Christmas tree farm is typically small and most are family owned and operated. However, farming this specialty crop is hard work, and takes a long time before trees are mature enough for harvest. In addition consumers are fickle, and their Christmas tree preferences change frequently.⁵

Figure 5.2: Buo Natale, Christmas Tree Farm in Boundary County



Source: www. .com/ images/258_DSCF0022.jpg

Today, horticulture still has a strong presence in Priest River and Bonner County. Greenhouses and nurseries with high value bedding plants and flowers are sold for wholesale. Pick your own huckleberry and blueberry patches are found all over the region. Dairy farms are currently found in the area, as well as buffalo and Alpaca farms. Buffalo are sold to other buffalo herders, and Alpaca wool is sold to be made into garments and accessories.⁶

Figure 5.3: Alpaca Herd



Source: .alpacajack.com/ images/features/Agave4_387.jpg

UI Extension & Master Gardener's Program

The University of Idaho Extension programs are located in 42 counties and reservations across the state. Faculty and researchers work directly with the residents, community and county agencies in a number of areas such as agriculture, natural resources, family and consumer sciences, and environmental issues.⁷

The UI Extension office in Bonner County and 32 other counties in Idaho has a program called the Master Gardeners Program. This program provides classes, research, and volunteer time to educate locals on a variety of horticulture topics.

Figure 5.4 Blueberries



Source: dcr.state.nc.us/.../blueberries.jpg

The UI extension office in Bonner County is located in the county seat of Sandpoint. This facility's major purpose is to conduct research and provide the public access to that research. Currently the main research topics are "anticancer compounds in blueberries and other small fruits, commercial management and production of western huckleberries and bilberries, development of improved varieties of edible-fruited honeysuckle, and evaluation of native trees for the use of Idaho's ornamental nursery and Christmas tree industries".⁸

Agriculture's Future in Priest River and Bonner County

Can agriculture be used to complement Priest River's changing economy? Only about one-eighth of the land is farmed today. Not only is Bonner County's land steep, but the soil is poor, and land prices are high. The UI extension programs have been successful in Bonner County because Northern Idaho's mountainous territory is advantageous for growing strawberries, currants, gooseberries, saskatoons, haskaps, apples, pears, and European plums. Many of these fruits and berries were already found in Bonner County. The University of Idaho Sandpoint Research and Extension Center is a leader in efforts to produce western huckleberries and bilberries in cultivation and managed forest stands.⁹ The domestication of wild huckleberries could result in the demand for huckleberry production to equal or exceed that of current blueberry production. Bonner County terrain is ideal for such huckleberry production, as well as other commercial fruit crops currently under development at the UI Research and Extension Center.

It appears that Priest River may be transitioning from a timber-based economy to a more diversified economy, which may also include ecotourism. The horticultural research, small-scale farming, and specialty crops produced in Bonner County could provide a complement to Priest River's emerging economic base. Local producers of specialty crops and animals could network with other regional entrepreneurs to organize tours of on site businesses to sample and purchase products. Tourists could participate in on-site educational tours, much as wine tours are organized in other regions of the Pacific Northwest.

¹ Wikipedia contributors, "Agriculture," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, [://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agriculture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agriculture) Accessed Dec 1, 2009

² General Notes of Bonner County, Call number MS5500.

³ Ibid

⁴ Wikipedia contributors, "Horticulture", Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, [://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horticulture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horticulture) Accessed Dec 3, 2009.

⁵ Interview with Dan Barney, UI Extension Faculty. Interviewed at the Sandpoint Extension Office on Oct 16, 2009.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ University of Idaho Extension Website [://www.extension.uidaho.edu/learn.asp](http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/learn.asp) Accessed Dec 3, 2009.

⁸ University of Idaho Sandpoint Research and Education Center [://www.cals.uidaho.edu/sandpoint/description.htm](http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/sandpoint/description.htm) Accessed Dec 3, 2009.

⁹ Ibid

Lisa Marshall

Political and Nongovernmental Institutions

Introduction

This section describes the political and nongovernmental entities that have a presence in Priest River. These include government agencies and other organizations that work at the county or regional level, and state agencies that are active in the panhandle region as well as organizations within the community. This section addresses government and other public institutions as well as other community-based institutions. Each of these organizations may have access to resources and knowledge that would be useful to the community at large through cooperative community efforts between agencies, departments, and organizations.

In This Section:

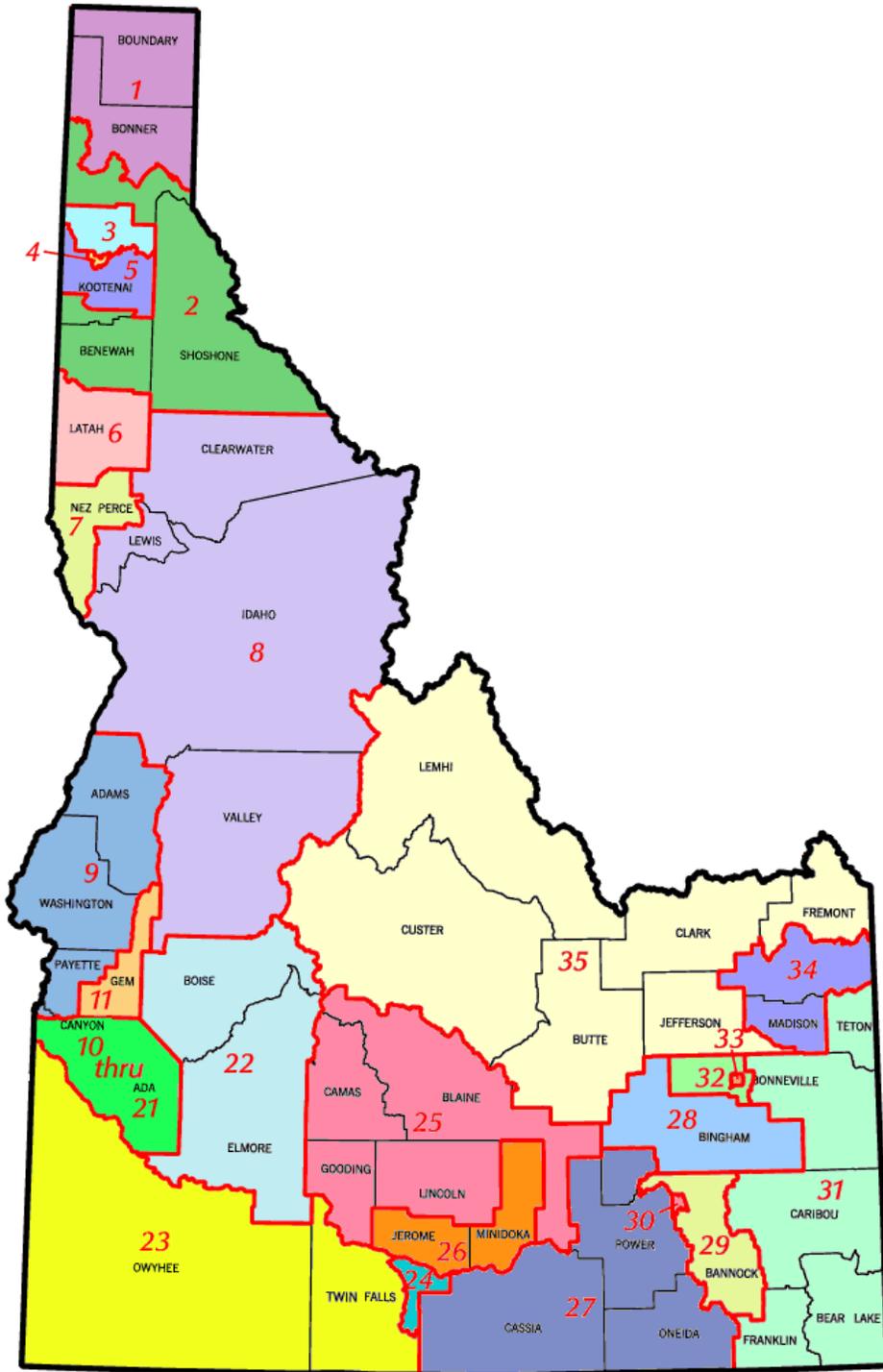
- Regional Districts
 - *Legislative Districts (Map)*
 - *Bonner County Service Districts*

- City Government
 - *City of Priest River*
 - *City Officials*
 - *City Commissions & Committees*
 - *Public Works Divisions*
 - *Law Enforcement*
- Other Government Agencies
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Conclusion

Regional Districts

Legislative Districts

Figure 6.1: Legislative Districts



Source: http://www.iche-idaho.org/images/districts_full_state.gif

The City of Priest River lies within Legislative District One, which includes segments of Boundary and Bonner Counties.

The region is primarily conservative; three Republicans currently represent District One.

Table 6.1: Elected Officials

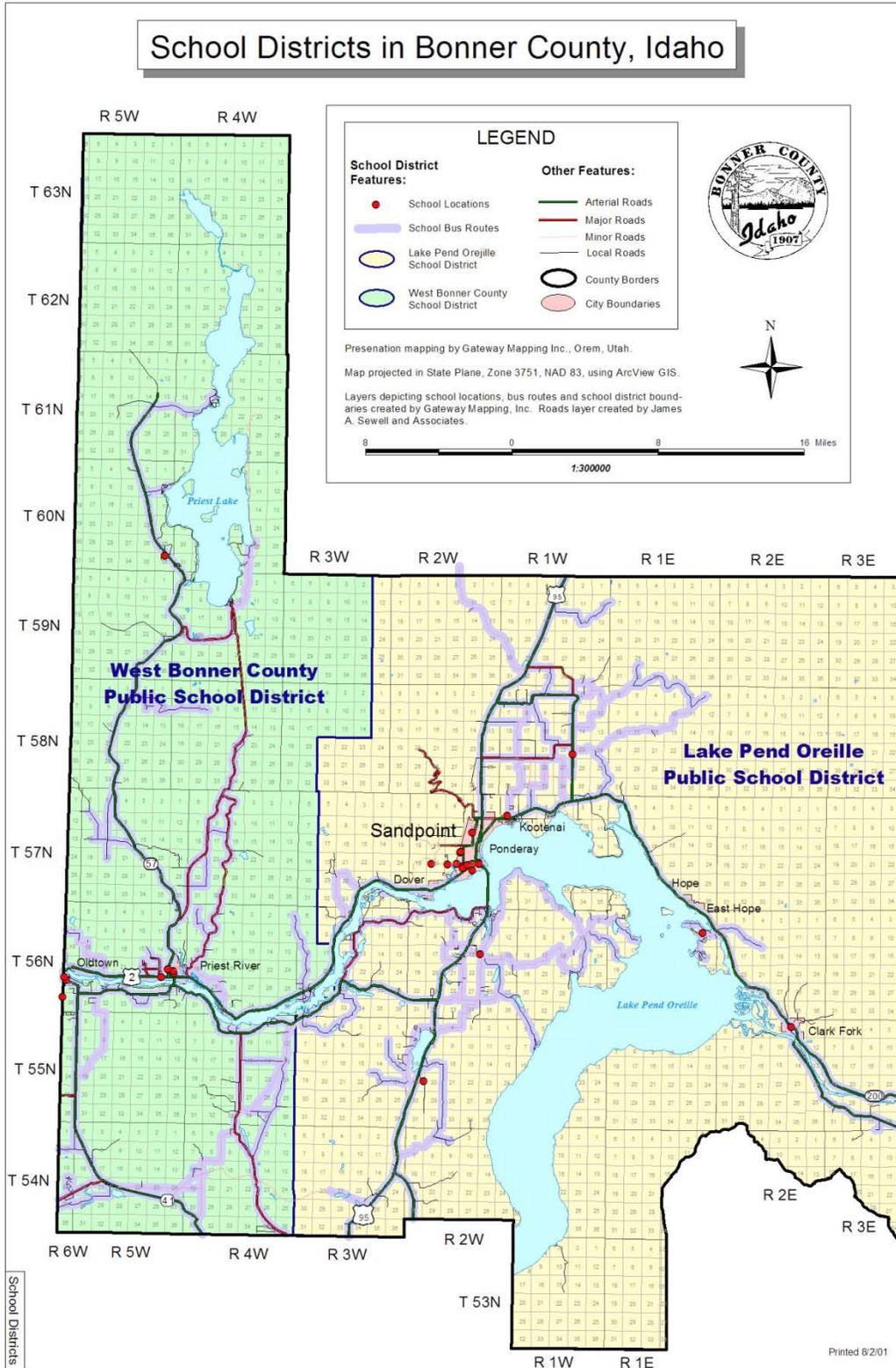
District One Elected Officials	State Legislature
Senator Shawn Keough District 1, Sandpoint P.O. Box 101, Sandpoint, 83864 Home (208) 263-1839	Finance - Vice Chair Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee Transportation
Representative Eric Anderson District 1, Priest Lake House Seat A 33 Match Bay Rd., Priest Lake, 83856-5049 Home (208) 265-6316 FAX (208) 443-1201	State Affairs - Vice Chair Environment, Energy & Technology Legislative Council
Representative George E. Eskridge District 1, Dover House Seat B P.O. Box 112, Dover, 83825 Home (208) 265-0123	Appropriations Environment, Energy & Technology Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee Resources & Conservation

Source: Idaho State Legislature web site <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/about/district.cfm#d1>

Bonner County Service Districts

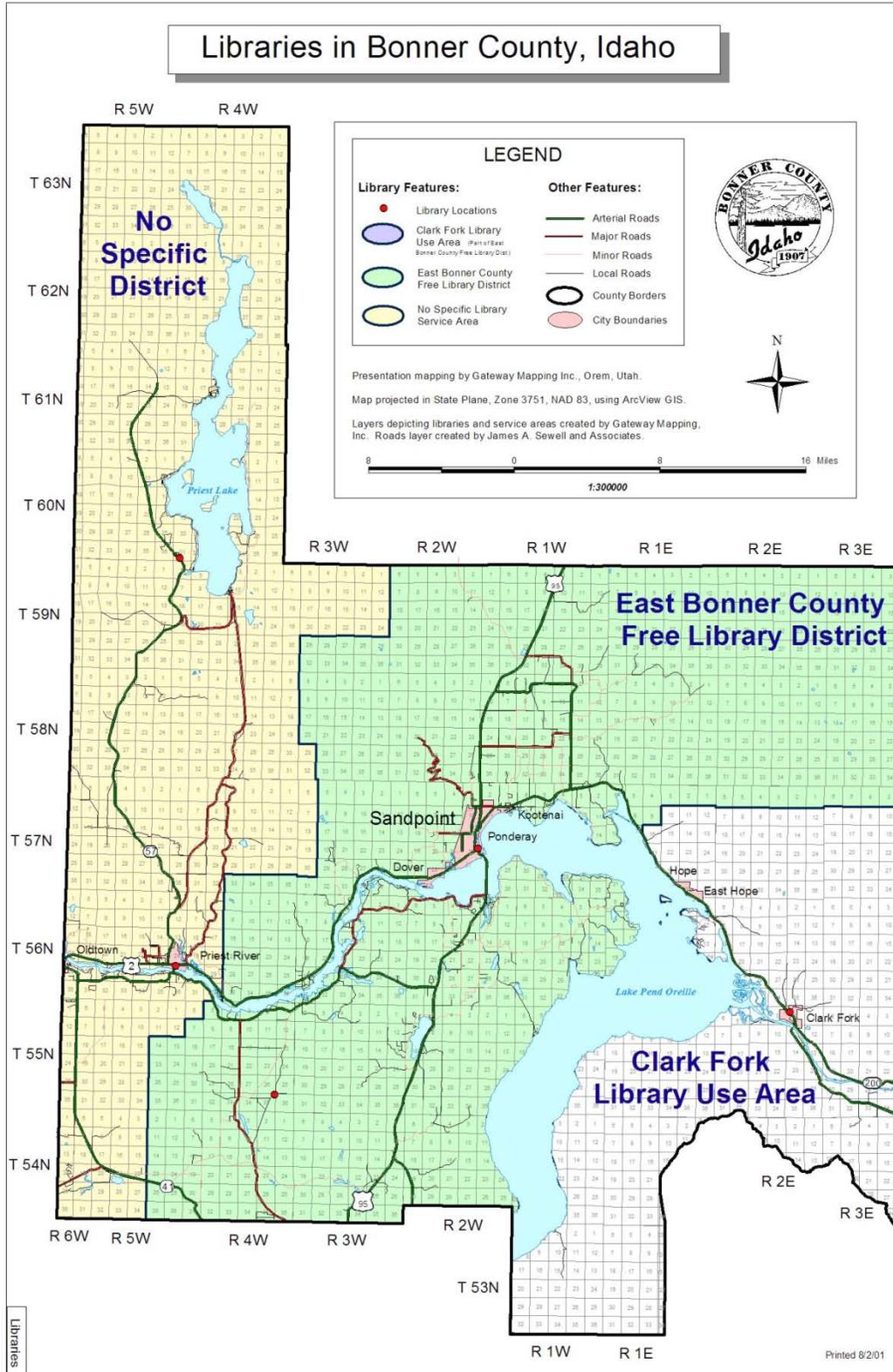
Several public service districts are split into East and West Bonner County. This division was put in place because residents in the western part of the county were concerned they were being underrepresented relative to Sandpoint, the county seat. Sandpoint is now a part of East Bonner County Districts. The services that are now divided into East and West districts include the library (Figure 6.2) and public school system (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.2: Bonner County School Districts



Source: Bonner County, Idaho

Figure 6.3 Bonner County Libraries



Source: Bonner County, Idaho

City Governments

City of Priest River

In the 1890s, immigrants from southern Italy arrived in the region en masse to work on the construction of the Great Northern Railroad.¹

The Italian influence was strong in Priest River for several decades. The east side of town was known as the Italian Settlement, and regionally the area was known as “Little Italy” through the 1950s.¹

Timber was the primary economic engine for decades, and the community identifies strongly with this traditional local activity.¹ Settlers attempted some agriculture and mining in the area, but logging was the main source of income.¹

Population: 1,754²

Land Area: 1.6 square miles (4.2 km²)²

Priest River City Hall
209 High Street
PO Box 415
Priest River, ID 83856
Phone: 208-448-2123³

City Officials

Mayor Jim Martin

A Priest River native, Mayor Martin left the community to receive an education in Washington and Montana before returning to the community. He manages the Juvenile Detention Center in Bonner County but since 2006, he has been working part-time as Priest River’s Mayor as well. He has been an active member of the City Council since 1998.⁴

Councilman Jeff Connely

Councilman Connely was born and raised in the city and has spent his career in the timber industry. He is active in several community organizations and serves as Parks and Fire Commissioner for the city. He has been on the City Council since 2002.⁴

Councilman Doug Wagner

Councilman Wagner grew up in the region and moved to Priest River after graduating from high school in nearby Newport. He is serving his third term on the City Council, and is also active in numerous social and civic organizations in the area.⁴

Councilwoman Peggy George

An Idaho native, Councilwoman George was educated in north Idaho and moved to Priest River in 1990. She has family ties to the timber industry. She is active in various city commissions.⁴

Councilman Rob Perkins

Relocated to Priest River following his marriage to a local. He is an entrepreneur who has opened businesses in the region.⁴

City Commissions & Committees

The city has a number of commissions and committees that address everything from planning, zoning, to historic preservation, parks, and urban renewal.

Planning & Zoning Commission⁵

Chairman: Cary Chrisman
Stephan Sommer
Dan Eskelson
Sherie Clipson

Historic Commission⁵

Chairman: Diane Mercer
Marylyn Cork
Linda Naccarato
Gayle Smith
JoAnne Starke

Parks Commission⁵

Peggy George
Doug Wagner
Ted Runberg
Chad Summers
Marie Duncan
Jan Perrins
Dan Eskelson

Urban Renewal⁵

Chairman: Ted Runberg
Garry Hojan
Leroy Campbell
Greg Snow
Ryan Fobes
Carlene Peterson
Doug Wagner
Wayne Benner

Table 6.2: City Budget Appropriation (Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2009)

General Fund:	\$617,973.00
Street Fund	\$278,562.00
Sanitation	\$118,000.00
Water Fund	\$298,110.00
Wastewater Fund	\$290,700.00
Impact Fee Fund	\$ 42,880.80
Water Reserve Bond 1996	\$ 17,452.00
Wastewater Reserve Bond 2001	\$ 87,662.00
Water Bond 2011	\$155,520.00
LID's	\$ 50,891.00
Trans. Plant Grant Carryover	\$ 34,019.00
Escrow Carryover	\$103,047.00
Special Revenue Funds	\$ 17,747.00
Total Proposed Expenditures	\$2,112,563.80

Source: City of Priest River

Public Works Divisions

The Public Works Divisions in Priest River provide residents with public services and amenities required for the public health and welfare. The divisions and their functions include:⁶

Administration: Operations scheduling

Street Division: Maintaining surface transportation and storm water system.

Water Treatment and Distribution: Potable water treatment, distribution and storage.

Wastewater Treatment and Collection: Water treatment and discharge.^{vii}

Law Enforcement

Priest River Police Department:

209 High Street

P.O. Box 415

Priest River, ID 83856

Phone: 208-448-1521

Fax: 208-448-0212

Bonner County Sheriff:

4001 N. Boyer Road,

Sandpoint, ID 83864

Phone: (208) 263-8417

Fax: (208) 265-4378

E-mail: bonnersheriff@bonnerso.org

Idaho Fish and Game:

Panhandle Regional Office

2885 W. Kathleen Ave.
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815
Phone: (208) 769-1414
Fax: (208) 769-1418

Idaho State Police, Region 1:
Patrol:
208.772.6055 208.772.0924
R1info@isp.idaho.gov
Investigations:
208.769.1433 208.769.1482
invinfo@isp.idaho.gov

Other Government Agencies

The following table provides a listing of the government and nongovernmental agencies in Bonner County and Priest River, as well as contact information.

Table 6.3: Government Agencies

Army Corps of Engineers	Joseph Summers Joseph.L.Summers@usace.army.mil
Bonner County Board of Commissioners	Joseph Young 208-265-1438 1500 Hwy 2, Suite 308 Sandpoint, Id 83864 jyoung@co.bonner.id.us
Bonner County Planning Commission	Clare Marley, AICP; Planning Director cmarley@co.bonner.id.us (208) 265-1458 1500 Highway 2, Suite 208, Sandpoint, ID 83864 Planning@co.bonner.id.us
Bonner County Public Works-- Waterways	4100 McGhee Road, Ste. C, Sandpoint ID 83864
Bonner County Trails/Pathways Advisory Group	1500 Highway 2, Suite 208, Sandpoint, ID 83864
Bonner Soil & Water Conservation District	1224 Washington Ave., Suite 101 Sandpoint, ID 83864 bonner.swcd@verizon.net
Forest Service	USFS, Northern Region One, PO Box 7669,

	Missoula, MT 59807-7669
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality	Steve.Gill@deq.idaho.gov
Idaho Department of Lands	mschanilec@idl.idaho.gov
Idaho Department of Water Resources	7600 Mineral Drive, Suite 100, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815-7763
Idaho Fish and Game	Charles E. "Chip" Corsi; Regional Supervisor Charles.corsi@idfg.idaho.gov 208-769-1414 2885 W. Kathleen Ave., Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815
Idaho State Grange	grammy_turner@hotmail.com
Priest River Planning and Zoning Commission	Cary Chrisman, PO Box 415, Priest River ID 83856
Priest River Urban Renewal Commission	tgrrr@mindspring.com
West Pend Oreille Fire District	PO Box 1267, Priest River, ID 83856-1267

Non-Governmental Organizations

Classifications are from the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities Core Codes 10 broad categories.⁷ This system is used by the IRS and National Center for Charitable Statistics to classify nonprofits.

Table 6.4: Arts, Culture, and Humanities

Evergreen Art Association	Box 1144, Newport, WA 99156
Friends of the Priest River Theatre Inc.	John Linch; Treasurer linchjrma@gmail.com 208-428-8006 1027 Old Priest River Road, Priest River, ID 83856
Friends of the West Bonner Library District	Jean Elsaesser; Former president jean_elsaesser@hotmail.com 208-448-1339 1871 Sanborn Creek Rd Priest River, ID 83856 westbonnerlibrary@priestriver.com

New Galilian Singers	418 Kacybear Lane Priest River, ID 83856-8316
Northwoods Performing Arts	Mark D Caldwell; Founder/Director Musicman@supersat.net 208-448-1294 85 Holley Glen Road Priest River, ID 83856
Pend Orielle Players Association	mail@pendoreilleplayers.org
Priest River Historic Commission	Diane Mercer PO Box 415 Priest River ID 83856
Priest River Restoration and Revitalization	PO Box 712 Priest River, ID 83856-0712
West Bonner County Library District	Katie Crill; Library Director westbonnerlibrary@priestriver.com 208-448-2207 219 Main St. Priest River, ID 83856

Table 6.5: Education

4-H	chaneycrew09@yahoo.com
Becky Gerow Charitable Trust	PO Box 3535 Oldtown, ID 83822-4545
Boy Scouts	anna@nwscouts.org
Philanthropic Educational Organization	Cathy Foote; Past President and current Chaplain 3feet@supersat2.net 208-448-1825 36 Hallie-Wood Ln. Priest River, ID 838458322
PTA Idaho Congress	PO Box 519 Priest River, ID 83856
West Bonner County School District	tfeldhausen@sd83.k12.id.us

Table 6.6: Environment and Animals

Arabian Horsefair Association	PO Box 906 Priest River, ID 83856-0906
International Selkirk Loop	info@selkirkloop.org
Priest Community Forest Connection	Liz Johnson-Gebhardt; Executive Director lizjg35@hotmail.com 208-448-0210 PO Box 892 Priest River, ID 83856-0892
Priest River Animal Rescue	petiterose56@earthlink.net
Priest River Parks Committee	Peggy George PO Box 415, Priest River ID 83856
Selkirk Conservation Alliance Inc.	Mark Sprengel; Executive Director sprengel@scawild.org 208-448-1110 PO Box 1809 Priest River, ID 83856 sca@scawild.org

Table 6.7: Health

Panhandle Health District	jbock@phd1.idaho.gov
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Table 6.8: Human Services

A Full Life	kmarang@afulllife.org
Angels Over Sandpoint	Kate McAlister; President kate@simplysandpoint.com 208-597-3670 P.O. Box 2369 Sandpoint, ID 83864 AngelsOverSandpoint@gmail.com
Bonner Community Food Center Frank Chapin Senior Center/ Happy Agers Neighbors 'n Need	bfc@televar.com PO Box 214 Priest River, ID 83856 4424 Bandy Road Priest River, ID 83856-7754
Priest River Food Bank	PO Box 214 Priest River, ID 83856

Priest River Youth Athletic Association	PO Box 1149 Priest River, ID, 83856-1149
	Karen Squires senior_momentz@yahoo.com 208-437-0143
West Bonner County Food Bank	PO Box 1088 Priest River, ID 83856

Table 6.9: Mutual/Membership Benefit

Ancient Free and Accepted Masons	grandsecretary@freemason-wa.org
Bonner County Association of Realtors	ahagelthorn@sandpointrealtor.com
Kaniksu Masonic Lodge # 97	PO Box 2154 Priest River, ID
Lion's Club	webmaster2@shaw.ca
Pend d'Orielle Order of the Eastern Star	4589 East Aspen Post Falls, ID 83854
Priest River Networking Group	Carlene Peterson PO Box 447 Priest River, Idaho 83856

Table 6.10: Public/ Societal Benefit

American Legion Post 147	MAIL: PO Box 88, Priest River
Citizens for Priest River	Ken Reed; Director/President ken@citizensofpriestriver.com 208-968-0211 P.O. Box 122 Priest River, ID 83856
Community Assistance League Inc.	PO Box 1361 Sandpoint, ID 83864
Disabled American Veterans, Ch. 25	2 Holley Glen Way Priest River, ID 83856-8714
Gem State Miner	Michelle Nedved; Editor 509-447-2433 P.O. Box 349

	Newport WA 99156 theminer@povn.com
Newport/Priest River Rotary	tivie@cdapress.com
Priest River Chamber of Commerce	Nadine Parker; President, 2010 ubigmoose@verizon.net 208-448-2721 PO Box 1044 Priest River, ID 83856 prchamber@conceptcable.com
Priest River Community Center Corporation	PO Box 1347 Priest River, ID 83856-1347
Priest River Development Corporation	prdc@povn.com
Priest River EMT Associates	PO Box 1515 Priest River, ID 83856-1515
Priest River Lioness Club	jbryan@povn.com
Priest River Times	jsheridan@cdapress.com
VFW Post 2909 & Auxiliary	jleade@verizon.net

Table 6.11: Religion Related

Beth Yeshua Messianic Fellowship	smalletta@supersat2.net
Church of Christ	710 Fourth St. Priest River, ID 83856
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	West Albeni Road
Community Congregational Church	521 Albeni Road Priest River, ID 83856
Edgemere Seventh-Day Adventist Church	5161 Vay Road Priest River, ID 83856
Generation Excellence Ministries	17 East Cedar Lane Priest River, ID 83856-8732
God's Provision Thrift Shop	Carolyn Sherman; Manager 509-447-3875 or 208-448-1909 132 Sunrise Hill

	Newport, WA 99156
Healing Leaves Ministry	Rob@healingleaves.com
Independent Order of Odd Fellows	3474 Highway 2 Priest River, ID 83856-9399
Lamb of God Lutheran Church	26508 Highway 2 Priest River, ID 83856-9634
Living Hope Free Methodist	701 Jackson Ave. Priest River ID 83856
Point Man International Ministries	PO Box 52 Priest River, ID 83856-0052
Priest River Assembly of God	info@priestriverassembly.com
Priest River Baptist Church	PO Box 989 Priest River, ID 83856-0988
Priest River Community Church	prcommunity@verizon.net
Priest River Ministries	PO Box 334 Priest River, ID 83856
Priest River Southern Baptist Church	Highway 57, Priest River, ID
St. Catherine's Catholic	larrylpilgrim@aol.com
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans	1125 4th St. Priest River, ID, 83856-6602
Trinity Baptist Church	Osprey Lane, Priest River, Idaho
Valley Baptist Church	7336 Spirit Lake Cut Off Road Priest River, ID 83856

Table 6.12: Unknown/Unclassified

Asphalt Angels	PO Box 1450, Priest River
Bunko Group	tgrr@mindspring.com
Freedom Hills Guest Ranch	7532 Eastside Road Priest River, ID 83856-9530

Mom's Club	1199 Bandy Road Priest River, ID 83856-7747
Priest River Airport Board	Box 1829 Priest River, ID 83856
Priest River Spartan Adult Booster Club	Amy McDonald; Treasurer amyprdc@verizon.net 208-290-6153 PO Box 400 Priest River, ID 83856
Royal Neighbors of America	623 Gregory Priest River, ID 83856

Conclusion

For a community of its size, Priest River has a wide array of community-based organizations. These could be important resources the community could capitalize on if they develop a collaborative framework for community development. The political separation between East and West Bonner County provides opportunities and challenges. While Priest River and other small communities on the West side of the county are able to exert more control due to the jurisdictional and psychological separations between the two halves of the county, they may also have more difficulty accessing resources that are based in of Sandpoint. Finding a means of facilitating cooperation with East Bonner County could be critical in Priest River's efforts to strategically position themselves regionally.

¹ <http://www.priestriver-id.gov/history.html>

² <http://factfinder.census.gov/>

³ <http://www.priestriver-id.gov/contacts.html>

⁴ <http://www.priestriver-id.gov/mayor-council.html>

⁵ <http://www.priestriver-id.gov/commissions-committees.html>

⁶ <http://www.priestriver-id.gov/public-works.html>

⁷ <http://nccs.urban.org/classification/NTEE.cfm>

Land Use

Introduction

The land use section includes a brief overview of the current zoning designations in Priest River to show how land uses are defined and organized in the city Zoning Ordinance. Following this section is a discussion of the Downtown Historic District, an essential piece of Priest River's history as well as its future. A large portion of it is listed on the National Register of History Places. Descriptions of a few key structures including the Beardmore and the Hotel Charbonneau and their individual histories are included in this section. The next section is the Priest River Urban Renewal Agency (URA), a major part of Priest River's ongoing transformation. This section briefly describes the agency's history, purpose, and goals. Following the discussion of the Priest River URA is an overview of recent major developments and annexations in Priest River that have or will have major impacts on the city. The developments included in this section are The Cottages, the River Settlement, the riverfront development, and the old Louisiana-Pacific mill site. Finally, this section concludes with a brief discussion of the implications of all of these land use changes for Priest River creating a cohesive community vision and turning its current transitory phase into an opportunity for positive changes.

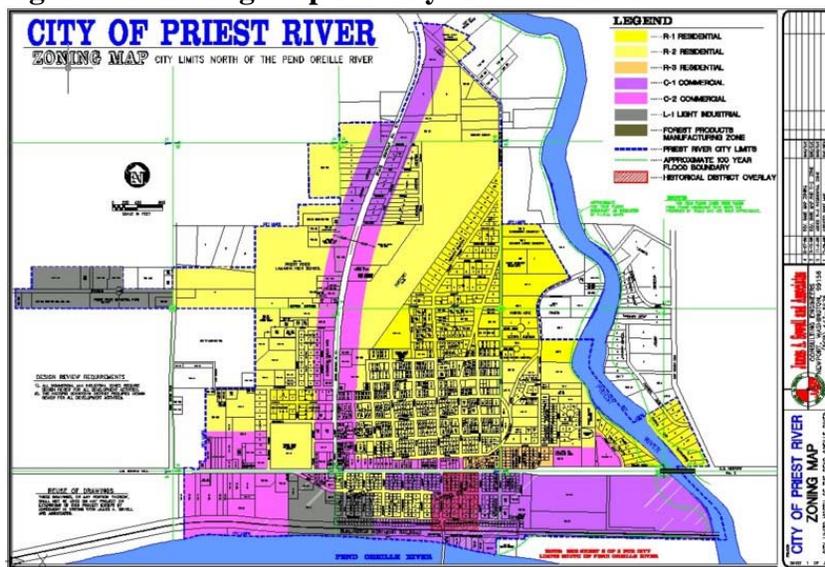
In This Section:

- Land Use Designations
- Historic District
- Priest River Urban Renewal Agency
- Annexations and New Development Opportunities
- Conclusion

Land Use Designations

The City of Priest River has determined several land use designations in order to maintain quality of life and “preserve the integrity and amenities of residential neighborhoods, as well as the economic vitality of industrial areas and commercial activity.”¹ These designations are intended to locate specific land uses in areas that are particularly ideal or beneficial, as well as to isolate uses that are less desirable to areas that minimize the detrimental impacts. These designations are delineated in the Priest River Zoning Ordinance in nine separate zones: including Large-Lot Residential, High Density Residential, Light Commercial Residential (Mixed Use), Low-Intensity Commercial, High-Intensity Commercial, Light Industrial, Forest Products Manufacturing, Design Review Overlay, and Historical Design Review Overlay.

Figure 7.1: Zoning Map for City of Priest River



Source: Priest River Comprehensive Plan

Large-Lot Residential zones are intended to permit single-family homes on larger sized lots and allow for small-scale agriculture and low-intensity farming. They also allow for such “accessory” uses as pools, ponds, and tennis courts. They may include uses such as churches, schools, and cemeteries.²

High-Density Residential zones allow for single family dwellings on smaller lots than the Large-Lot Residential zones, as well as conditional acceptance of mobile home parks and low density multi-family housing with a maximum of 14 units per acre. All of these uses must comply with the density, setback, and maximum height requirements in order to be accepted. These zones may also include churches, schools, and cemeteries, as well as power stations shielded from view, golf courses or country clubs, and community or senior centers.³

Light Commercial Residential zones are intended to embrace a more mixed-use commercial atmosphere that is still compatible with residential uses and does not generate traffic or hazardous pollutants that will detract from the character of the residential area. This zone requires larger lots than the High-Density Residential zone and requires a fence or other type of

barrier between commercial space and residential property. It allows for service-type businesses with minimal to no actual production, such as doctors, lawyers, and beauty shops.⁴

Low-Intensity Commercial zones permit commercial uses that are generally compatible with and encourage expansion and renewal of the Historic Downtown District. These uses include businesses such as restaurants, bakeries, photography studios, dance studios, music studios, antique shops, savings and loans banks, and such.⁵

High-Intensity Commercial zones accommodate larger-scale businesses that generate higher traffic volumes such as motels, large retail stores, drive-in restaurants, and tire sales and service. This zone typically allows those uses that do not necessarily fit in with the Historic Downtown Commercial District.⁶

Light Industrial zones are intended for “inoffensive” light manufacturing uses and the commercial businesses that support them and are located in areas in which residential development is prohibited. These uses may include assembly plants, welding and fabrication shops, and wholesale distributors.⁷

Forest Products Manufacturing zones are specifically designated for the uses necessary for timber harvesting, such as log storage, saw mills, storage and repair of logging and mill equipment, and other incidental uses such as logging offices. These zones may also include retail or warehousing, public works, shielded equipment repair or storage, or even specially permitted residential areas, provided that they are specifically intended for security or operation of the manufacturing businesses.⁸

Figure 7.2: Lumber Mill, Priest River, Idaho



Source: <http://www.priestriver.org/chamber/area-photos.php>

The areas designated as Design Review Overlay Districts are those that are located within another zoning classification but in which design and appearance play a major role. All uses are allowed that are within the specifications of the zone in which the site falls, but within these districts, owners are required to submit plans and drawings to a Design Review Commission if any alteration of buildings is to occur that will impact its appearance.⁹

The Design Review Overlay Historic District similarly requires Historic Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission permission to make any alterations to facades and signage, for renovations, new construction, demolition, site improvements, or any other visible changes within the specified historic district. This District is intended to “promote, preserve, and protect the distinctive characteristics of historic buildings, streets, and places of architectural and historical significance to Priest River.”¹⁰

Historic District

The Priest River Downtown Historic District is known for its unique architecture and the preservation and adaptive reuse of the old buildings. The entire block located between Wisconsin Street, Montgomery Street, Cedar Street, and Albeni Road has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, in which two of the most notable buildings are the Hotel Charbonneau and the Beardmore Building.¹¹

Figure 7.3: Downtown Priest River, early 1900s



Source: Priest River Comprehensive Plan

The Hotel Charbonneau has a unique history as the “high-end” hotel in historic Priest River and was known as the place to stay if one was wealthy enough. Originally constructed in 1912, the building was in operation as a hotel through 1989, at which point it was abandoned. It is now somewhat of a tourist destination and is one of the most distinctive features in the downtown district.¹² This historic hotel was purchased in 2004 by Trevor and Fred Greenfield, who will be renovating it for use once again as a hotel as well as for other uses such as a film studio.¹³

Figure 7.4: Historic Hotel in Priest River



Source: <http://www.historichotelcharbonneau.com>

The Beardmore Building, a 32,000 square foot monument located on Main Street has its own unique history and is a remarkable example of adaptive reuse and restoration.¹⁴ The building was originally constructed in 1922 by Charles Beardmore, one of Priest River's more prominent entrepreneurs, and was the site of the Rex Theater, a mercantile store, offices for Diamond Match Company, a hardware store, as well as a grand ballroom.¹⁵ Ownership was held by the Beardmore family for several decades but it eventually was sold, nearly abandoned, and fell into a state of disrepair.¹⁶

Figure 7.5: Beardmore Building, downtown Priest River



Source: www.riverjournal.com

Brian Runberg, architect and great-grandson of Charles Beardmore, purchased the building in 2006, hoping to restore a piece of his family's history using his professional talents. Runberg has restored much of the building, reusing all of the original materials as possible, including windows, doors, toilets, sinks, structural joists, and even the plaster from the walls. His efforts have been awarded with a LEED Gold Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council for its energy and water use efficiency, as well as an Orchid Award by the Idaho Historic Preservation Council for meeting its highest standards of rehabilitation.¹⁷

The Beardmore Building is once again able to house thriving businesses and is now home to several new and innovative businesses including Noni, a wine bar, and a smoothie and juice bar, as well as the offices of an engineering firm and an accounting firm. It may also soon add to its list of tenants, possibly including a spa and yoga studio.¹⁸

Priest River Urban Renewal Agency

While private individuals like the Greenfields and Brian Runberg are working to restore the historic downtown, government is also at work endeavoring to revitalize the urban character of Priest River. The Priest River Urban Renewal Agency (URA) is a governmentally established body that was created to work toward the goals of the Urban Renewal Law of 1965.¹⁹

Its state-mandated goals are to

- 1) Identify areas with potentially adverse effects on public safety and health or to the general welfare of Priest River residents;*

2) Encourage and maximize opportunity for private enterprise to redevelop or rehabilitate areas that contribute to these adverse effects;

3) Create a workable plan to eliminate and prevent areas identified as contributing to adverse effects within the designated area.²⁰

In order to accomplish these goals, the URA began by determining the areas that may adversely affect Priest River residents. In 2008, the Priest River URA conducted a survey of Priest River residents in order to gauge the community's thoughts. They surveyed residents at the Priest River Timber Days Festival, ran the survey in the Priest River Times, and set up displays at Mitchell Harvest Foods and the Priest River Public Library.²¹

Among the most highly recommended land use improvements that citizen respondents identified were

- 1) Development or improvement of the waterfront area;*
- 2) General aesthetics of Highway 2 and the commercial areas;*
- 3) Increasing the number and quality of parks;*
- 4) Bringing in new businesses.²²*

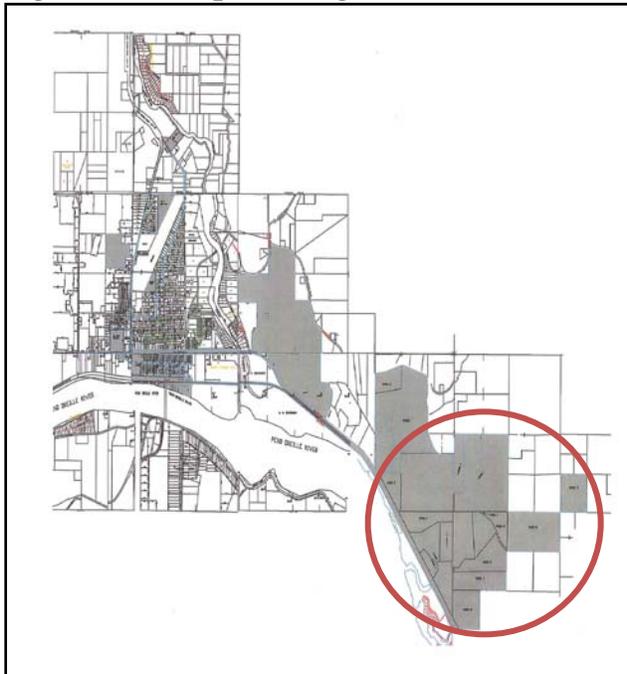
These suggestions seem to be recurring in many discussions regarding the desirable land use changes in Priest River. Action upon these suggestions is likely to be a major contribution to increasing and maintaining general welfare and quality of life in Priest River.

Annexations and New Development Opportunities

Aside from renewing the Historic District and the urban core of Priest River, the city itself is growing as new areas are annexed and county land is incorporated into the city limits.

The River Settlement- "A Green Community" was a Planned Unit Development (PUD) consisting of 879 acres along Highway 2 that was annexed from Bonner County by Priest River in 2008.²³ This property was originally a family ranch that has not recently been inhabited by the owners, who were leasing it out by parcel to local ranchers.²⁴ Annexation was necessary because the development would be required to access sewer and water from Priest River; the county prohibited a new development that would require independent small scale septic tanks or wells.²⁵ The City of Priest River could not afford to provide services to this large of a development without annexing it into the city limits in order to gain its tax revenue.²⁶

Figure 7.6: Map showing location of the River Settlement



Source: The River Settlement Master Plan

The River Settlement was intended to be a mixed use development with condominiums, apartments, townhomes, cottages, and commercial areas that would include a beauty shop, convenience store, gift shop, antique store, drug store, food store, mini storage units, restaurants, parks and trail systems, as well as a major golf course.²⁷ Ten percent of housing units in The River Settlement were intended to be especially marketed to working people as work force or affordable housing.²⁸

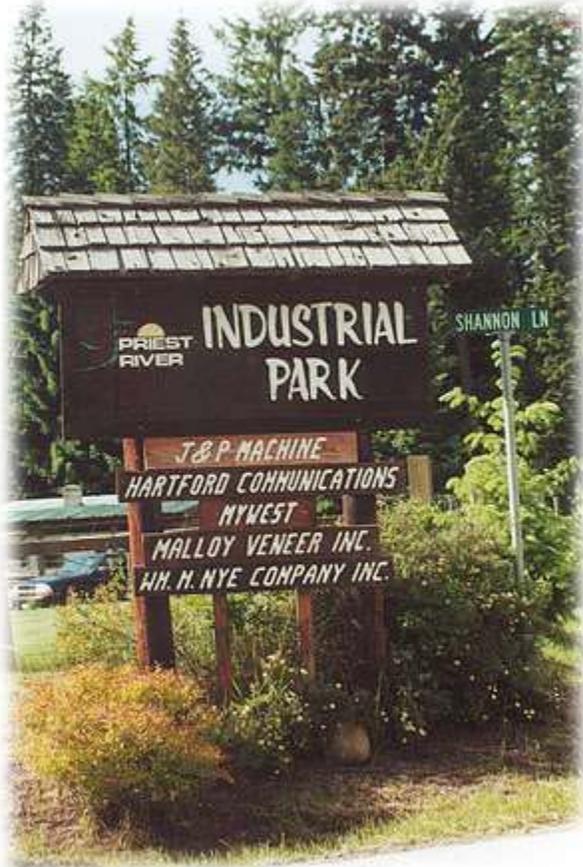
Unfortunately, the developers that were responsible for The River Settlement have reportedly gone bankrupt and have not put in an application to the city for building as of 2009.²⁹ Therefore, there is currently a nearly two-mile stretch of undeveloped property along Highway 2 that has enormous potential, and may eventually become a thriving “Green Community”.^{30,31}

Another PUD with great potential is the Cottages Development along Highway 57. This PUD is specifically marketed to elderly, single, or first time homebuyers and includes 14 sites for high-end condos and townhouses as well as a common area.³² The development is unique because homeowners own their houses, but the property is commonly owned. This makes living here particularly appropriate for elderly people or single people, as lawn care and snow removal are taken care of through shared costs.³³ Community leaders believe that this development could bring with it the potential for many new service-type employers.³⁴

The former sites of the Louisiana-Pacific and J.D mills are located on a wetland area that encompasses over 200 acres. The J.D. mill site is undergoing a brownfields cleanup project and will be ready for further development upon the completion of the project. The Louisiana-Pacific site is currently home to a growing industrial park that includes Harrison Dock builders and the Aerocet Incorporated float plane factory. It was annexed to the city as a result of requests from

Harrison Dock builders. They convinced the city to annex the site because they needed to grow and otherwise would have had to move into the county.³⁵

Figure 7.7: Priest River Industrial Park Sign



Source: <http://www.priestriver.org/prdc/>

Arriving to Priest River in 2005, the Harrison Dock Builders business was one of the first industries recruited and supported in Priest River, likely because it was so ideal for the community. It was associated with trades that were already prevalent in the community and gave residents the opportunity to use their mill skills like working on machinery and heavy equipment. Upon convincing the city to annex the Louisiana-Pacific site, Harrison Dock Builders relocated their business there in 2007.³⁶

Aside from the industrial park, the Louisiana-Pacific site is also designated a conservation wetlands project and must remain a wetlands indefinitely. City ordinances allow for trail development, although there are currently none in place. It will likely become a public park in the future.³⁷

Additionally, seemingly on the forefront of everyone's minds regarding land use issues in Priest River are the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) brownfields cleanup projects. The riverfront brownfield area includes the former Dock n' Shop and Joslyn Pole Treating sites. Another Idaho DEQ project is the former landfill site on the northern edge of town. Residents

seem to have many ideas about the land use possibilities and the site seems to be the center of a bit of contention, but simultaneously the center of a major community effort for innovation and improvement.

Conclusion

Priest River is a unique community with enormous potential, which residents and visitors are beginning to recognize and embrace. City decision makers have created a clear and easily interpreted set of zoning districts that allow for preservation of Priest River's character as well as encourage economic prosperity and entrepreneurial growth. These community leaders seem to be well aware of what is necessary to achieve a balance between these key attributes and have the skills and knowledge to assess the needs of the community and project those needs into policies.

Figure 7.8: Looking North at Priest River across the Pend Oreille River



Source: <http://priestriver.org/chamber/area-photos/php>

In addition to the success of the city government, the Priest River Urban Renewal Agency is taking leaps and bounds towards forging a strong and cohesive community land use vision by gathering community insight on issues that affect quality of life and general well-being in their city. The ideas collected by the URA will serve to inform policy makers' land use decisions and work towards fruition of an overall community vision.

This cohesive vision will not only include ideas for positive changes, but will include ideas on what is important to preserve as part of Priest River's collective history. Revitalizing the downtown's historic buildings with adaptive reuse techniques such as those used in the Beardmore Building and the Hotel Charbonneau are important to creating a vision that not only emphasizes a prosperous future, but also connects that future with the past. Private citizens like the Greenfields and Brian Runberg seem to recognize this need for synthesis of past, present, and future and are diffusing these ideas into the rest of the community with their ambitious projects.

While reusing existing structures is an important step, new developments are sometimes necessary and community-minded developments like The River Settlement and the wetlands project on the old Louisiana Pacific mill site will also aid in this process as community members see positive changes occurring right before their eyes. Priest River is moving towards

developments that create unique *places* where people can work, play, and live, which is essential to creating a thriving community with high quality of life and general well-being.

If we take a step back and simply observe the positive land use changes that have occurred in the recent past and are continuing to occur now in Priest River, we will see a community on the verge of a magnificent transition. Community leaders and government agencies have recognized the need for land use planning and have engaged the community members in forming ideas for a community vision. Community members have responded with abundant ideas; some of them like the Beardmore and Hotel Charbonneau have already materialized. If community ideas can continue to be turned into action, Priest River's threatening circumstances will be turned into positive opportunities and the City of Priest River will continue to make itself an excellent example for other communities in transition.

¹ Priest River City. Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive Plan. Priest River, 2005.

² Priest River, City of. Ordinance 279-Zoning Ordinance. Priest River, Idaho, 2005.

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Davis, Belinda and Ann Swanson. "The National Register of Historic Places in Idaho." Compilation. n.d.

¹² Priest River City. Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive Plan. Priest River, 2005.

¹³ Huisman, Cate. "More Praise for Priest River's Beardmore Block." New West Topics (2009).

¹⁴ Runberg, Brian. "Sustaining the Future While Restoring the Past." Daily Journal of Commerce (2009).

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Priest River City. Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive Plan. Priest River, 2005.

¹⁷ Runberg, Brian. "Sustaining the Future While Restoring the Past." Daily Journal of Commerce (2009).

¹⁸ Huisman, Cate. "More Praise for Priest River's Beardmore Block." New West Topics (2009).

¹⁹ Priest River Urban Renewal Agency . 2008 Community Survey Results. Survey Results. . Priest River, Idaho: Priest River URA, 2008.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

²³ Inland Northwest Consultants-Planning-Engineering-Surveying . The River Settement-A Green Community-Master Plan 2009. Priest River, Idaho, 2008.

²⁴ Quayle, Bryan. Land Use Consultant , Personal Communication. Danielle Clelland. 16 October 2009.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Huisman, Cate. "More Praise for Priest River's Beardmore Block." New West Topics (2009).

³² The Cottages in Priest River Prospect Information Sheet. October 25, 2008. Collected at Cottages site by Monica Walker.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Quayle, Bryan. Land Use Consultant. Personal Communication. Danielle Clelland. 16 October 2009.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

Infrastructure

Introduction

Infrastructure can be defined as the basic physical structures needed for the operation of a society and facilities necessary for society to function. The term typically refers to the technical structures that support a society such as water, transportation, energy, communication, and solid waste management. Infrastructure can be either publicly owned or privately owned, but all infrastructure are regulated to some degree on the federal, state, and local levels.

This section provides an overview of the infrastructure components that exist in the City of Priest River and Bonner County. The majority of the data found in this section deals with the area inside the city limits of Priest River, but expands outside city limits when information was available.

In This Section:

- Water
 - *Potable Water*
 - *Waste Water*
 - *Storm Water*
 - *Dams*
- Energy
 - *Electric*
 - *Fossil Fuels*
 - *Renewable Energy Sources*
- Communication
 - *Phone, Communication structures, two way radio*
 - *Television Cable and Broadcast*
 - *Radio*
 - *Internet*
- Solid Waste Management
 - *Solid Waste (Garbage)*
 - *Recycling*
- Conclusion

Water

Potable Water

The City of Priest River obtains drinking water from the Pend Oreille River through an intake at an under water elevation of 2,043 ft. (See figure 1), and can pump and filter 600,000 gpd (gallons per day) at the water treatment plant located at the intersection of Treat and Montgomery streets.¹ After the water is treated and purified, it is piped to a 1 million gallon storage tank off of James Ave.² There are 800 city water accounts.³ The water line that carries the water to the water tank is in “okay” condition with water laterals being a combination of copper and galvanized pipe. The condition of the lateral pipes range from good (in newer parts of the city) to very bad (in older parts of the city) and depends on the neighborhood.⁴ There is a big discrepancy in water pressure (PSI) due to the elevation and change in topography between neighborhoods; the City Engineer recommends a booster pump to help resolve the PSI issue.⁵ Another option to increase the PSI is to add an additional water tank at a higher elevation, which would produce a high static water pressure.⁶ The City of Priest River is currently looking to supplement their source of water with a ground well East of the Priest River off of East Side Rd. Preliminary results reveal that there is good water roughly 316 ft. below grade but it will need to be treated for iron manganese, which is not a harmful to drink but stains and causes build-up.⁷ The water that comes from this new well will be from the Priest River/Pend Oreille River Aquifer, which is a valley fill aquifer.⁸ “Valley fill aquifers are generally found in the state’s[Idaho] intermountain valleys. The sediments and rocks comprising these aquifers were loosely deposited some time ago by air, water, or glacial activity on the earth’s surface. As more material was deposited, these sediments and rocks generally remained in a loose configuration with many spaces between each other to hold water. One example of a valley fill aquifer is the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer.”⁹

Table 8.1 Additional Wells with a Priest River Address¹⁰

Public Wells

USFS BEAVER CREEK CAMPGROUND (Population served: 100, Groundwater)

USFS REEDER BAY AND LEDGEWOOD (Population served: 85, Groundwater)

USFS LUBY BAY CAMPGROUND AND MUSEUM (Population served: 60, Groundwater)

Private Wells

THE SHOWBOAT (Population served: 100, Groundwater)

TAMRAK SHOPPING VILLAGE (Population served: 70, Groundwater)

RANCH CLUB GOLF COURSE (Population served: 65, Groundwater)

PINEWOOD WATER SYSTEM (Population served: 49, Groundwater)

SCHNEIDERS SUBD (Population served: 48, Groundwater)

Wastewater

The City of Priest River wastewater treatment site was built in 1965 and is located at the West end of Railroad Avenue and Wisconsin St. (see Figure 1), and originally had a capacity of .25mgd (million gallons per day). It was refitted in 2001 for additional capacity (.5mgd) and an ultraviolet light component for improved water treatment.¹¹ The wastewater treatment plant is

currently operating at .23mgd, which is about half of it's capacity.¹² After treatment, the system is designed to discharge into the Pend Oreille River, West of the bridge that crosses the river.¹³ The City currently has 650 sewer accounts,¹⁴ in contrast to the number of City water accounts of 800. The difference means that there are 150 accounts that are not part of the City wastewater system and are treating their own wastewater with on-site septic tanks. The main line for wastewater is a good quality clay pipe and was installed in 1933 as part of Franklin D. Roosevelt works program during the Great Depression.¹⁵ During the main line construction, quality control was low, as can be seen by the pipe not having a consistent slope, which increases build-ups and blockages.¹⁶ There are seismic events in the greater region, which may cause a lot of damage to clay pipes since they are brittle.¹⁷ The majority of the remaining waste water lines are 65-year-old concrete pipes that have a life expectancy of 35 years; new development uses plastic pipes.¹⁸ Furthermore, the majority of wastewater lines that serve the older neighborhoods run down 10 foot city alleys and narrow streets and pose a problem for maintenance and replacement.²⁰ In alleys, property owners have built up to the Right-of-Way (ROW) and in some instances built over the ROW.²¹ Wastewater lines are typically 10'-15' below ground to take into account basements and slope. Narrow ROW's create a space that is difficult to work in while maintaining the safety of the workers and the structures on the edge of ROW^a.²²

^a According to the USGS, there is a less than 0.1percent chance of magnitude 7 or greater event within 50 kilometers of Sandpoint over the next 100 years. For a magnitude 6 event or greater, the probability rises to 5-10 percent. A magnitude 5 or larger event has a 40-50 percent probability.²⁹ The probability of a future earthquake causing significant damage is rated as "infrequent".³⁰

Storm Water

Priest River currently does not have a citywide comprehensive storm water management plan, but requires new development to treat and slowdown storm water runoff before it leaves the property.²³ The city does require Grassy Infiltration Areas (GIA's) or drywells on all new developments.²⁴ During storm water events in the northern half of the City, (the newer parts of the City) where there are no GIA's, the water ends up in the Priest River (See Figure 1.1). The remaining portions of Priest River area drains into the City's wastewater system.²⁵ Along State Hwy 2 in Priest River, the State of Idaho maintains a storm water line that picks up water from the highway and carries it to a small wetland/swampy area just south of the highway (see Figure 1) in Priest River.²⁶ From the wetland, the water enters into the natural water system. Even though Priest River requires GIA's it does not have a specification or standard detail on what or how the GIA's are supposed to function. Some specifications might include how much of the water needs to percolate into the ground, do they need to detain the water for a specific amount of time or just slow the flow down. The design of the GIA's is left up to the civil engineer responsible for the project, to design and calculate.²⁷ Storm water has a big potential of contaminating the Pend Oreille and Priest rivers.

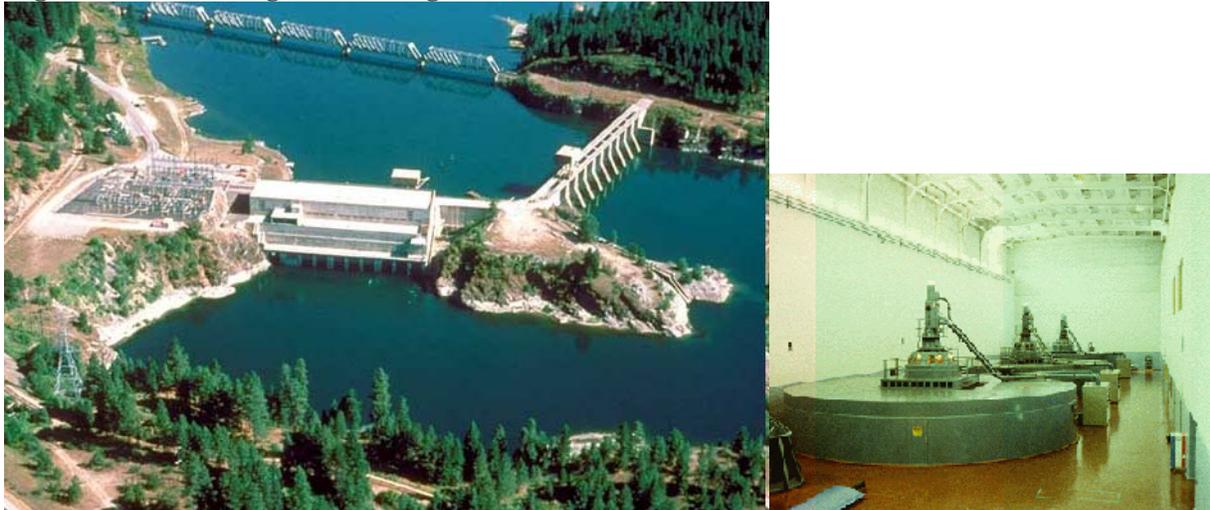
Dams

The United States Bureau of Reclamation's Dam Safety Program categorizes dams into the following three categories (These ratings are based on potential for loss of life and property damage from the failure of the dam, not the condition or probability of the dam failing.):²⁸

- High-Hazard Dams: A dam where failure or misoperation will probably cause loss of human life.
- Significant Hazard Dam: A dam that would not be expected to cause loss of life if it failed, but would cause economic damage, disruption of lifeline facilities, or impact other concerns.
- Low Hazard Dam: A dam where failure or misoperation would not result in loss of human life and low economic and/or environmental loss. Losses are usually limited to the owners property.

Albeni Falls Dam is located on the Pend Oreille River approximately 6 miles west of Priest River. The flood of 1948 which reached the elevation of 2072' (10' higher than summer water level) helped to get the Albeni Falls Dam built.³¹ The dam, a 65-foot-high concrete structure, was completed in 1952 at a cost of \$34 million.³² It is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and operated for flood control, hydroelectric power (42,600 kilowatts), and lake fish habitat.^{33,34} Summer operation level is elevation 2062.5 ft. reached by July 4th.³⁵ Fall draw-down starts Labor Day in September and continues until it reaches the winter operational elevation of 2051.5 ft.³⁶ Every 3 to 4 years the winter operation elevation will be 2055.5 ft. to help clean the spawning beds of Kokanee Salmon.³⁷ The reservoir has a storage capacity of 1.04 million acre feet of water and provides recreational opportunities for visitors.³⁸

Figure 8.2 (Left) Figure 8.3 (Right)



Source: Army Corp. of Engineers. Albeni Falls Dam.

[:/www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/Menu.cfm?sitename=albeni&pagename=home](http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/Menu.cfm?sitename=albeni&pagename=home) Accessed September 23, 2009

Albeni Falls Dam works with Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG) to manage the fisheries in Lake Pend Oreille.⁴¹ The Kokanee Salmon are prey fish to the endangered Bull Trout.⁴² Working with IDFG the Albeni Falls Dam can manage the water levels at key spawning times to improve the spawning grounds.⁴³

Cabinet Gorge Dam is located on the Clark Fork River, ¼-mile west of the Idaho-Montana state line, and 20 miles downstream of the larger Nixon Rapids Dam. Operated by Avista Corporation for hydroelectric power generation (20,000 kilowatts), Cabinet Gorge lies 7.5 miles upstream of the town of Clark Fork and 11 miles upstream of Lake Pend Oreille.⁴⁴ Cabinet Gorge impounds a 20- mile long reservoir, containing approximately 105,000 acre-feet of storage at full pool elevation 2,175 feet).⁴⁵ The dam, a 395 foot concrete arch between two concrete abutments, is 208 feet tall at its highest point. The spillway is controlled by eight vertical lift spillgates, each 40 feet wide by 35 feet high.⁴⁶

Outlet Dam is a small dam on Priest Lake which controls the elevation of the lake for recreation purposes and releases water for downstream power consumption. The dam is operated by Avista Corporation under an agreement with the State of Idaho, who owns the dam.⁴⁷

Other Dams: Low hazard dams in the county include: Blanchard Creek, Stoneridge, Roberts, Rich, Kelsey, Matthews, Hayden, Jewel Lake, Garfield, Stevens, Rice Paddie Dikes, Sandpoint, Grouse Creek South, and Grouse Creek North.⁴⁸

Energy

Electric

The City of Priest River and residents along the river from the Washington/Idaho state line get their power from Avista Power Company,⁴⁹ while the majority of Bonner County receive their power from Northern Lights Inc. Northern Lights Incorporated (NLI) is an energy co-operative that has supplied power from the northern half of Kootenai County up to the Canadian border, and Northeastern Washington, and Western Montana since 1935.⁵⁰ Avista and NLI both get the majority of their power from Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).⁵¹ Albeni Fall Dam sells it's generated energy to BPA.⁵²

Fossil Fuels

Bonner County and the City of Priest River currently have no piped natural gas options.⁵³ Propane and oil are widely used though out Priest River and Bonner County. Propane is handled with propane tanks that are generally leased or rented to a property owner with service to fill tanks varying due to package. The two large propane distributors in the county are AmeriGas Propane and Co-op Energy L.L.C.⁵⁴ which partners with Northern Lights Inc. Oil, is also used by residents to heat their homes. The major distributor of oil is Family Oil L.L.C., a locally owned company based in Priest River.⁵⁵

Renewable Energy Sources

The only locally renewable energy source in the area is from water. These sources include Albeni Falls Dam on Pend Oreille River near Priest River, and Cabinet Gorge Dam on the Clark Fork, near the Idaho/Montana border.

Communication

The existing communication network that serves the City of Priest River and Bonner County are grouped into the following groups: Phone (Communication Structures and Two Way Radio), Television (Cable and Broadcast), Radio, and Internet.

Phone, Communication Structures and Two Way Radio

Local and long distance phone service is provided by Verizon,⁵⁶ and cell phone options with (but are not limited to) Verizon and AT&T service.

Table 8.2 Communication Structures⁵⁷

Towers FCC Registered Cell Phone Towers			
Verizon Wireless – Atop Horn Mountain, 21.3m tall			
FCC Registered Antenna Towers			
AT&T Wireless Services, Inc. – Mile Maker #8, 67.1m tall			
American Towers, Inc. – Horn Mountain, 25m tall			
Ubiquitel - West 11th Street, 36.5m tall			
Ubiquitel Leasing Company – Albeni Highway, 36.5m tall			
Washington Communications, LLC – Hoodoo Mountain, 7.6m tall			
FCC Registered Microwave Towers			
Registrant	Height	Call Sign	Location
Verizon Wireless	21.3m	WMW993	Atop Horn Mountain
FCC Registered Paging Towers			
Wilkinson Barker Knauer, LLP	11.6m	KNKO288	4 th st & Summit Blvd.
Moutian Communications	?	KWT864	Hoodoo Mountain

Amateur radio, or ham radio, is a two-way communication format. Amateur radio participants are typically hobbyists, and use various types of radio communications equipment to communicate with other radio amateurs; furthermore, they have the ability to provide a public service during emergencies. In Priest River there are 33 FCC registered amateur radio licenses.⁵⁸ The term "amateur" reflects the principle that amateur radio and its skilled operators are committed to helping communities without financial compensation; whereas commercial radio operates for profit.⁵⁹

Table 8.3 Radio Antennas Structures⁶⁰

Name	Height	Call Sign	Frequency
Indian Creek State Park	8 m	WRE284	159.225 MHz
Mc Donald Logging Company	Unknown	KYL317	153.065 MHz
Burlington Norther Railroad	6 m	WNHI484	161.545 MHz
Radio Licensing Services	Unknown	WPSL508	151.580 MHz

Television Cable and Broadcast

Cable TV

The only provider of Cable TV is provided by Concept Cable Company, with a local office in Newport WA.⁶¹

TV Broadcast

Over the air digital TV signals can be received in Priest River for channel 2 (KREM-CBS), Channel 4 (KXLY-ABC), channel 6 (KHQ-NBC), and Channel 59 (IEPBS).^{62,63}

Radio (Commercial)

Commercial radio is widely available with the following radio stations.

Table 8.4 Radio Stations⁶⁴

AM - Strongest AM radio signals
KGA (1510 AM; 50 kW; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Citadel Broadcasting Company)
KXLY (920 AM; 20 kW; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Spokane Radio, Inc.)
KMJY (700 AM; 10 kW; NEWPORT, WA; Owner: James E. and Helen G. Stargel)
KVNI (1080 AM; 10 kW; COEUR D' ALENE, ID; Owner: Queenb Radio, Inc.)
KQNT (590 AM; 5 kW; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Capstar Tx Limited Partnership)
KERR (750 AM; 50 kW; POLSON, MT; Owner: Anderson Radio Broadcasting, Inc.)
KTBI (810 AM; daytime; 50 kW; EPHRATA, WA; Owner: Tacoma Broadcasters, Inc.)
KJRB (790 AM; 5 kW; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Citadel Broadcasting Company)
KOFI (1180 AM; 50 kW; KALISPELL, MT; Owner: KOFI, Inc.)
KTRW (970 AM; 5 kW; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: KTRW, LLC)
KDRK (1050 AM; 5 kW; DISHMAN, WA; Owner: Citadel Broadcasting Company)
KQQQ (1150 AM; 25 kW; PULLMAN, WA; Owner: Radio Palouse, Inc.)
KSPT (1400 AM; 1 kW; SANDPOINT, ID; Owner: Blue Sky Broadcasting Inc.)
FM - Strongest FM radio signals
KXLY-FM (99.9 FM; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Spokane Radio, Inc.)
KMJY-FM (104.5 FM; NEWPORT, WA; Owner: ALC Communications)
KPND (95.3 FM; SANDPOINT, ID; Owner: Blue Sky Broadcasting Inc.)
KHTQ (94.5 FM; HAYDEN, ID; Owner: Queenb Radio, Inc.)
KCDA (103.1 FM; POST FALLS, ID; Owner: Capstar Tx Limited Partnership)
KIBX (92.1 FM; BONNERS FERRY, ID; Owner: Spokane Public Radio, Inc.)
KDRK-FM (93.7 FM; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Citadel Broadcasting Company)
KIXZ-FM (96.1 FM; OPPORTUNITY, WA; Owner: Capstar Tx Limited Partnership)
KMBI-FM (107.9 FM; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago)
KPBX-FM (91.1 FM; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Spokane Public Radio, Inc.)
KICR (102.3 FM; COEUR D'ALENE, ID; Owner: Great Northern Broadcasting, Inc.)
KZZU-FM (92.9 FM; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Queenb Radio, Inc.)
KAZZ (107.1 FM; DEER PARK, WA; Owner: 3 Point Media - Washington, LLC)
KISC (98.1 FM; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Capstar Tx Limited Partnership)
KEYF-FM (101.1 FM; CHENEY, WA; Owner: Citadel Broadcasting Company)
KZBD (105.7 FM; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Citadel Broadcasting Company)
KAGU (88.7 FM; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Gonzaga University Telecommunications Assoc.)
KKZX (98.9 FM; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Capstar Tx Limited Partnership)
KSFC (91.9 FM; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Spokane Public Radio, Inc.)
KEEH (104.9 FM; SPOKANE, WA; Owner: Upper Columbia Media Association)

Internet

Local internet options available to the residents of Priest River include, but are not limited to dial-up service by Verizon, and high-speed internet by Concept Cable and Verizon, including satellite and radio internet connections.⁶⁵

Solid Waste Management

Solid Waste (Garbage)

Solid waste, in the form of garbage, is handled by weekly curbside pick-up in Priest River by Waste Management Co. The garbage is then taken to a transfer station in Sandpoint where it is transferred again to be taken out of state to Columbia Ridge Landfill in Oregon.⁶⁶ Residents outside of the City of Priest River have to manage their own garbage, by taking it to any of the 3 county transfer stations.⁶⁷ Waste Management Co. provides service to these county stations where it is taken Sandpoint then Columbia Ridge, Oregon.⁶⁸

Recycling

Currently, there are no curbside recycling services available to Priest River's residents.⁶⁹ United Recycling is a local family owned business in Oldtown, ID. that began in 2007, and provides e-waste services to Boundary, Bonner, and Kootenai counties.⁷⁰ Pacific Steel & Recycling has a recycling center in Sandpoint where they recycle metal and paper products.⁷¹ ABCO Wood Recycling, located in Sandpoint, recycles all types of wood and cardboard, including new construction waste and building removal waste.⁷²

Conclusion

Infrastructure plays a pivotal role in the City of Priest River by providing the facilities necessary for its citizens to live. These facilities are usually buried or hidden from view and therefore tend to be forgotten. Publicly owned and maintained water and wastewater facilities are in varying states of condition, ranging from good to very bad, and require improvements and replacements such as water and sewer lines. Stormwater pollution is a problem with the potential contamination of both the Priest and Pend Oreille rivers. To accommodate future growth, city leaders will need to evaluate projects and the impact it has on existing infrastructure.

¹ Interview with Jack Johnson & Johnny Wilson City Engineers for Priest River, at Priest River City Hall conference table, on September 25, 2009

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

- ⁸ Ibid
- ⁹ Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. Ground Water in Idaho: Aquifers [Idaho's Aquifer System]. [://www.deq.state.id.us/water/prog_issues/ground_water/aquifers.cfm#idaho](http://www.deq.state.id.us/water/prog_issues/ground_water/aquifers.cfm#idaho) Accessed December 2, 2009
- ¹⁰ City-Data. Priest River – Idaho. [://www.city-data.com/city/Priest-River-Idaho.html#ixzz0Z7I7ZZSq](http://www.city-data.com/city/Priest-River-Idaho.html#ixzz0Z7I7ZZSq) Accessed November 26, 2009
- ¹¹ Interview with Jack Johnson & Johnny Wilson City Engineers for Priest River, at Priest River City Hall conference table, on September 25, 2009
- ¹² Ibid
- ¹³ Ibid
- ¹⁴ Ibid
- ¹⁵ Ibid
- ¹⁶ Ibid
- ¹⁷ Ibid
- ¹⁸ Ibid
- ¹⁹ James A. Sewell and Associates. Priest River Autocad base file 1998. Adapted to show data from Interview with Jack Johnson & Johnny Wilson City Engineers for Priest River, over the phone. December 9, 2009
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- ²² Ibid
- ²³ Interview with Jack Johnson & Johnny Wilson City Engineers for Priest River, at Priest River City Hall conference table, on September 25, 2009
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- ²⁵ Ibid
- ²⁶ Ibid
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- ²⁸ U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security & Federal Emergency Management Agency. “Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety: Hazard Potential Classification System for Dams.” April, 2004. pg.5-6
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- ³⁰ Bonner County. Draft All-Hazard Mitigation Plan, Prepared by Tetra Tech Inc. pg.36 http://206.127.65.86/bonnercopdm/documents/Plan/Ch3_RiskAssessmentHazardProfiles.pdf
- ³¹ U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers. Albeni Falls Dam. [://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/Menu.cfm?sitename=albeni&pagename=home](http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/Menu.cfm?sitename=albeni&pagename=home) Accessed September 23, 2009
- ³² Ibid
- ³³ Bonner County. Draft All-Hazard Mitigation Plan, Prepared by Tetra Tech Inc. pg.29-31 http://206.127.65.86/bonnercopdm/documents/Plan/Ch3_RiskAssessmentHazardProfiles.pdf
- ³⁴ Interview with Joe Summers. Operation Director for U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers, Albeni Falls Dam, interviewed in his office at the Albeni Falls Dam, on September 25, 2009
- ³⁵ Ibid
- ³⁶ Ibid
- ³⁷ Ibid
- ³⁸ Ibid
- ³⁹ U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers. Albeni Falls Dam. [://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/Menu.cfm?sitename=albeni&pagename=home](http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/Menu.cfm?sitename=albeni&pagename=home) Accessed September 23, 2009
- ⁴⁰ Ibid
- ⁴¹ Interview with Joe Summers. Operation Director for U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers, Albeni Falls Dam, interviewed in his office at the Albeni Falls Dam, on September 25, 2009
- ⁴² Ibid
- ⁴³ Ibid
- ⁴⁴ Bonner County. Draft All-Hazard Mitigation Plan, Prepared by Tetra Tech Inc. pg.29-31 http://206.127.65.86/bonnercopdm/documents/Plan/Ch3_RiskAssessmentHazardProfiles.pdf
- ⁴⁵ Ibid

- ⁴⁶ Ibid
- ⁴⁷ Ibid
- ⁴⁸ Ibid
- ⁴⁹ Interview with Chandra Griesemer. Deputy City Clerk of Priest River, over the phone. December 9, 2009
- ⁵⁰ Northern Light Inc. [://www.norlight.org/](http://www.norlight.org/) Accessed December 13, 2009
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- ⁵³ Interview with Jack Johnson. City Engineer of Priest River over the phone, on November 30, 2009
- ⁵⁴ Interview with Chandra Griesemer. Deputy City Clerk of Priest River, over the phone. December 9, 2009
- ⁵⁵ Ibid
- ⁵⁶ Ibid
- ⁵⁷ City-Data. Priest River – Idaho. [://www.city-data.com/city/Priest-River-Idaho.html#ixzz0Zt2rm52w](http://www.city-data.com/city/Priest-River-Idaho.html#ixzz0Zt2rm52w) Accessed November 26,2009
- ⁵⁸ Ibid
- ⁵⁹ Wikipedia contributors. “Amateur Radio,” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. [://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amateur_radio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amateur_radio) Accessed December 9, 2009
- ⁶⁰ City-Data. Priest River – Idaho. [://www.city-data.com/city/Priest-River-Idaho.html#ixzz0Z7oXa28J](http://www.city-data.com/city/Priest-River-Idaho.html#ixzz0Z7oXa28J) Accessed November 26,2009
- ⁶¹ Interview with Chandra Griesemer. Deputy City Clerk of Priest River, over the phone. December 9, 2009
- ⁶² Ibid
- ⁶³ City-Data. Priest River – Idaho. [://www.city-data.com/city/Priest-River-Idaho.html#ixzz0Z7mz2kxr](http://www.city-data.com/city/Priest-River-Idaho.html#ixzz0Z7mz2kxr) Accessed November 26,2009
- ⁶⁴ Ibid
- ⁶⁵ Interview with Chandra Griesemer. Deputy City Clerk of Priest River, over the phone. December 9, 2009
- ⁶⁶ Interview with a Representative of Waste Management, over the phone. December 9, 2009
- ⁶⁷ Interview with Chandra Griesemer. Deputy City Clerk of Priest River, over the phone. December 9, 2009
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- ⁶⁹ Ibid
- ⁷⁰ United Recycling. [://unitedrecyclingcorp.com/](http://unitedrecyclingcorp.com/) Accessed December 15, 2009
- ⁷¹ Pacific Steel & Recycling. [://www.pacific-recycling.com/](http://www.pacific-recycling.com/). Accessed December 15, 2009
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Transportation

Introduction

Transportation in Bonner County and Priest River consists of automobile travel, bicycles, pedestrians, trains, airplanes, and public transportation. With the Bonner County Transportation Plan published in 2004, and current efforts being focused on a Priest River Transportation Plan, it is apparent that the people in Bonner County and Priest River value well-designed transportation systems, which address all modes of travel and include public involvement. A Trails Advisory Group is currently working on improving pedestrian and bicycle amenities in the County and has begun developing a trails master plan. One challenge facing the City of Priest River involves the highway system; US Highway 2 intersects State Highway 57 in Priest River, State Highway 57 is aligned north-south and provides access to Priest Lake; vehicles often travel through Priest River on the way to the lake, contributing to high amounts of flow-through traffic in the town. Recently obtained funding has made possible some major transportation improvement projects which will enhance the mobility of the County, while providing a more efficient transportation system that considers impacts on communities.

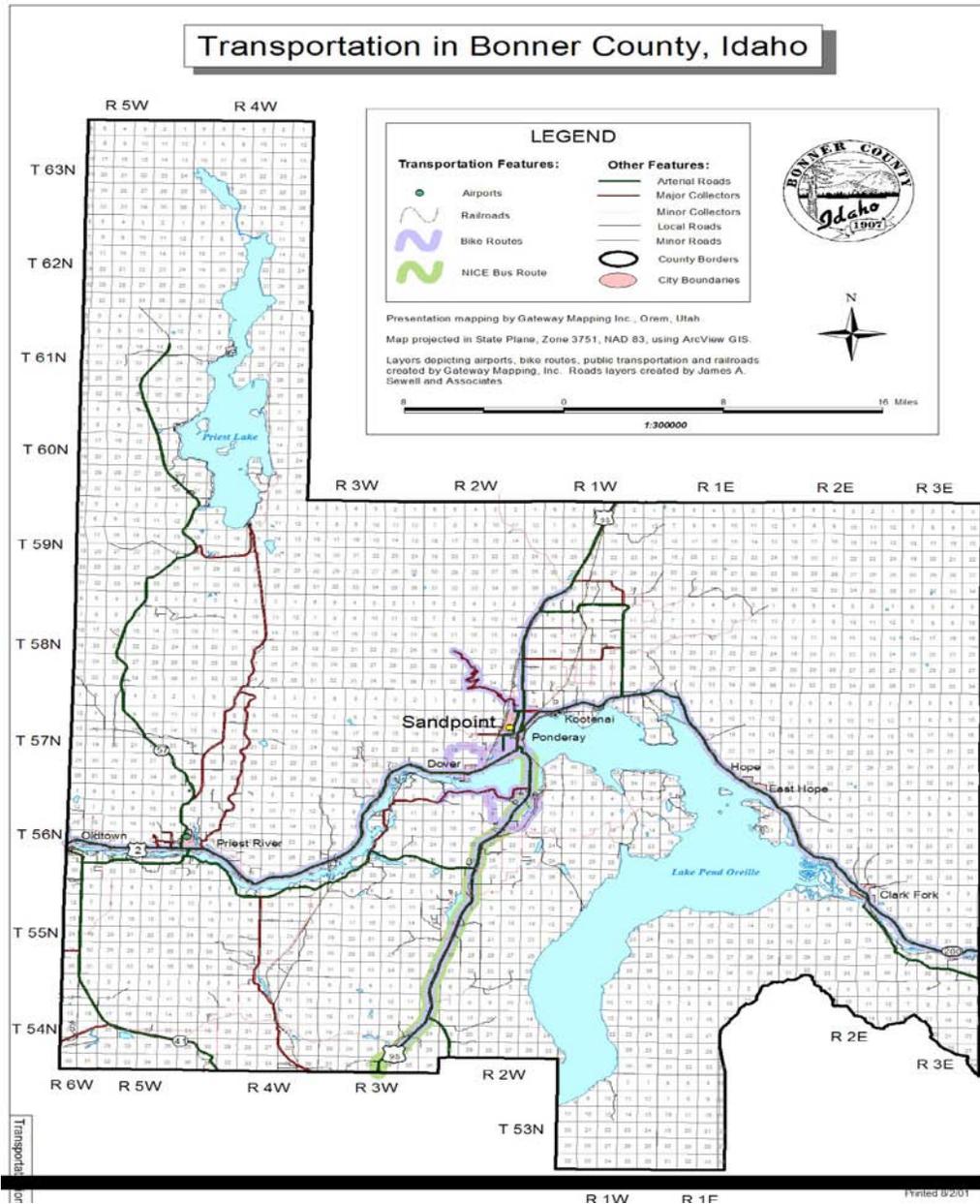
In this section:

- County Transportation Overview
- Highways and Auto Traffic
 - *Highway Transportation Improvement Projects*
 - *Idaho Scenic Byways in Bonner County*
 - *International Selkirk Loop*
- Trails and Non-Motorized Transportation
- Rail Lines
 - *Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF)*
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- Public Transportation
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 - *White Tail Transportation*
 - *Moose Express*
- Transportation Planning Efforts
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 - *City of Priest River*
- Conclusion

County Transportation Overview

The Bonner County transportation system is made up of arterial roads, major collector roads, minor collector roads, local roads, minor roads, airports, railroads, bike routes and bus routes. Figure 9.1 provides an overview of the transportation network in relation to city locations.

Figure 9.1: Overview of Transportation in Bonner County, Idaho

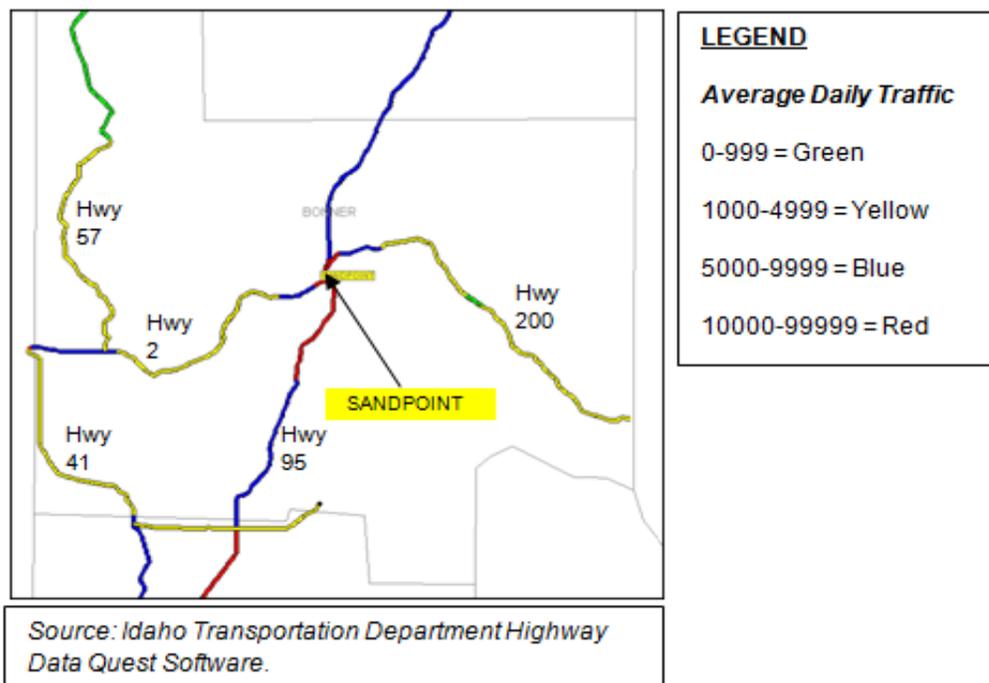


Source: Bonner County

Highways and Auto Traffic

There are 699 miles of county roads; 249 miles of paved surface, and 450 miles of gravel roads in Bonner County. This total mileage does not include city streets, private roads, privately maintained public roads, Forest Service or BLM roads, or any other roads that may exist. There are five state highways and four major arterials within the boundaries of Bonner County that provide access to cities in the county and links to surrounding states.¹ These roadways are: State Highways 95, 57, 41, 200, and US Highway 2. Figure 9.2 demonstrates the average daily traffic flow volumes for the five state highways.

Figure 9.2: Average daily traffic volumes on Bonner County highways.



Each year average daily traffic flow volumes are recorded on highways in the state of Idaho. To identify if there has been a drastic increase or decrease in traffic volumes in Bonner County, average daily traffic flow volumes from 1998 and 2008 for SH-57, 95, and 2 have been compared. The total traffic flow is broken down into commercial versus rural automobile traffic. Table 9.1 demonstrates changes in traffic volumes from 1998 to 2008. As shown in the table, traffic volumes have not significantly increased or decreased in the past 10 years. The largest traffic volume increase of 4,000 was on SH-95 from Bayview, north to Bonners Ferry.

Table 9.1: Comparison of Traffic Flow Volumes 1998 to 2008 on specific Hwy connections.

	1998			2008			Change in Daily Traffic Flow from 1998 to 2008
	Total Traffic Flow	% Commercial	% Rural	Total Traffic Flow	% Commercial	% Rural	
Hwy 57, Priest River north to Nordman	4,000	11%	89%	3,500	13%	87%	-500
Hwy 95, Bayview north to Bonners Ferry	59,400	11%	89%	63,400	12%	88%	+4,000
Hwy 2, Sandpoint west to Priest River	5,000	12%	88%	6,000	8%	92%	+1,000

Source: Idaho Transportation Department Highway Data Quest Software

Highway Transportation Improvement Projects

Idaho’s draft FY2010-13 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) outlines a number of highway projects to be completed in Bonner County. These projects are listed in Table 9.2.

Idaho Scenic Byways in Bonner County

In the state of Idaho there are three principals that must be fulfilled in order to be listed in the Idaho Scenic Byway Program. Roadways must be unique, have local support and commitment, and have protective standards. Two minor arterials in Bonner County have been designated by the state of Idaho in the Idaho Scenic Byways Program: Panhandle Historic Rivers Passage and Pend Oreille Scenic Byway (see Figure 9.3).

Established in December 1998, the Panhandle Historic Rivers Passage comprises US Highway 2 from the Washington state line to the Sandpoint City Beach area, a total of 28 miles.

Table 9.2: Highway Transportation Projects for Bonner County (FY2010-13)

Idaho's DRAFT FY2010-13 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)				
Bonner County Highway Project List				
Route	Project Location	Work Type	Cost	Scheduled Completion Year
US 95	Sandpoint, north & south	Reconstruction/R Gr&Dr	\$17,258	2011
SH 200	Trestle Creek Bridge	BR/APPRS BrRepl	\$680,000	2013
SH 200	Burlington Northern RR Bridge	BR/APPRS BrRehab	\$2,120	2010
SH 200	Trestle Creek Bridge Roadwork	BR/APPRS Bs&Rsrf RESRF/REST	\$3,000	2013
US 95	Union Pacific RR Bridge	DeckProSys	\$277,000	2012
SH 41	Burlington Northern RR Overpass	BR/APPRS DeckRepl	\$510,000	2013
SH 57	Gleason Boswell to Lamb Creek	RESRF/REST PavR&R	\$2,213	2010
SH 57	Lamb Creek to Bismark Road	RESRF/REST PavR&R	\$2,414	2010
SH 57	Upper W Branch Priest River Bridge	RESRF/REST BrReh	\$536,000	2010
SH 200	Delta View Road to BN RR Overpass	RESRF/REST Resrf	\$2,875	2013
STC-5780	Dufort Road RR Crossing	SAFTY/TRAF RRSgnl	\$370,000	2011

Figure 9.3. Map of Idaho Scenic Byways in Bonner County



This passage offers views of the Priest River Historic District, views of Pend Oreille River, and travels along the Kalispell Indian historic and cultural areas.² The Pend Oreille Scenic Byway begins at the junction of US Highway 95 north of Sandpoint and follows State Highway 200 east to the Montana state line, a total of 33 miles. This route provides travelers a panoramic view of the northern rim of Lake Pend Oreille and the Cabinet Gorge.

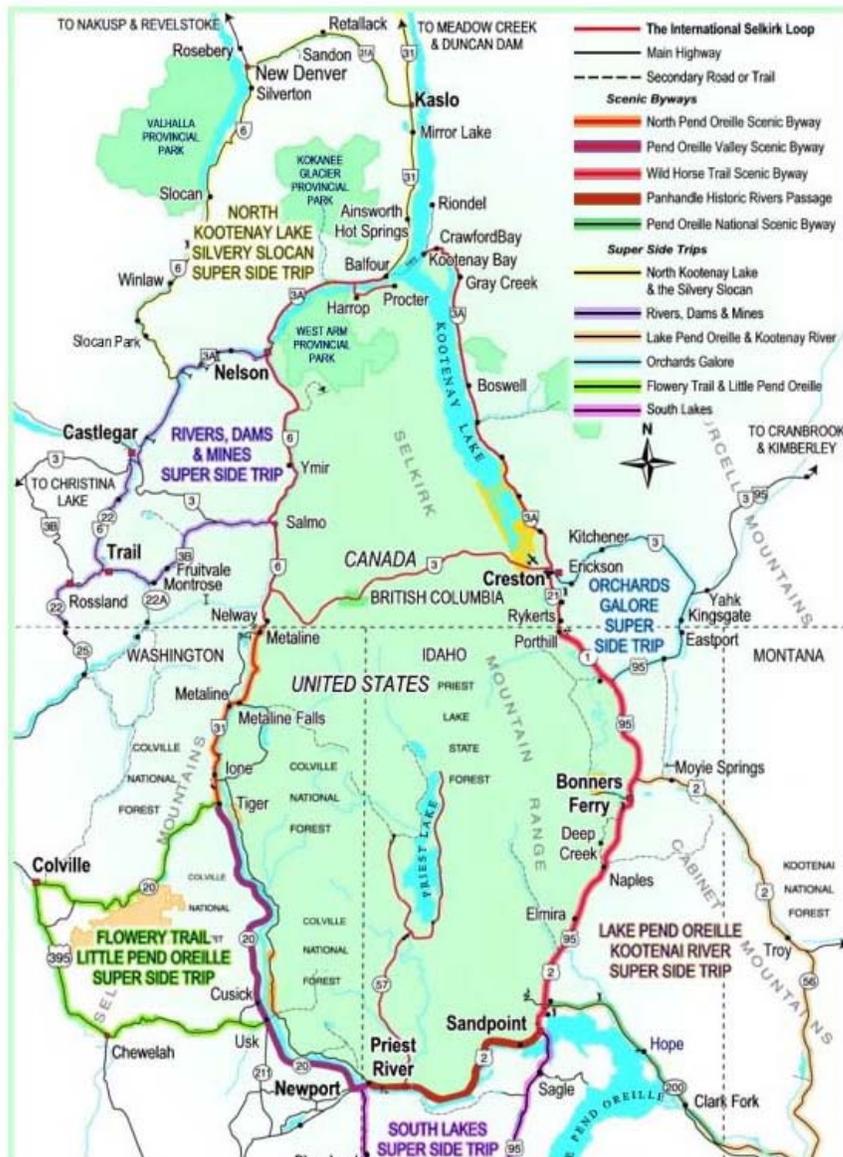
International Selkirk Loop

The International Selkirk Loop is a 450 km/280 mile scenic drive which circles the Selkirk Mountains in northeast Washington, northern Idaho and southeast British

Columbia. The entire loop map is shown in Figure 9.4. The southern edge of the loop includes the Panhandle Historic Rivers Passage which goes through the City of Priest River and Sandpoint, Idaho. The International Selkirk Loop was formed in 1999 as a non-profit corporation intended to enhance the local economy through promotion of tourism in the area. Business owners, travel guides, and various publications throughout the US and Canada are now members of the loop.

The loop offers a variety of recreational opportunities depending on the season, spectacular views of scenery and wildlife, as well as history and small communities which hold festivals throughout the year. There are numerous “super side-trips” that branch off from the loop, these include opportunities for hiking, biking and birding. The loop is one of only 27 All-American Road National Scenic Byways in the US.³

Figure 9.4: International Selkirk Loop Map



Source: www.selkirkloop.org

Trails and Non-Motorized Transportation

Figure 9.5: Carlson-McConnaughey Sagle



Figure 9.6: Dover-Sandpoint Trail



Figure 9.7: Exercise station on Wendy's Way Trail

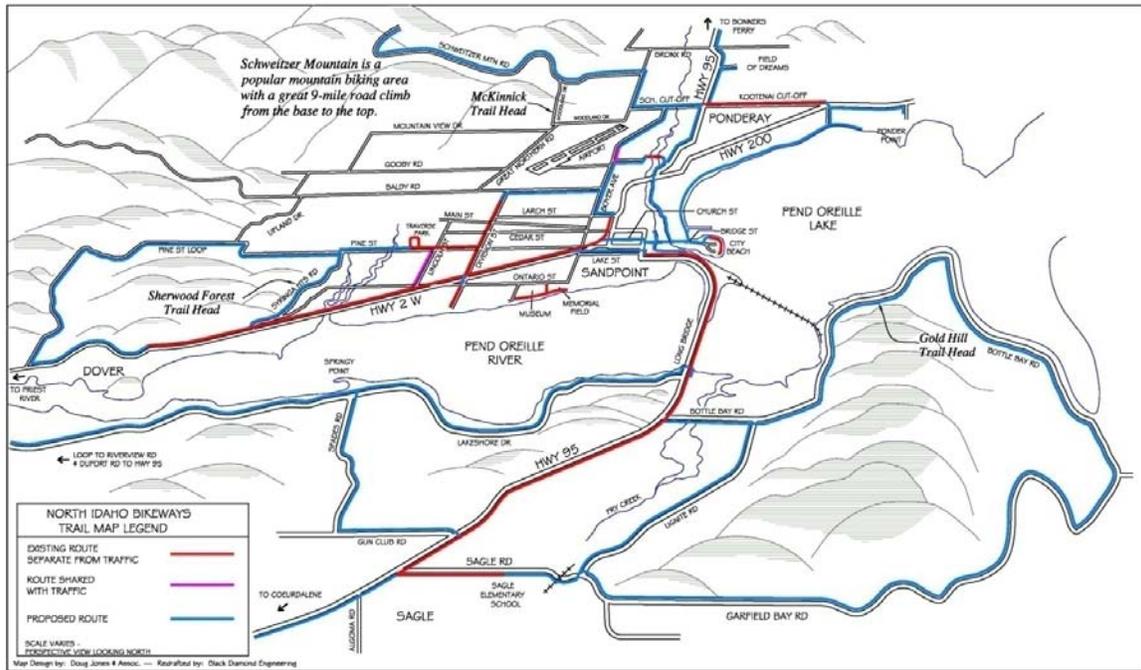


North Idaho Bikeways Inc. (NIB) is a non-profit corporation focused on establishing a network of bike and pedestrian trails that will connect communities' neighborhoods, businesses, schools, parks and recreational areas in Bonner County. The corporation was founded in 1995 after development of highways and road networks made non-motorized travel unsafe and unappealing. From 1995 to 2008 NIB helped create 13 miles of separated bike trails. Goals of the corporation include the following:⁴

- Connect Bonner County communities with a series of bike/pedestrian paths that facilitate access to community areas such as parks, school, and neighborhood activity centers
- Identify, prioritize, and promote the pathway locations to achieve a Master Plan of non-motorized trails
- Promote financial support for bike trail development
- Encourage cities and counties to adopt in comprehensive plans on and off-street bike/pedestrian pathways with all major street improvements
- Provide appropriate signage for direction and destination points along pathways so residents and visitors can identify, locate and safely use appropriate pathways
- Create a bike/pedestrian pathway map
- Promote increased bicycle parking facilities in high use areas
- Decrease automobile travel
- Provide a significant tourist attraction
- Increase access to aerobic exercise

Figure 9.8 shows locations of existing and proposed NIB trails.

Figure 9.8: North Idaho Bikeways Trail Map



Source: North Idaho Bikeways⁴

Funding for all projects that NIB has accomplished has been through private donations, fundraisers, local businesses, and state grants. NIB has completed nearly 14 projects, with 12 projects ongoing, planned but unfunded, or still in the planning stages. Table 9.3 below provides a list of these projects.

Table 9.3: North Idaho Bikeways Project List

Project Title	Project Status	Funding Source
Carlson-McConnaughey Sagle Community Trail	Completed	Idaho Parks & Rec Grant (\$90,000) Federal Trans Enhancement Grant (\$310,000)
Dover-Sandpoint Trail	Completed	Forest Service Grant (\$12,000)
Creed's Crossing	Completed	Grant (\$35,000)
Popsicle Bridge	Completed	Grant (\$15,000)
Jim Hunt Trail	Completed	City of Sandpoint, Rotary Club & Slam Committee Grant (\$20,000)
Wendy's Way	Completed	Grant
Boyer Avenue-Popsicle Bridge Trail	Completed	Grant
Long Bridge Underpass to Lakeshore Drive	Completed	Grant
North Lincoln Street Trail	Completed	Grant
New bike/ped bridge over Bridge Street	Completed	Grant
Kootenai Cutoff-McGhee Road connector	Completed	Idaho Transportation Department
Extension of bike/ped Boardwalk on Sand Creek	Completed	Grant

Ponderay Highway 95 widening trail	Completed	Idaho Transportation Department
Sandpoint Byway Trail	On-going	Idaho Transportation Department
Ponderay Lakeshore Trail	Planned-Unfunded	
Church Street Downtown Connector	Planned-Unfunded	ISTEA Grant (pending)
McGhee Road-Ponder Point Trail	Planned-Unfunded	
Pine Street Bike Path	Planned-Unfunded	
Division Street Bike Path Connector	Planned-Unfunded	
City of Dover Trails	In Planning Stage	
Division Street-Boyer Avenue Connector	In Planning Stage	
Sagle-Dufort Trail	In Planning Stage	
Sandpoint-Garwood North 95 Trail	In Planning Stage	

Source: *North Idaho Bikeways*⁸

In response to NIB’s goal of future development of county non-motorized trails master plan, a Trails Advisory Group (TAG) was formed in 2008 to assist in the development of a Bonner County trails master plan, which is now currently in progress. In addition to numerous individual volunteers being involved with TAG, participating groups include the Bonner County Planning & Zoning Commission, Bonner County Board of Commissioners, Pend Oreille Peddlars, Panhandle Backcountry Horsemen Association, Priest Lake Snowmobile & Trails Club, North Idaho Bikeways, U.S. Forest Service, and the Idaho Department of Lands.⁵

The purpose of the trails plan is to preserve and maintain the county’s existing trails/pathway system and to develop new pathways that are appropriately funded and maintained. The plan is intended to provide an inventory of existing trails, explore long-term management of the trails, and look to the future to expand and improve the trails system. Due to existing property rights across the county the plan will work with public agencies and private property owners to ensure permanent protection of a trails system.

The goals of the plan are as follows:

- Provide a connection between communities
- Provide direction and cooperation among the various governmental jurisdictions, private property owners, and conservation groups to develop a county-wide system of pathways and trails
- Protect public access waterways, public lands, and public rights-of-way for recreation, health, transportation, hunting, gathering, and fishing

A trails master plan will be created that designates where non-motorized, motorized and mixed-use trails are appropriate. Once the plan is finalized it will be sent to the Bonner County Planning & Zoning Commission for review/approval.⁵

Types of trail users in Bonner County include:

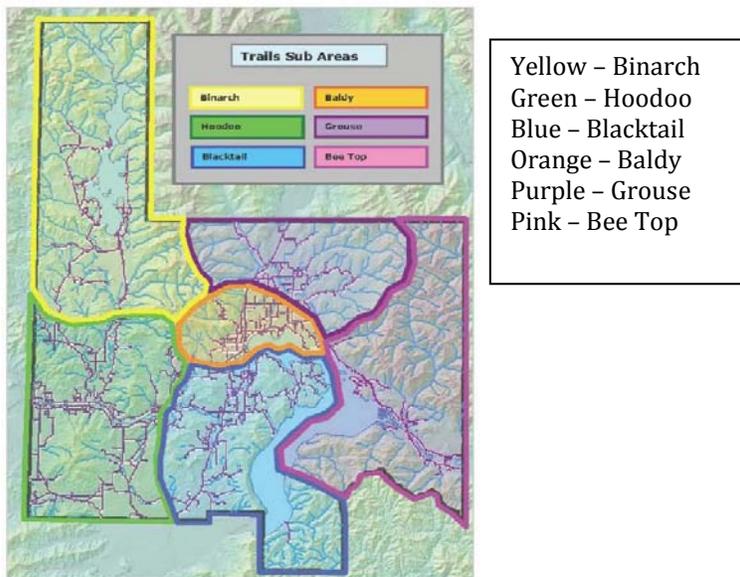
- Day hikers/walkers
- Snowmobilers
- Horseback packers
- Cross-country skiers
- Snowshoes

- Mountain bikers
- Cyclists
- ATV riders

With the variety of trail users, TAG has determined that motorized and non-motorized trails will be identified, as well as water-based trails, and mixed-use trails.

In order to ensure efficient and effective planning of a trails system within a diverse landscape and with numerous trail users, neighborhood “sub-areas” should be determined for developing a good trails/pathway plan. The sub-areas were named after the mountains in the area, and are distributed throughout the county as shown in Figure 9.9.⁵

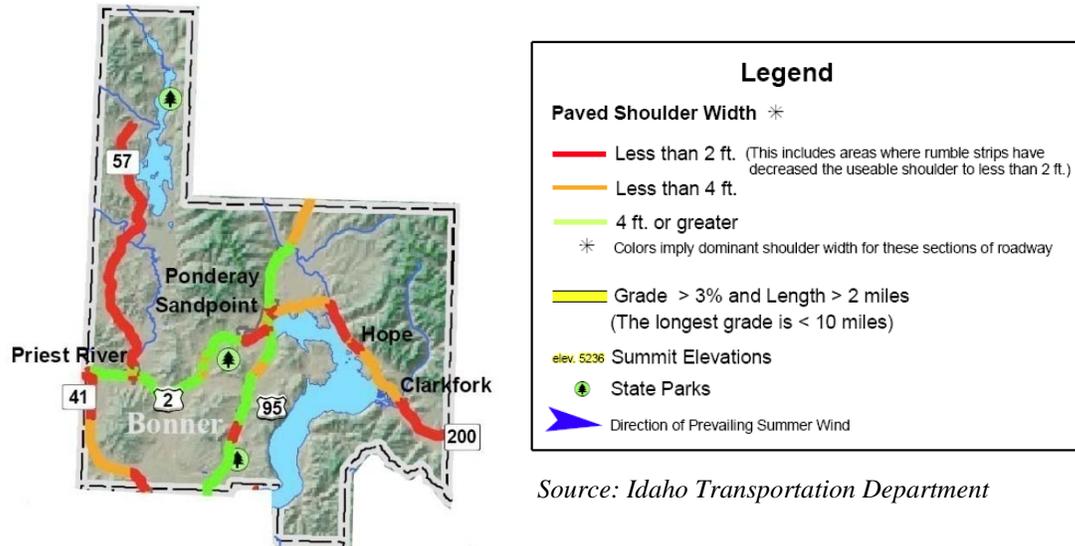
Figure 9.9: Neighborhood Trail Sub-Areas



Source: Bonner County Trails Update

The Idaho Transportation Department has analyzed state highways and determined the available paved shoulder widths which allow for bicycling along on Idaho’s highway system. This study was completed in 2009.⁶ Figure 9.10 highlights shoulder widths on highways located in Bonner County.

Figure 9.10: 2009 Bonner County Bicycling Map



Source: Idaho Transportation Department

Rail Lines

There are four rail lines that run through Bonner County: Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF); Spokane International (Union Pacific); Port of Pend Oreille, Pend Oreille Valley Authority; and Amtrak.¹ There are 162 railroad grade crossings in Bonner County, 12 gated and 150 un-gated. These crossings include private, public, grade separated, and at-grade crossings.

Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF)

Figure 9.11: A Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Rail Car



Rail Link line which handles freight between Kootenai, Idaho, and Butte, Montana. The main line runs approximately 50 miles through Bonner County, with a junction in

Sandpoint and in Dover, the Link line runs approximately 80 miles through the county. Both lines are used to ship lumber, petroleum, potash, and other products. Approximately three to seven BNSF trains travel through Bonner County each day.

Spokane International (Union Pacific)

The Spokane International Railroad runs between Spokane, Washington, and connects with the Canadian Pacific Railroad in Canada. This line ships lumber, potash, and petroleum while passing through Sandpoint, and travels approximately 66 miles through Bonner County.

Port of Pend Oreille, Pend Oreille Valley Authority

The Port of Pend Oreille operates approximately 60 miles per day in Bonner County providing round-trip freight train service between Oldtown and Sandpoint. This line carries wood products including lumber, chips, and paper products between Bonner and Pend Oreille counties, servicing many large mills and lumber companies which operate in Bonner County.

Amtrak

Figure 9.12: The Amtrak station in Sandpoint, Idaho



Amtrak's Empire Builder passenger train serves Sandpoint daily, heading eastbound to Chicago and westbound to Portland/Seattle. Two Amtrak trains travel through Bonner County on a daily basis. The Empire Builder is a superliner with bi-level railcars.

Air Transportation

There are four small airports, several private and public landing fields, and three private heliports that service air transportation in Bonner County. Airports are located in Sandpoint, Priest River, Priest Lake, and Cavanaugh Bay. There are some aeronautic projects listed in the Idaho Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, these are shown in Table 9.4.⁷

Table 9.4: Bonner County Aeronautics Project List (FY2010-13)

<i>Bonner County Aeronautics Project List</i>			
Project Location	Work Type	Cost	Scheduled Completion Year
Priest River	Pavement Rehabilitation	\$158,000	2010
Sandpoint	Extend, widen, relocate	\$474,000	2010
Priest River	Pavement Rehabilitation	\$158,000	2011
Sandpoint	Land Acquisition	\$12,273	2011
Sandpoint	Pavement Rehabilitation	\$316,000	2012
Priest River	Pavement Rehabilitation	\$158,000	2012
Sandpoint	Construct T/W NewPave	\$200,000	2013

Source: Idaho DRAFT FY2010-13 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Sandpoint Airport

The Sandpoint Airport, operated by Bonner County, is located on approximately 60 acres and was established in the 1940's. There are approximately 18,000 take-offs and landings per year. The traffic at this airport is a combination of business and tourism related travel, as well as recreational flying and training purposes. Future development of the Sandpoint airport includes an updated Bonner County airport master plan with potential development of a commuter air service serving the Seattle or Calgary areas, and possibly Boise, Idaho.¹

Priest River Airport

The Priest River Airport, operated by Bonner County, is located on 44 acres east of SH-57 and north of Priest River. This airport was established in 1921. The Priest River airport is used primarily for tourism related travel and second-home owner travel. This airport has about 7,800 landings and take-offs per year.

Priest Lake Airport

The Priest Lake Airport, operated by the U.S. Forest Service, is located about 3 miles south of Nordman, on the west side of Priest Lake. The only services this airport offers is seasonal tie-downs, the airport is open on a seasonal basis and there is no winter maintenance. Priest Lake airport has about 23 take-offs and landings per year.

Cavanaugh Bay Airport

Cavanaugh Bay airport is located about 3 miles north of Coolin on the east side of Priest Lake. The airport is open to the public, but is unattended and has no winter maintenance. The airport has an average of about 86 landings and take-offs per week during the summer season. Traffic is all transient general aviation.

Public Transportation

There are three public transportation service providers in Bonner County: North Idaho Community Express, White Tail Transportation, and Moose Express.¹

North Idaho Community Express (NICE)

Figure 9.13: North Idaho Community Express Bus



NICE service operates on a reservation (dial-a-ride) basis in Bonner County. It is a private service that qualifies for Americans with Disabilities Act funding. This service operates in Sandpoint, Pend Oreille, Sagle, Dover, and Kootenai. Additionally, NICE operates a service from Sandpoint to Coeur d'Alene three times per day, Monday – Friday at a rate of \$14 one-way, reservations only.⁸

White Tail Transportation

Figure 9.14: White Tail Transportation Bus



White Tail Transportation is based out of Sandpoint and provides transportation services in northern Idaho to senior citizens, adults, and children with special needs. White Tail is a private service that was established in 1999, service routes in Bonner County include Sandpoint, Priest River, and Trestle Creek. White Tail also offers a charter service for sporting events, company functions, weddings, parties, restaurants/shopping, and airport transportation.⁹

Moose Express

Moose Express is based out of Sandpoint and provides a charter bus service specifically for airport passenger and courier service from Sandpoint to Spokane. This is a private company which operates four mini vans.

Transportation Planning Efforts

Bonner County

The most recent Bonner County Transportation Plan was published in December 2004; development of the plan was lead by the Bonner County Area Transportation Team (BCATT). BCATT was formed in 1991 by the Idaho Transportation Department with the intention that the group would review grants and work closely with Legislators. BCATT members include elected officials, planning professionals, city employees, and government officials.¹⁰ The BCATT bylaws state that “BCATT will promote the coordination, planning, development and maintenance of the transportation infrastructure in Bonner County. BCATT will also provide a forum for unified decision making, project support, and attendant funding for local projects.”¹¹

The Bonner County Transportation Plan is intended to address county-wide transportation needs for a twenty year period (2002 to 2022). The plan provides an avenue for future direction for transportation capital improvements and allows the county and cities to qualify for federal and state funding of transportation improvements. The overall transportation goal for the county is to “provide a balanced transportation system that meets the needs of the community by accommodating the movement of people, goods, and services at an optimum level of safety, economy, and efficiency.”¹²

Public input in Bonner County has been crucial to the decisions made regarding transportation improvement projects. Susan Kiebert works for a private company in Sandpoint, Idaho as a liaison between local citizens and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). She strives to include public input in all transportation projects in the county. Kiebert’s office coordinates weekly community meetings with contractors, ITD, and local residents.¹⁰ These meetings have been a successful method for public participation and ensuring local citizens have a voice in transportation improvements.

City of Priest River

The City of Priest River is currently in the process of creating a transportation plan, which will address all modes of transportation. The city received a \$50,000 grant to hire an engineering firm to develop the plan. Work done at this point includes traffic counts, street and signage inventory, projected growth of commercial and residential areas, and solicitation of public input. Surveys were mailed to citizens to collect comments from residents. In addition, public open houses have been held and public hearings are scheduled in the future.¹³ One of the goals that will be addressed in the plan is to have a

sidewalk and bike path on at least one side of every street. This will promote safe biking and walking in the city. According to Bryan Quayle, Planning and Zoning Administrator in Bonner County, the projected completion date for the transportation plan is March 2010. The final plan will be completed after a series of public open houses and hearings with the planning commission and city council.

Conclusion

The transportation system, services, and planning efforts that exist in Bonner County encourage active lifestyles, sustainability, tourism, and offer mobility. The highway system provides scenic connections between communities and across state borders. Many planning efforts are currently in progress and will only further enhance the transportation system in Bonner County. The trails master plan will continue to provide significant connections for non-motorized transportation, contributing to a multi-modal transportation system. A potential trail corridor that was not mentioned in future trail projects is a multi-use trail connecting Priest River to Priest Lake. A trail making this connection would offer an abundance of recreational activities (snowmobiling, cycling, running, rollerblading, cross-country skiing) and provide a significant connection between these communities. In future planning efforts it will be increasingly important to involve Bonner County citizens in any transportation decision making processes. Additionally, it is equally important for governmental bodies in this region to work together and pursue transportation goals regionally. Doing so will ensure a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system that meets mobility needs of Bonner County residents and visitors now and in the future.

¹ Transportation Component Bonner County Comprehensive Plan. JUB Engineers, Inc. August 15, 2002. Pgs. 1-50. [://www.co.bonner.id.us/planning/documents/pdf/plan.trans.pdf](http://www.co.bonner.id.us/planning/documents/pdf/plan.trans.pdf). Web Accessed Oct. 15, 2009.

² Idaho Byways program guide – panhandle historic rivers passage [://itd.idaho.gov/planning/byways/scenic/Idaho_Byways_Program_Guide.pdf](http://itd.idaho.gov/planning/byways/scenic/Idaho_Byways_Program_Guide.pdf). Web accessed Nov. 16, 2009.

³ The International Selkirk Loop. [://www.selkirkloop.org/](http://www.selkirkloop.org/). Web Accessed January 24, 2010.

⁴ North Idaho Bikeways, Inc. [://www.northidahobikeways.com/](http://www.northidahobikeways.com/). Web Accessed Oct. 18, 2009.

⁵ Trails Update. [://www.co.bonner.id.us/planning/Documents/August2009draft.pdf](http://www.co.bonner.id.us/planning/Documents/August2009draft.pdf). Web accessed Nov. 16, 2009.

⁶ Idaho Bicycling Map. January 2009. [://itd.idaho.gov/bike_ped/BikeMap.pdf](http://itd.idaho.gov/bike_ped/BikeMap.pdf). Web accessed Nov. 16, 2009.

⁷ FY2009-2013 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. [://itd.idaho.gov/planning/stip/](http://itd.idaho.gov/planning/stip/). Web accessed Nov. 16, 2009.

⁸ North Idaho Community Express. [://nicetransportation.com/](http://nicetransportation.com/). Web Accessed Dec. 6, 2009.

⁹ Whitetail Transportation, Inc. [://www.whitetailtransportation.com/Default.aspx](http://www.whitetailtransportation.com/Default.aspx). 1999-2009. Web Accessed Oct. 15, 2009.

¹⁰ Kiebert, Susan. Public Involvement Specialist, Transportation Information Office. Interviewed by Rebecca Couch. September 26, 2009.

¹¹ Bonner County Area Transportation Team Bylaws. BCATT. 2009.

¹² Bonner County Area Transportation Plan. The Transpo Group Inc. December 2004.

¹³ Quayle, Bryan. Planning and Zoning Administrator, Priest River. Interviewed by Rebecca Couch. October 21, 2009.

¹⁴ Bonner County Website. [://www.co.bonner.id.us/index.html](http://www.co.bonner.id.us/index.html). 2007. Web Accessed Nov. 16, 2009.

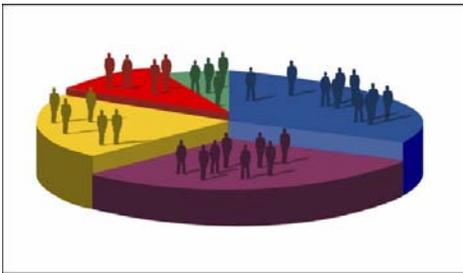
¹⁵ Marley, Clare, AICP. Planning Director, Bonner County.

Demographics

Introduction

This section covers the number and distribution of people in Priest River as compared to Bonner County. To illustrate changes in population that have occurred, population characteristics from 1970 to the 2000 US Census are given for comparison. Priest River has an overall trend of increasing population since the 1970s. There is an overall trend of more females to males in Priest River, opposite of trends seen in Bonner County and Idaho. There is an age gap in Priest River between the ages of 25-50, indicating an out-migration once residents reach production years, and an in-migration of retirees. Priest River is predominantly white, along with Bonner County and Idaho.

Images for cover page:



Sources: [://www.scu.edu/provost/diversity/faculty_staff/images/demographics.jpg](http://www.scu.edu/provost/diversity/faculty_staff/images/demographics.jpg)
[://www.gridpp.ac.uk/about/People%202.jpg](http://www.gridpp.ac.uk/about/People%202.jpg)

In this section:

- Population Changes
- Gender Distributions
- Age Distributions
- Ethnicity Distributions
- Summary

Population Changes

Changes in the population of Priest River in the past 40 years have reflected the economic climate of the region. The first settlers of Priest River came in the late 1880s to work on the railroad and in the timber industry.¹ The *Priest River Times* in the 1920's reported that according to the U.S. Census, Priest River was the fastest growing town in North Idaho.

Priest River saw a decrease in population between 1980 and 1990, but within ten years to 2000, the population was above what it was in 1980. Priest River has grown at a slower rate than Bonner County, all of Idaho, and the United States between 1990 and 2008 (See table 10.1).

Table 10.1: Population Change by Place from 1970-2008

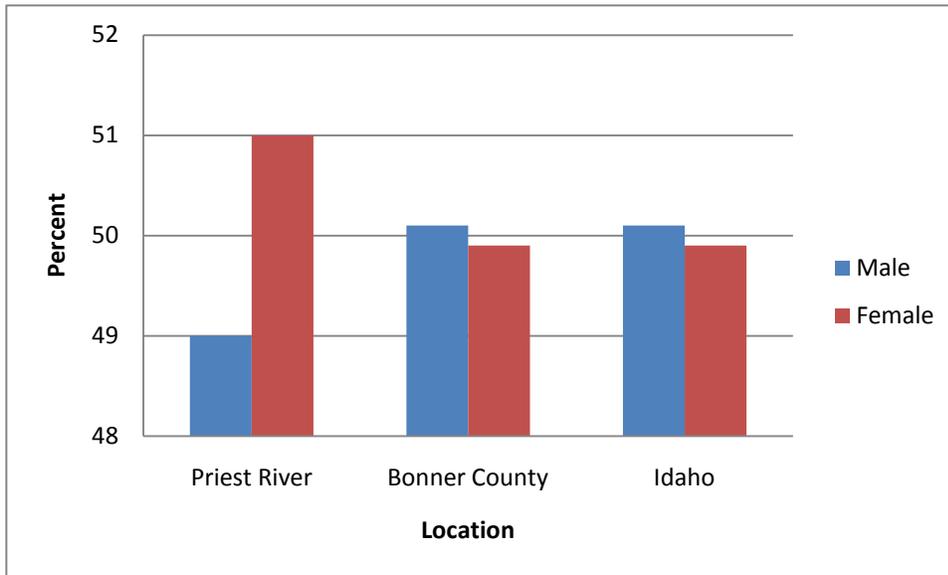
Total Population	Priest River	Bonner County ²	Idaho	United States
1970	1,493 ³	15,560	x	x
1980	1,639	24,163	944,127 ⁴	x
1990	1,560	26,622	1,006,749	248,709,873
2000	1,754	36,835	1,293,953	281,421,906
2008	1,913	41,168	1,523,816	304,059,724
Percent-positive change 1990-2008 ⁵	23	55	51	12

Source: US Census, Idaho Works Community Profile, Bonner County Comprehensive Plan

Gender Distributions

Graph 10.1 shows gender distribution by place in Priest River, Bonner County, and Idaho. Priest River shows an uneven distribution of males to females, with a slightly higher number of females as compared to Bonner County and the rest of the state.

Graph 10.1: Gender Distribution by Place

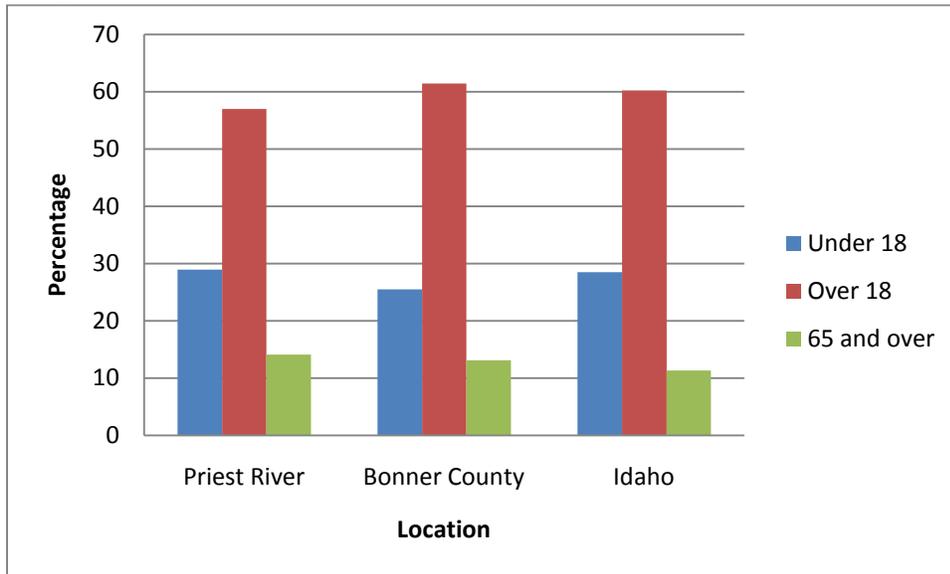


Source: US Census 2000

Age Distributions

Graph 10.2 shows the percentages of age distributions of residents of Priest River as compared to Bonner County and the rest of Idaho. Priest River has about the same number of residents under the age of 18 as Idaho, with Bonner County having slightly less. Priest River has fewer residents between the ages of 18 and 65 than Bonner County and Idaho. In terms of those aged 65 or older, Priest River has more of these residents as a percentage than Bonner County and Idaho. These trends imply an outmigration of residents once they turn 18, and an in-migration of people once they are of retirement age.

Graph 10.2 Age Distribution Percentage by Place

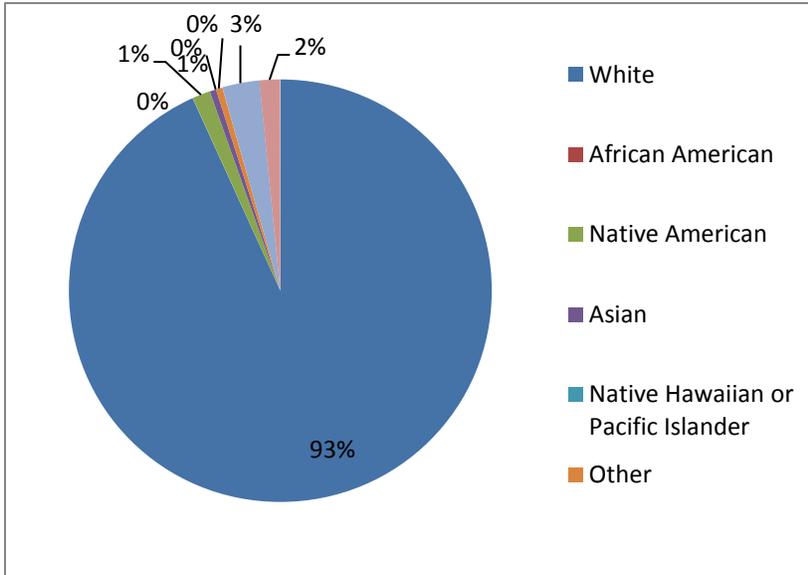


Source: US Census 2000

Ethnic Distributions

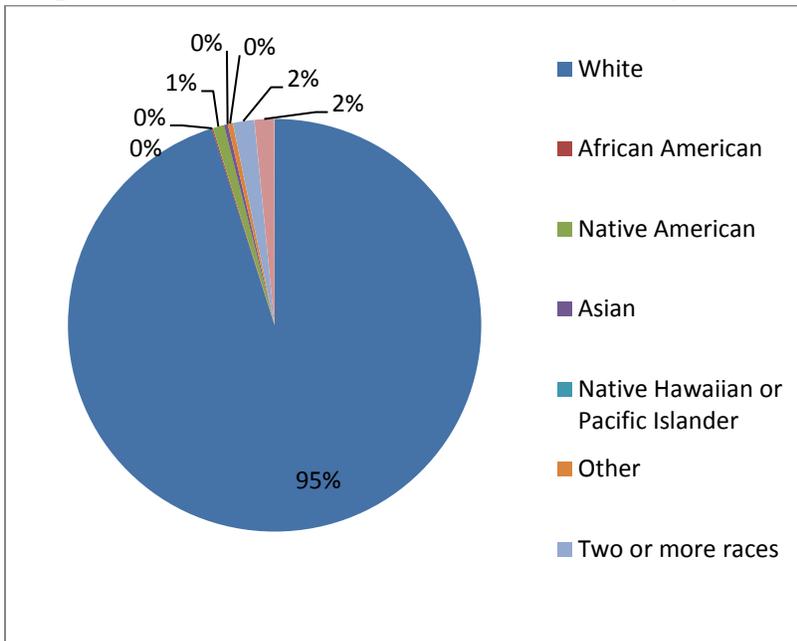
Graph 10.3 shows that the predominant race in Priest River is white followed by Native American. In comparison to Graph 10.4 which shows the racial distribution of Bonner County, Priest River has a slightly higher percentage of Native American residents. The ethnic diversity in Priest River and Bonner County is fairly low, most likely because the region is very rural. Bonner County and Priest River do not have as high a variety of racial representation as Idaho (Graph 10.5). However, Idaho itself is fairly homogenous as well, with over 84% of the state being white.

Graph 10.3: Racial Distribution of Priest River



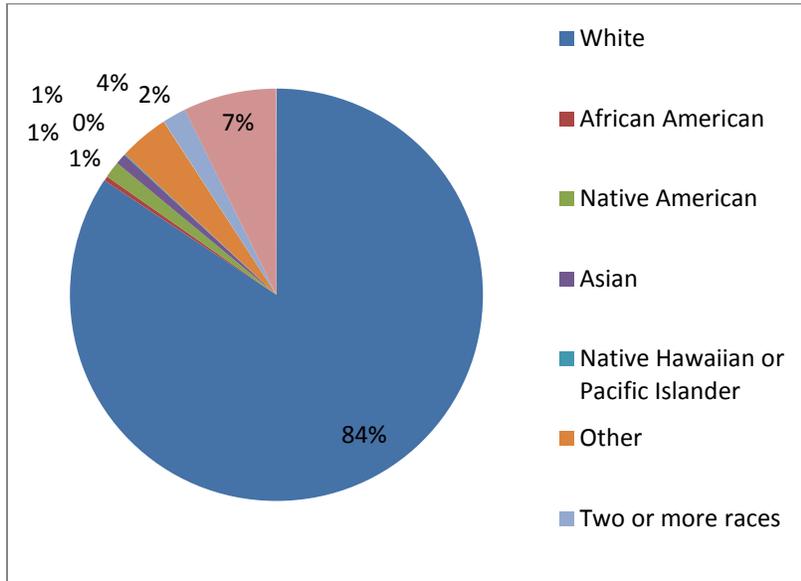
Source: US Census 2000

Graph 10.4: Racial Distribution of Bonner County



Source: US Census 2000

Graph 10.5: Racial Distribution of Idaho



Source: US Census 2000

Summary

The population of Priest River shows that there is an age gap between 25 and 50. Such trends indicate an out-migration of the population in their productive years, most likely in search of employment, and an increase in population of retirees. The outmigration of residents in their production years is consistent with the shrinking economy and the recent closure of lumber mills in the area. The relatively large number of residents under the age of 18 might suggest there will be an increase in population once these residents become of child bearing age, but because of the trend of out-migration, this group most likely will not be a large contributor to the population. Many residents are seeking employment opportunities outside of Priest River, but people move back to Priest River after their production years. The larger population of retirement-aged residents indicates a strong connection to the area only after employment has happened. It is recommended that this population be taken into consideration in terms of services such as a senior center, activities that appeal to an older age group and possible transportation services for this age group. Priest River also has a higher population by percentage of Native Americans than Bonner County as well as a higher percentage of the population of people of two or more races than Bonner County. Though Idaho as a state is fairly homogenous in terms of ethnicity and race, it is important to note that Priest River has a small population of Native Americans.

¹ Priest River Schools Students, “History of Priest River” in *Priest River Then and Now*, http://www.sd83.k12.id.us/pre/quest/history_of_priest_river.htm

² Bonner County Board of Commissioners, “Population Component” in Bonner County Comprehensive Plan (19 June 2003) <http://www.co.bonner.id.us/planning/documents/pdf/plan.pop.pdf> (accessed 8 December 2009).

³ “Idaho Community Profiles: Priest River”, Idaho Commerce and Labor (1 March 2006), <http://commerce.idaho.gov/assets/content/docs/Cities/PriestRiver.pdf> (accessed 8 December 2009).

⁴ Coeur d’Alene Atlas

⁵ 2008 numbers are based on predictions by the US Census Bureau

Economics

Introduction

Priest River has been going through an economic transformation in the past few decades, as have many former logging towns in the Western United States, characterized by the closing of mills in the area, the loss of timber jobs, and an increased reliance on tourism. This coupled with a global economic downturn has placed a great deal of economic stress on the town of Priest River. Despite the apparent problems that Priest River has economically, there are bright spots. The very active community involvement by citizens, the revitalization that is occurring downtown, and a quite lively business atmosphere all suggest that the town is working hard at reinventing itself.

The data contained within this section is for the purpose of providing the citizens of Priest River with information that will help them make informed decisions regarding economic policy. Data was gathered from a variety of sources both public and private based on the completeness of the data as well as the availability of the most current data. The report includes economic profile information including sections on employment, income, and housing. The report also includes analysis and synthesis of the data using tools such as Reilly's Law, location quotients, and social accounting matrices.

Report data contained within is as current as possible, however data sources are only as new as 2008 and extend back as far as the 2000 census. Even with the newer 2007 and 2008 data, it is known that the economic landscape has changed with the global downturn, as such, construction and housing data will likely be inflated. Readers of this section should consider this when analyzing the data as well as consider additional first hand knowledge of the area that could be used to further and deepen the economic picture being created. Hopefully, even with these shortcomings, this section will serve to inform the public decision on future economic action in Priest River.

In This Section:

- Principles of a Regional Economy
- Economic Features of Priest River
 - *Employment*
 - *Income*
 - *Housing*
- Natural Amenities
- Industry Data
- Conclusion

Principles of a Regional Economy

There are many ways to define the economic area of Priest River. Perhaps the region is just within the city limits, but for most it would extend beyond the city limits, stopping short of Spokane, WA and Sandpoint, ID. However these cities and the population and resources they possess can be a major asset to smaller communities such as Priest River. All communities in a region participate in a regional economy, recognizing this and then determining a comparative advantage within this regional economy is a good step toward economic sustainability.

One way of analyzing how cities and their economies interact in a region is with Reilly's Law. Reilly's Law is a fairly simple tool that looks at the severity of pull between two regions. In the case of Priest River we are looking at the relationships between towns or cities in Bonner County and into Coeur d'Alene and Spokane. The idea behind this law is that of central place theory, in which larger population centers are central places for regions that everyone must go to for certain goods and services, and smaller towns serve as central places for smaller regions, offering more limited services. Reilly's Law takes this idea and gives a calculation, based on distance between two cities and population, which explains a break point, where at a certain distance the pull of one city is greater than the pull of another city.

The model (Table 11.1) was calculated using distances from Google Maps¹ and Populations from the 2000 US Census.² Many of these findings are expected. Spokane has the greatest pull on Priest River, New Port has an equal pull with Priest River, and Priest River attracts people from about 7.5 miles, while Sandpoint attracts people from the remainder of the distance between Priest River and Sandpoint (14.93 miles). This of course is a general rule, but will likely work for most situations. The point is not to compare Priest River to any other city in any sort of hierarchy, but to show that the size of cities are important, as well as that Priest River exists within a regional economy and should capitalize on the population resources of the surrounding areas.

Table 11.1: Geographic Influence of Priest River

Towns	Priest River's Pull	Pull on Priest River	Percent of Priest River's Pull
Spokane, WA	4.67 Miles	49.33 Miles	8.65%
Coeur d'Alene	9.38 Miles	42.22 Miles	18.18%
Sandpoint	7.57 Miles	14.93 Miles	33.64%
New Port, WA	3.22 Miles	3.38 Miles	48.79%

Economic Features of Priest River

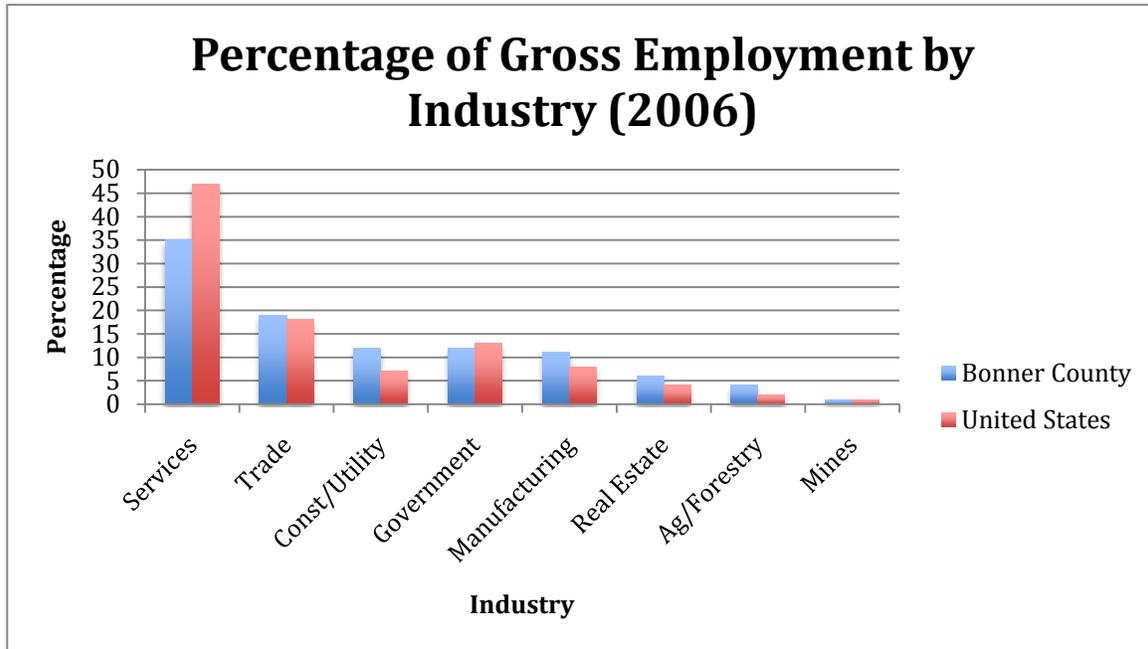
Employment

In “What’s good about your city?” surveys conducted by the University of Idaho in September of 2009, quality of available jobs received more poor responses than any of the 60 questions asked. Similarly, the number one response for prioritized actions for the Bonner County community was, “Bring in business to provide needed jobs that support your vision of the future.”³ Additional information showing parallel community feelings towards problems of economic development can be found in the 2008 Priest River Urban Renewal Agency community survey.⁴

The City of Priest River had several major employers according to the Idaho Department of Commerce in 2006.⁵ These employers included JD Lumber at 225 employees, the West Bonner School District at 200 employees, Stimson Lumber at 130 employees, the City of Priest River at 32 employees, Malloy Veneer at 30 employees, and Aerocet, Inc. at 20 employees. Sense 2006, however, many companies in the area have cut employees and JD Lumber, the City’s largest employer has been sold, laying off over 200 employees.⁶

Figure 11.1 shows how employment in Bonner County is divided compared to employment by sector for the US as a whole. With JD Lumber having left Priest River, there is much less manufacturing; the impact of this will be discussed more in the income section. Larger employment exists for Bonner County in the industries of construction and utilities, trade, manufacturing, and real estate compared to the US. The growing population of the County combined with the housing boom experienced by the area likely account for a majority of the construction and real estate differences, considering this data is from 2006. Major companies located in Sandpoint will account, in large part, for manufacturing and trade differences with the US.

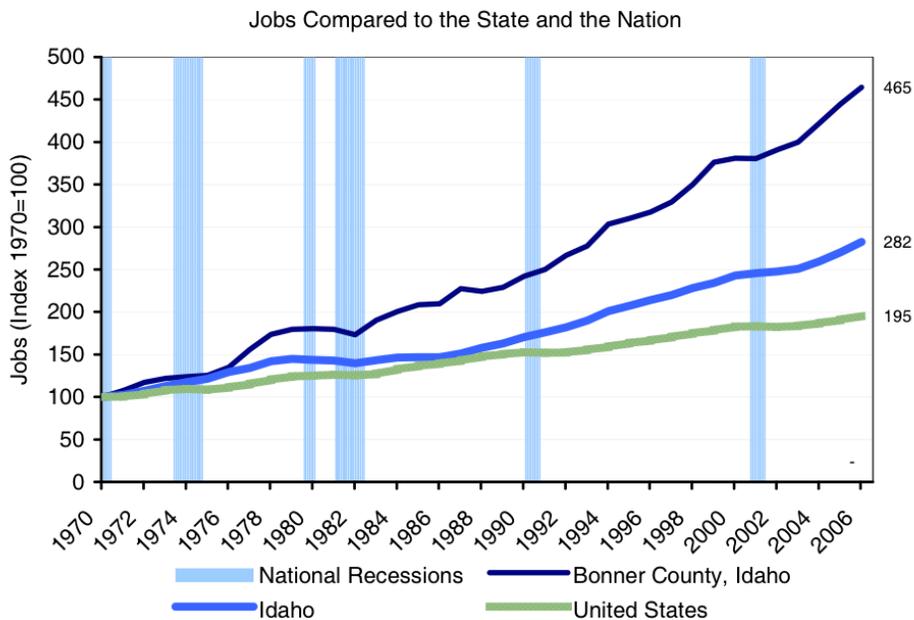
Figure 11.1



Source: IMPLAN Professional⁷

Despite recent setbacks in employment and high current unemployment (figure 11.3), compared to the US, job growth in Bonner County up until 2006 has been higher than either Idaho or the United States, indexed to 1970. (Figure 11.2)

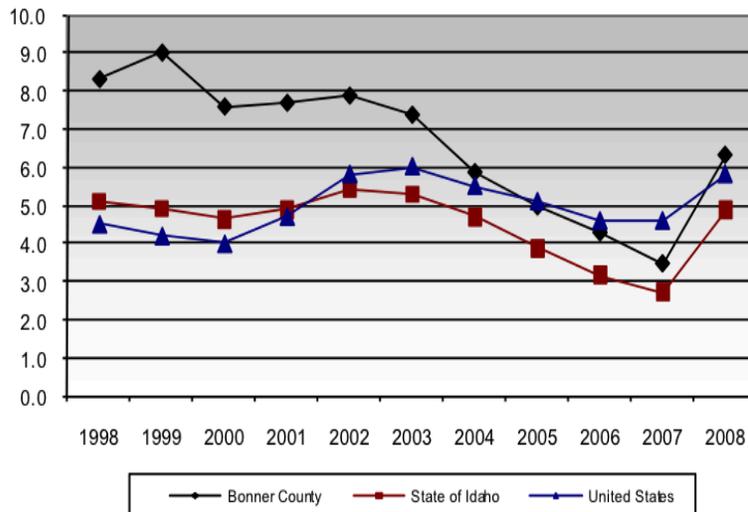
Figure 11.2



Source: Headwaters Economics⁸

Figure 11.3

Unemployment Rates



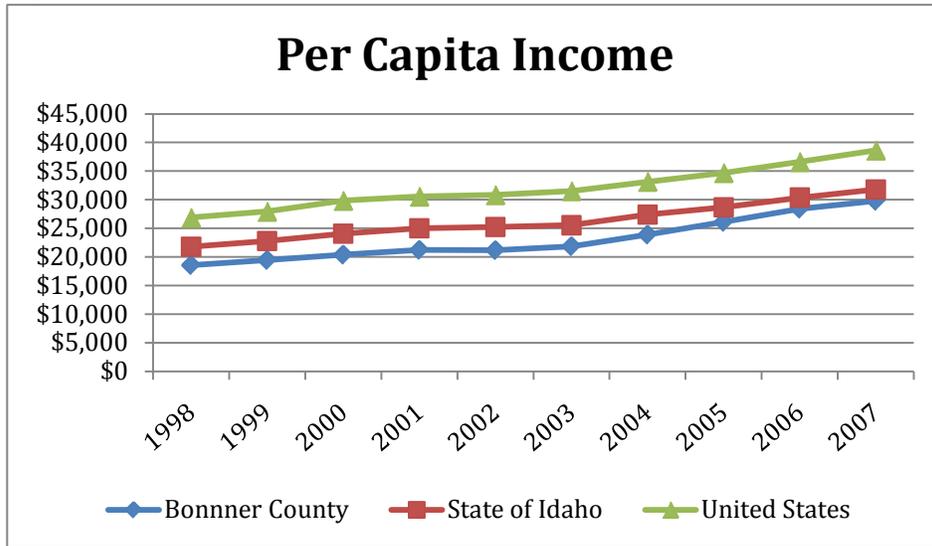
Source: Idaho Department of Labor⁹

Unemployment in Bonner County, while going above 6 percent in the 2008 data, has dropped back under 6 percent in the most current data. At the time of writing, the current unemployment rate in Bonner County is at 5.2 percent, with 1,089 people unemployed compared to the 20,774-person labor force.¹⁰

Income

According to 2006 to 2008 Census estimates, the labor force in Bonner County over the age of 16 was 60.6 percent of the population, or 20,003 people. United States estimates for the same age group and time period come in at 65.6 percent of the population.¹¹ The difference in Bonner County and US per capita income is \$29,808 for Bonner County and \$38,615 for the United States as a whole (Figure 11.4).¹² Poverty levels also mimic these differences with 11.2 percent of Bonner County families below the poverty level and 9.6 percent of US families below the poverty level.¹³

Figure 11.4



Source: Idaho Department of Commerce¹⁴

Wages in particular industries vary widely throughout the County (Figure 11.5). This is one of the challenges that Priest River will face as the economy continues to change. The sawmill jobs that fall under manufacturing have high average wages. This is especially true when compared to hospitality and service jobs. A fact that should be kept in mind as economic development strategies are considered.

Figure 11.5

Covered Employment & Average Annual Wages Per Job for 1998, 2007 & 2008	1998		2007		2008	
	Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages
Total Covered Wages	11,468	\$20,518	14,716	\$30,562	14,277	\$31,024
Agriculture	296	\$23,620	243	\$30,705	224	\$31,224
Mining	63	\$32,454	154	\$43,869	138	\$41,154
Construction	730	\$21,384	1,422	\$29,424	1,235	\$30,252
Manufacturing	1,334	\$26,734	2,321	\$34,929	2,206	\$34,952
Trade, Utilities & Transportation	3,159	\$20,322	3,231	\$34,172	3,112	\$35,282
Information	171	\$27,812	173	\$35,819	164	\$36,213
Financial Activities	390	\$25,308	589	\$39,425	586	\$38,519
Professional and Business Services	541	\$19,839	867	\$39,684	857	\$37,622
Educational and Health Services	748	\$20,936	1,106	\$26,777	1,070	\$27,963
Leisure and Hospitality	1,541	\$9,201	1,845	\$13,325	1,856	\$13,953
Other Services	385	\$15,399	428	\$20,440	483	\$20,572
Government	2,111	\$23,547	2,338	\$32,274	2,345	\$33,882

Source: Idaho Department of Commerce¹⁵

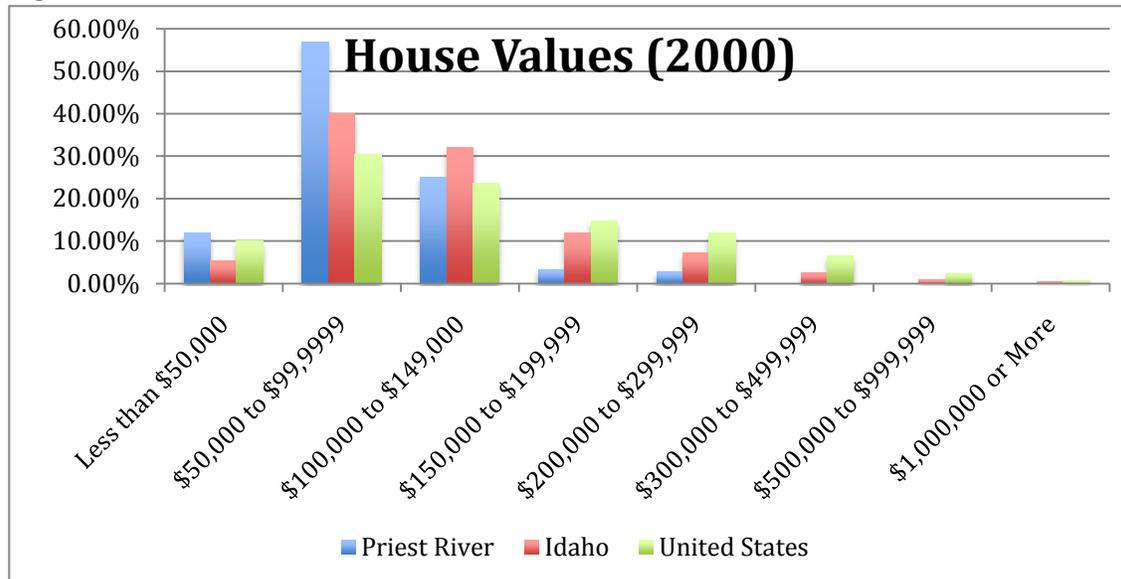
Housing

According to the Priest River Comprehensive Plan “one of the most troubling issues facing resort towns is the rising costs of commercial and residential real estate.”¹⁶ Affordability in housing has become more of a problem recently with the increasing interest in recreational activity in Sandpoint and Priest Lake. Blaine County in contrast

has been unaffordable for residents for decades, but the next three unaffordable counties in Idaho include Valley, Latah, and Bonner counties. Bonner County has struggled with affordability since the 1980's and remains in the top five counties for unaffordable housing in Idaho.¹⁷

The unaffordability of housing in Bonner County, however, may be more related to housing prices in Sandpoint than Priest River. The median house value in Priest River was \$80,900 in 2000, while the median for Idaho was more than 25 percent greater at \$106,300, and the median house value for owner occupied housing in the United States was even higher at \$119,600.¹⁸ Figure 11.6 demonstrates the percentage break down of house values in Priest River compared to Idaho and the US. Of note is that this is occurring as Bonner County is becoming increasing more urban, going from 18.5 percent urban in 1980 to 22.5 percent urban in 2000.¹⁹

Figure 11.6



Source: US Census Bureau²⁰

Natural Amenities

Assets are anything a community or region has that makes it a better place to be. Economist Thomas Michael Power defines assets, or amenities, as “qualities of a locality that make it an attractive place to live and work.”²¹ They include everything from obvious natural amenities like rivers, wildlife, clean air, and open space, to quality education and transportation systems, to the quality of the local businesses and labor force, to local storytellers and artisans. These assets not only provide a local sense of identity and quality of life, but also serve to attract new residents, businesses, and visitors and can serve as a potent economic driver.²²

Priest River is flush with natural assets including a beautiful downtown core, timber, and of course the river. Bonner County receives a five out of seven on a nation-wide county

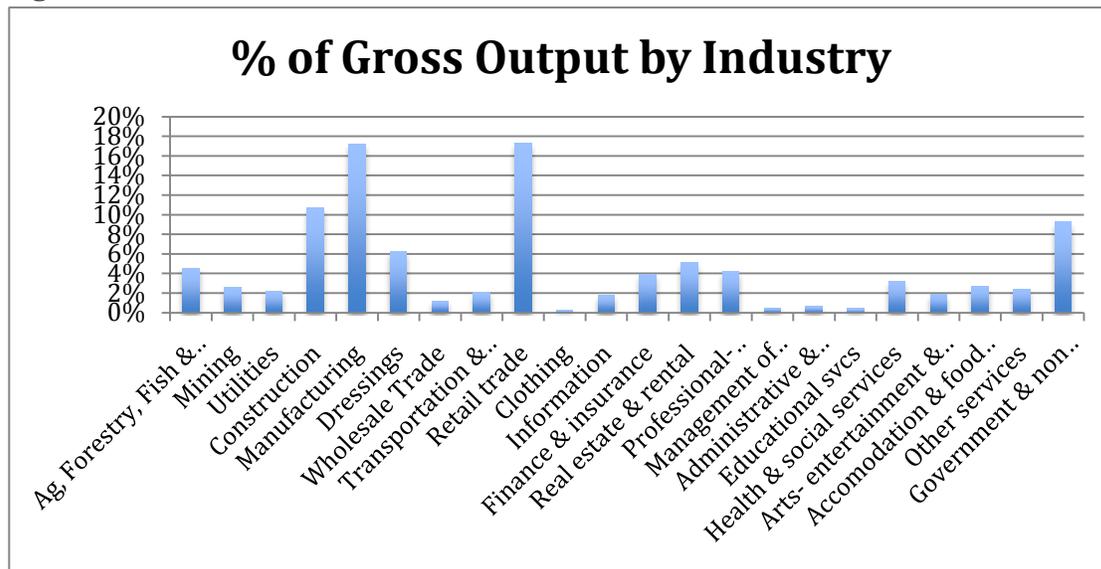
amenity index by the United State’s Agriculture Department.²³ This is quite a high rating, for context national park counties such as Glacier and the Tetons receive ratings of six. These assets are what has given Priest River it’s economic vitality in the past and will continue to provide economically for Priest River into the future, although perhaps through tourism or some other manner.

“Successful communities capitalize on their distinctive assets – their architecture, history, and natural surroundings – rather than trying to adopt a new and different identity.”²⁴ Asset based development, also called amenity-based development, is any type of development that specifically targets the economic advantages associated with these natural assets and is one strategy for economic vitality that should be utilized in Priest River.

Industry Data

As noted in the employment section, Priest River has several large employers, but has suffered from the loss of many lumber-manufacturing jobs. Within Bonner County, manufacturing, retail trade, and services relating to tourism have become the dominant industries in the area (Figure 11.7), even though many people in Bonner County continue to have an identify tied to the timber industry. The milling that once made up the majority of the manufacturing sector of Bonner County, and thus the largest single industry, has continued to decrease in size as timber industries leave the United States. Major employers in Sandpoint such as Coldwater Creek, Quest Aircraft, and Litehouse are now producing the largest share of the County’s output.

Figure 11.7



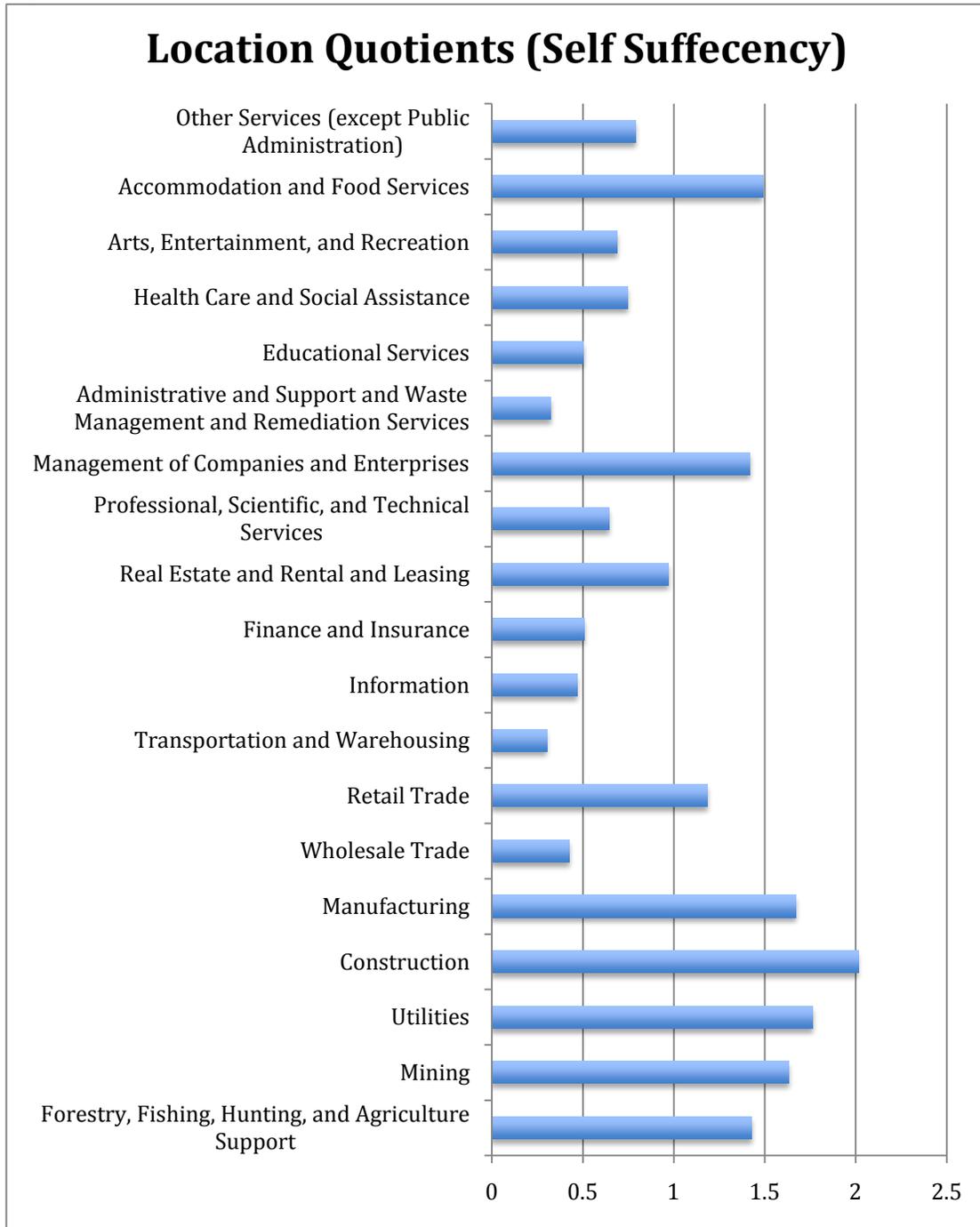
Source: IMPLAN Professional²⁵

In addition to looking at Bonner County’s economy in terms of output, trying to determine the self-sufficiency of each industry can be useful information; the location

quotient is one tool to do this. The location quotient (LQ) is a technique for assessing Bonner County's specialization in an industry. An LQ is the ratio of the percentage of Bonner County's employment in a particular industry to the comparable percentage in the United States. For example, if 17 percent of Bonner County's workforce were employed in a retail trade, it may not be immediately evident if that is a high or low figure. An LQ puts the local employment percentages in relation to a benchmark of the U.S. employment. If an industry sector has an LQ of one, then the regional employment in the given industry is at the same percentage as the national employment. If it is below one then the regional concentration is lower than the nation and if the LQ is over one then the regional concentration is greater than the nation as a whole.²⁶ These numbers can be viewed in terms of a level of self-sufficiency. If the LQ is equal to one, that industry can be viewed as self sufficient for that region, however, if the LQ is greater than one it is likely that the region is an exporter of that industry and conversely if the LQ is less than one the region is most likely an importer of that industries good or service.

An LQ analysis shows that Bonner County is a net exporter in forestry/agricultural, mining, utilities, construction, manufacturing, retail trade, management, and accommodation services (Figure 11.8). The LQ analysis showing these exporting industries, supports the other information highlighting the well known major industries in Bonner County such as forest products, manufacturing, and trade. There are however industries in the County that have low LQs and thus imports are expected, see figure 11.8, these include wholesale trade, finance and insurance, information, transportation and warehousing, and administrative and support and waste management. These are areas where there may be potential for Priest River to attract or nurture businesses in these specific industries. This would not only provide new employment in Priest River, but would also substitute imports in the region for local goods or services, thus creating economically advantageous import substitutions.

Figure 11.8



Source: IMPLAN Professional²⁷

Conclusion

Priest River in Northern Idaho is a beautiful area that plays on its comparative advantage in timber and natural amenities such as rivers, mountains, and outdoor recreation opportunities to help attract economic activity to the area. For a relatively small city

there are major companies that operate on national and international scales. The closeness of Priest River to Spokane and the regional airport certainly helps this, but other factors, such as a revitalizing downtown, is also helping advance the economy. Economic development organizations in the region are another factor that can contribute to economic vitality. Thankfully the area has several including the City the Priest River Development Corporation (PRDC)²⁸, the Bonner County Economic Development Corporation (BCEC)²⁹, and the Panhandle Area Council (PAC)³⁰.

There are however problems. The timber industry is rapidly leaving the area, which smaller communities such as Priest River have to grapple with to a great degree, while the county seat of Sandpoint and vacation communities such as Priest Lake and Hope, ID continue to attract new money.

“Investment at less-than-normal maintenance will eventually bring about physical and social decay. Investment above the maintenance level can generate economic growth and produce a feeling of community well being.”³¹ –Thomas L. Daniels (Possible Text Box)

Opportunity for Priest River to change and grow economically will come with investment in the community by itself, the retention of youth and entrepreneurs, and taking advantage of the areas natural amenities. It can be seen that Priest River is willing to make the effort to invest in itself. This along with creating a clear vision for the future and creating new ways to employ comparative advantages will place the City of Priest River well on the way to transitioning to a more diversified and vibrant economy.

¹ “Google Maps,” <http://maps.google.com/>.

² “Bonner County, Idaho - Fact Sheet - American FactFinder,”

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?_event=&geo_id=05000US16017&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US16%7C05000US16017&_street=&_county=bonner&_cityTown=bonner&_state=&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=050&_submenuId=factsheet_1&ds_name=null&_ci_nbr=null&q_r_name=null®=null%3Anull&_keyword=&_industry=

³ Tamara Laninga and Iris Mayes, “Understanding the Bioregional Landscapes of Priest River/Bonner County,” September 21, 2009, 2,3.

⁴ Priest River URA, *Urban Renewal Agency 2008 Community Survey Results*, December 9, 2008.

⁵ “Idaho Department of Labor > Home,” <http://labor.idaho.gov/dnn/idl/Home/tabid/617/Default.aspx>.

⁶ Terri Ivie, “Priest River’s JD Lumber set to close - Coeur d’Alene Press Newspaper - Local and National News - Kootenai County, Idaho,” *CDA Press*, September 4, 2008, <http://www.cdapress.com/articles/2008/08/05/news/news03.txt>.

⁷ *IMPLAN Professional* (Stillwater, Minnesota: IMPLAN Group, Inc.).

⁸ Headwaters Economics, “A SocioEconomic Profile Bonner County, Idaho” (Economic Profile System (EPS), February 13, 2009), 7.

⁹ “Idaho Department of Labor > Home.”

¹⁰ “Local Area Unemployment Statistics Overview,” <http://www.bls.gov/lau/lauov.htm>.

¹¹ “Bonner County, Idaho - Fact Sheet - American FactFinder.”

¹² “Socioeconomic Profiles : Idaho Department of Commerce,”

<http://commerce.idaho.gov/business/socioeconomic-profiles.aspx>.

¹³ “Bonner County, Idaho - Fact Sheet - American FactFinder.”

¹⁴ “Socioeconomic Profiles : Idaho Department of Commerce.”

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Planning and Zoning Commission et al., “City of Priest River Comprehensive Plan; Planning for Today & Tomorrow 2005 - 2025,” 2005, 20.

¹⁷ Luke V. Erickson et al., “Housing affordability in Idaho 1979 to 2000” (University of Idaho, March 2008), 7-13.

¹⁸ “Bonner County, Idaho - Fact Sheet - American FactFinder.”

¹⁹ “Socioeconomic Profiles : Idaho Department of Commerce,” 1.

²⁰ US Census Bureau The Internet Staff, “Census Bureau Home Page,” <http://www.census.gov/>.

²¹ Thomas Michael Power, *Lost Landscapes and Failed Economies* (Island Press, 1998), 142.

²² Ryan Urie, Willem Braak, and Nicholas Brown, “Asset Development in Long Valley,” May 2009, 2.

²³ *Natural Amenities Scale* (United States Department of Agriculture), <http://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/naturalamenities/natamenf.xls&ei=dzIpS4fCFZDcsgP4uL3HDA&sa=X&oi=nshc&resnum=1&ct=result&cd=2&ved=0CAkQzgQoAQ&usg=AFQjCNFFeRyfXl4Dx1JiKdQFFTi-5j1b-w>.

²⁴ Jim Howe, Edward McMahon, and Luther Propst, *Balancing nature and commerce in gateway communities* (Island Press, 1997), 47,48.

²⁵ *IMPLAN Professional*.

²⁶ Phil Watson and Andy Seidl, *Economic Development Report, No. 9* (University of Colorado, August 2004), 17.

²⁷ US Census Bureau Economic Planning and Coordination Division and Paul Zeisset x34151, “US Census Bureau's County Business Patterns,” *County Business Patterns*, September 22, 2009, <http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html>.

²⁸ “Welcome to the Priest River Development Corporation,” <http://priestriver.org/prdc/prdc2.html>.

²⁹ Bonner County Economic Corporation, “Bonner County Economic Development Corporation - Sandpoint, Idaho,” 2008, <http://blog.bonnercountyedc.com/>.

³⁰ “Panhandle Area Council,” <http://www.pacni.org/>.

³¹ Thomas L. Daniels, John William Keller, and Mark B. Lapping, *The small town planning handbook* (American Planning Association, 1995), 100.

Housing

Introduction

The housing section of the Priest River Atlas looks at general housing data in Priest River and Bonner County including current housing stock, supply and demand in the region, and the condition and maintenance of housing in the area. Health and safety issues such as lead poisoning, asbestos, radon and mold are also considered. Other topics in this section include housing cost and the availability of affordable housing in the area, housing type, renter and owner occupied housing statistics as well as seasonal and recreational use housing. Data are compared between Priest River, Bonner County and the State of Idaho. The section concludes with recommendations.

Many Priest River homeowners are spending 30 percent or more of their gross monthly income on housing payments and utilities. Closing of regional lumber mills as a result of the economic recession has further increased the gap between house payments and monthly income. Unemployment in Priest River may be as high as 25 percent due to the mill closures.¹ An analysis of homes and apartments in the area show that low to moderate-income households have a difficult time finding affordable housing in most areas of Bonner County.²

In This Section:

- Background
- Housing Stock
- Affordable Housing
- Health, Safety and Maintenance
 - *Mold*
 - *Lead*
 - *Radon*
- Recommendations and Conclusions

Background

In 2001, a collaborative project of the Association of Idaho Cities (AIC), the Idaho Rural Partnership (IRP), the Idaho Department of Commerce (IDOC) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) produced the *Priest River Community Review Report*. This report emphasized new residential developments in and out of town and on new additions to utility capacity to accommodate community growth. In addition, an emphasis on assisting neighborhoods that are already badly in need of rehabilitation was highlighted in the review process.³ Given the economic changes in the area since the writing of this review such as the rise and subsequent burst of the housing industry, the baby boomer population nearing retirement age, the inability of many residents to work and live in the area, the decline of the lumber industry and sharp decreases in construction as well as other economic recession ramifications, priorities in the region have shifted.⁴

Bonner County saw a dramatic increase in home construction, both secondary homes and speculative housing between 2004 and 2007 escalating land and housing costs increasing the gap between household income and housing expenses.⁵ According to the Bonner County Daily Bee, Bonner County has one of the worst affordable housing markets in the Rocky Mountain Region due to higher-than-average rent and lower than average median income.⁶ Affordability of housing is determined as the difference between the fair-market rent for a two-bedroom unit and the rental rate that is affordable at the median household income,⁷ which was \$44,200 in 2006.⁸

As a result of these conditions Bonner County, The City of Sandpoint, local businesses and the Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA) partnered in 2006 to fund a Housing Needs Assessment administered by BBC Research to address affordable housing issues in Bonner County.⁹ The IHFA is a non-profit housing and finance association that administers affordable housing programs and works to increase housing affordability for Idaho residents.¹⁰ An outcome of the assessment was the formation of the Bonner County Housing Agency (BCHA) in 2007 as well as the creation of a County-wide task force aimed at dealing with affordable housing issues.¹¹ According to the BBC Research Housing Report only 8 – 10 percent of Bonner County residents could afford the median house price, \$199,000, in the greater Sandpoint area.¹² The BCHA, through education, partnerships, and funding, supports and develops affordable housing as a foundation upon which individuals, families and neighborhoods can build vital communities in Bonner County.¹³

The Priest River Comprehensive Plan lists two goals of high priority:

- 1) to promote adequate choices of housing opportunities within the community to meet the needs of individuals of all socio-economic backgrounds, elderly and disabled, and
- 2) that housing should be maintained in an attractive and safe condition.¹⁴

The lack of quality affordable housing coupled with poor housing conditions are important issues facing the Priest River region and can have detrimental affects on the general health and well-being of individual residents, a neighborhood and the community as a whole.

Housing Stock

Table 12.1 compares housing units in Priest River, Bonner County and the State of Idaho. The 2000 census identified a total of 762 housing units in Priest River, 90.8 percent of which are owner or renter occupied; 9.2 percent are vacant.¹⁵ In Priest River, 20 percent of vacant housing units are for seasonal, recreational or occasional use.¹⁶

Table 12.1: Comparison of Housing Units, 2000

Housing	Priest River	Bonner County	Idaho
Average household size	2.53	2.49	2.69
Total housing units	762	19,646	469,645
Owner-occupied (percent)	63.5	58.3	64.4
Renter-occupied (percent)	27.3	16.5	24.6
Vacant (percent)	9.2	25.2	11.0

Sources: 2000 US Census¹⁷

Idaho Department of Commerce: Idaho Community Profiles: Priest River, Bonner County^{18, 19}

Tables 12.2 – 12.5 compare the types of homes in the region. The dominant housing type in Priest River is owner occupied single-family homes. The second most common type of housing is renter occupied multi-family housing, duplexes, apartment buildings and condominiums consisting of 2 or more units. Mobile homes make up the least common type of housing in Priest River and Bonner County.

Table 12.2: Priest River Housing Stock: Owner Occupied

Priest River	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	495	100
1-Unit, detached	393	79.4
1-Unit, attached	3	.6
Multi-Family (2+units)	4	0.8
Mobile Home	95	19.2
Boat, RV, Van	0	0

Sources: 2000 US Census²⁰

Figure 12.1: Single-Family detached housing, Priest River, Idaho 2009



Source: Monica Walker

Figure 12.2: Single-Family detached housing, Priest River, Idaho 2009



Source: Monica Walker

Table 12.3: Priest River Housing Stock: Renter Occupied

Priest River	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	207	100
1-Unit, detached	90	43.5
1-Unit, attached	0	0
Multi-Family (2+units)	94	45.3
Mobile Home	23	11.1
Boat, RV, Van	0	0

Figure 12.3: Multi-Family housing, Priest River, Idaho 2009



Source: Monica Walker

Table 12.4: Bonner County Housing Stock: Owner Occupied

Priest River	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	11,438	100
1-Unit, detached	8840	77.3
1-Unit, attached	83	0.7
Multi-Family (2+units)	91	0.8
Mobile Home	2,324	20.3
Boat, RV, Van	100	0.9

Table 12.5: Bonner County Housing Stock: Renter Occupied

Priest River	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	3255	100
1-Unit, detached	1539	47.3
1-Unit, attached	101	3.1
Multi-Family (2+units)	987	30.4
Mobile Home	610	18.7
Boat, RV, Van	18	0.6

Affordable Housing

Between 2004 and 2007, the Bonner County region witnessed a dramatic increase in housing costs while median income rose at a much slower rate; Bonner County residents were finding it increasingly difficult to afford to live and work in the area. The median value of owner-occupied housing in Priest River as of 2000 was \$80,900 and the median rent was \$441 per month.²¹ Bonner County, in comparison, had a median value of owner-occupied units of \$124,500 in 2000.²² The Housing Needs Assessment of 2007 was conducted to assess the availability and need of affordable housing in the Bonner County region and revealed that many people have been forced to leave the area because they can no longer afford housing. According to the Bonner County Needs Assessment, 57 percent of all households in Priest River are considered low-income with low and moderate-income households together making up a total of 67 percent of all households in Priest River. In Bonner County, low-income households make up 47 percent of all households in Bonner County.

Affordability, using the industry standard, is defined as spending no more than 30 percent of ones gross monthly income on a mortgage or rent, plus utilities; a household spending over 30 percent of their gross monthly income is considered “cost burdened”.²³ Just over four percent of Priest River households are spending 30-34 percent of their household income on housing while 21 percent of area households are spending 35 percent or more of their household income on housing.²⁴ Approximately 11 percent of the population in Priest River rent and spend between 30-34 percent of their household income on rent and utilities while 33.8 percent are spending 35 percent or more on household costs.²⁵ Twenty-one percent of Priest River households that rent, pay more than 50 percent of their income in rent and utilities.²⁶ This data highlights the fact that there is a lack of affordable housing in the Priest River area to meet the needs of the community.

In comparison, the selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income in 1999 for Bonner County showed 25.9 percent spending above 30 percent of their household income on living expenses.²⁷ Almost half of all renters in Bonner County are paying more than 30 percent of their household incomes toward rent and associated utilities.²⁸ According to the Bonner County Housing Needs Assessment, there is an estimated shortage of 1,200 affordable units in the county to serve renters earning less than \$15,000 per year, of which makes up nearly 37 percent of Bonner County renter households.²⁹

Table 12.6 details median house values in Priest River and Bonner County showing the percent of households currently spending over 30 percent of their gross monthly income on household expenses.

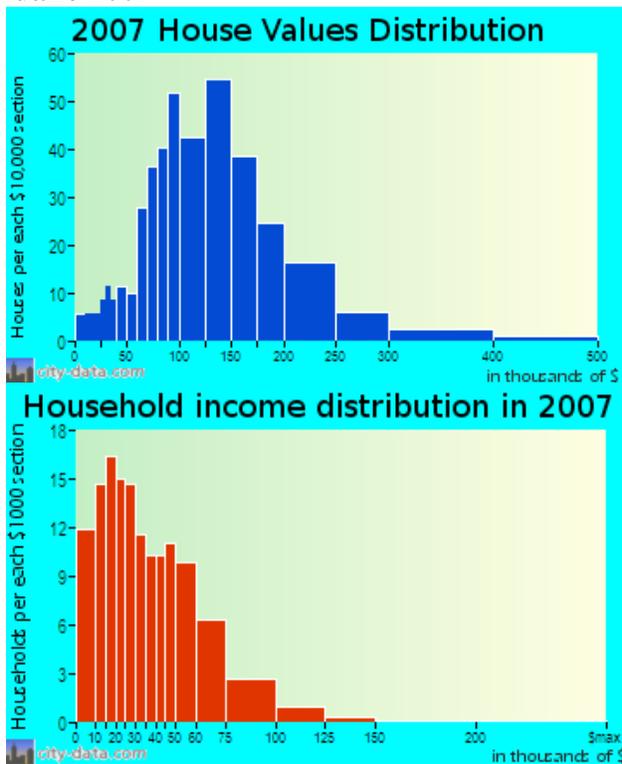
Table 12.6: Median monthly costs

Households spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs	Priest River	Bonner County
Owner-Occupied (percent)	25	25.9
Renter-Occupied (percent)	44.8	40.7
Median house value (dollars)	\$80,900	\$124,500
Median monthly rent (dollars)	\$441	\$518

Sources: 2000 US Census³⁰

Idaho Department of Commerce: Idaho Community Profiles: Priest River, Bonner County^{31, 32}

Figure 12.4 – 12.5: 2007 House Value and Household Income Distribution in Priest River, Idaho 2007



Source: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Priest-River-Idaho.html>³³

Figure 12.6: Multi-Family Affordable Housing, Priest River, Idaho 2009



Source: Monica Walker

The Bonner County Housing Needs Assessment focused on the market for workforce housing and showed that approximately 50 percent of Bonner County’s full-time resident households are considered low-income, earning less than \$35,000 per year.³⁴ “Workforce housing” is used to describe housing meant to serve workers in a community who cannot afford to rent or buy housing on the private market.³⁵ The Needs Assessment revealed low-income renters in the region are the lowest served section of the population as the market is not producing adequate affordable rentals.³⁶ Much of the rental stock in the county is detached, single family homes or mobile homes that carry higher rents and utility costs pricing the majority of renters out of the market in Bonner County.³⁷

Figure 12.7: Mobile Homes, Priest River, Idaho 2009



Source: Monica Walker

As of 2007, low and moderate income families found it difficult to find an affordable home in Bonner County; only approximately 15 percent of homes on the market were priced for moderate-income households.³⁸ Based on the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) analysis, low to moderate-income county residents would find the areas around Priest River most affordable. However, in 2005, there were fewer homes for sale in the Priest River area relative to the communities around Sandpoint and the City of Sandpoint. In 2005, there were a total of 615 single-family units sold in and around Sandpoint compared to 183 in the Priest River area.³⁹

In terms of available rentals, a review of newspaper ads in December 2006 and January 2007 found that, except for 3- and 4- bedroom homes for rent, the average prices on apartments (\$477 - \$728) and smaller homes (\$658 - \$1435) were mostly affordable to low-income and moderate-income households. However, the supply of lower-priced rentals (apartments and 2-bedroom homes) was much lower than higher-priced homes for rent showing a need for affordable rental homes in the region.⁴⁰

Bonner County and neighboring Shoshone and Kootenai Counties have higher rates of foreclosures compared with other counties in Idaho. Currently, 79 properties in the Priest River area are in pre-foreclosure out of a total of 740 pre-foreclosures in Bonner County.⁴¹ Foreclosed homes often suffer deferred maintenance increasing the likelihood of health and safety issues.⁴²

Health, Safety and Maintenance

Housing maintenance, or lack thereof, can be a sign of prosperity or decline of a community. Deferred maintenance (e.g., new roof, painting or other upkeep) is often the result of a declining economy and can lead to environmental and home health and safety issues.⁴³ Mold, lead and radon are examples of potential health threats in affected homes that should be addressed. If a

homeowner is unable to keep up with maintenance issues as they arise, property values can decline and neighboring properties may also be affected.

Mold

Mold in homes is often found in areas with high humidity such as bathrooms, basements and around windows. Flooding, bathing, cooking, laundry, leaky roofs and windows, humidifiers, plants, continuous plumbing leaks, backed-up sewers, and non-vented burning appliances are some of the many sources of moisture that could result in mold growth.⁴⁴ Molds produce allergens and irritants and can be potentially toxic, most often affecting infants, pregnant women, people with respiratory problems such as asthma and allergies, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems.⁴⁵

Removing mold from a home can be a difficult process and can increase the risk of exposure during the cleanup process. It is important to use appropriate precautions when dealing with mold problems.⁴⁶

Lead

Lead, often found in paint, pipes and construction dust, is another deterrent to a healthy living situation in many older homes. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Bureau of Community and Environmental Health, along with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), are working to educate homeowners about the issue of lead in older homes.⁴⁷ Lead-based paint is most commonly found in homes built before 1960 and is usually found on windows, trim, doors, railings, porches and exterior walls.⁴⁸ Lead can enter the body by breathing lead dust particles or swallowing chips, or disturbing dust or soil contaminated with lead based paint.⁴⁹ Lead plumbing pipes in older homes can also be another source of contamination by leaching into drinking water.⁵⁰

Bonner County, falling within the 50 to 60th percentile of US counties, has an identified 310 housing units with a high risk of lead hazards.⁵¹ Housing with a high risk of lead hazards, those built before 1950 and home to low-income residents, are linked to elevated blood levels in children.⁵² Children six years old or younger are at the highest risk for lead poisoning because children put their hands and other objects which can have lead dust or lead-based paint chips into their mouths.⁵³ Bonner County has nearly 780 homes with children under the age of five living below the poverty level, accounting for 38 percent of housing in Bonner County.⁵⁴ Health effects in children exposed to lead can include behavioral and learning problems, hearing problems, headaches, slowed growth and damage to the brain and central nervous system.⁵⁵ Adults can suffer from reproductive problems, high blood pressure, digestive disorders, memory and concentration problems, nerve disorders, and digestive disorders.⁵⁶

Radon

Exposure to radon is responsible for an estimated 20,000 deaths from lung cancer each year according to the US Environmental Protection Agency.⁵⁷ Radon is a radioactive gas emitted from the ground and is a result of the natural breakdown of uranium found in most rocks and

soil.⁵⁸ Once inside a home or other enclosed structure, radon can build up to high levels.⁵⁹ High levels of radon have been reported in Bonner County, however the only way to know if radon is a problem in a home is to test for it.⁶⁰ In 1989 and 1990, Idaho and the EPA conducted a survey of radon in homes in Idaho; results indicated that more than 20 percent of Idaho homes had high levels of radon with the number rising in 2005 to 37 percent of homes that participated in the survey testing high for radon.⁶¹ Since each home can have different levels of radon, even homes built side by side, it is recommended that all homes be tested.⁶²

Recommendations and Conclusions

Addressing issues of housing maintenance, health and safety, affordable housing, barriers to affordable housing and adequate housing choices in a community is essential. The strength and economic vitality of a community is strongly tied to its housing resources. Providing quality, affordable housing to address the needs of community members at all income levels is essential to maintaining a stable community.⁶³

Re-assessing current land use ordinances in Priest River may be one way to address the housing needs of the community. For example, some ordinances require minimum square footages, perhaps as a way to exclude mobile or manufactured housing from neighborhoods with the affect of driving up the cost of housing and increasing energy costs and consumption.⁶⁴ Another ordinance which prohibits living in the upper floors of downtown buildings should also be re-visited. Allowing infill in the downtown core and restoring living space in the downtown area could provide additional foot traffic and vitality to the area.⁶⁵

Increased public education and outreach concerning health and safety issues of homes is recommended. Lead paint and radon are known health threats and toxic mold is increasingly becoming an important health issue. To have a healthy, vibrant community means having adequate, quality housing for community members.

¹ Huisman, Cate. Timber Falls, But Manufacturing Rises in the Panhandle of Idaho. <http://www.timberbuysell.com/Community/DisplayAd.asp?id=5529>

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⁷ *ibid*

⁸ BBC Research & Consulting. Draft Housing Needs Assessment: A Workforce/Affordable Housing Initiative for Bonner County. 2007.

⁹ Bonner Community Housing Agency. <http://bonnercommunityhousing.org/>. 2009.

¹⁰ Idaho Housing and Finance Association. http://www.ihfa.org/vti_script/serach.aspO.idq. (accessed November 24, 2009).

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¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ Priest River, City of. Priest River Comprehensive Plan: Planning for Today and Tomorrow, 2005-2025. Priest River, ID. Undated.

- ¹⁵ US Census Bureau. American Factfinder. 2000. <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html? lang=en>. (accessed November 24, 2009).
- ¹⁶ ibid
- ¹⁷ ibid
- ¹⁸ Idaho Community Profiles. Priest River. Idaho Department of Commerce. <http://commerce.idaho.gov/search/?q=housing>. (accessed November 25, 2009).
- ¹⁹ Idaho Community Profiles. Bonner County. Idaho Department of Commerce. <http://commerce.idaho.gov/search/?q=housing>. (accessed November 25, 2009).
- ²⁰ US Census Bureau. American Factfinder. 2000. <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html? lang=en>. (accessed November 24, 2009).
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- ²² Bonner Community Housing Agency. <http://bonnercommunityhousing.org/>. 2009.
- ²³ ibid
- ²⁴ US Census Bureau. Census 2000 Profiles. Censtats.census.gov/data/ID/1601665530.pdf.
- ²⁵ ibid
- ²⁶ Headwater Economics. A Socioeconomic Profile: Priest River City, Idaho. 2009.
- ²⁷ US Census Bureau. Census 2000 Profiles. <http://censtats.census.gov/cgi-bin/pctprofile.pl>.
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- ³⁰ US Census Bureau. American Factfinder. 2000. <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html? lang=en>. (accessed November 24, 2009).
- ³¹ Idaho Community Profiles. Priest River. Idaho Department of Commerce. <http://commerce.idaho.gov/search/?q=housing>. (accessed November 25, 2009).
- ³² Idaho Community Profiles. Bonner County. Idaho Department of Commerce. <http://commerce.idaho.gov/search/?q=housing>. (accessed November 25, 2009).
- ³³ <http://www.city-data.com/city/Priest-River-Idaho.html>. (accessed December 16, 2009).
- ³⁴ BBC Research & Consulting. Draft Housing Needs Assessment: A Workforce/Affordable Housing Initiative for Bonner County. 2007.
- ³⁵ ibid
- ³⁶ Bonner Community Housing Agency. <http://bonnercommunityhousing.org/>. 2009.
- ³⁷ BBC Research & Consulting. Draft Housing Needs Assessment: A Workforce/Affordable Housing Initiative for Bonner County. 2007.
- ³⁸ ibid
- ³⁹ ibid
- ⁴⁰ ibid
- ⁴¹ <http://www.realtytrac.com/mapsearch/idaho-foreclosures.html>. (accessed November 29, 2009).
- ⁴² <http://www.walletpop.com/blog/2008/12/05/hidden-costs-of-foreclosed-properties/> (accessed November 25, 2009).
- ⁴³ <http://www.answers.com/topic/deferred-maintenance>. (accessed December 15, 2009).
- ⁴⁴ Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Health, Bureau of Community and Environmental Health, Indoor Environment Program. “Mold in our Homes”. 2009.
- ⁴⁵ ibid
- ⁴⁶ ibid
- ⁴⁷ Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Health, Bureau of Community and Environmental Health, Indoor Environment Program. “Facts about Lead-Based Paint”. 2009.
- ⁴⁸ ibid
- ⁴⁹ ibid
- ⁵⁰ ibid
- ⁵¹ http://www.scorecard.org/env-releases/lead/county.tcl?fips_county_code=16017#rank. (accessed December 15, 2009).
- ⁵² ibid
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- ⁵⁴ http://www.scorecard.org/env-releases/lead/rank-counties.tcl?fips_state_code=16. (accessed November 25, 2009).

- ⁵⁵ Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Health, Bureau of Community and Environmental Health, Indoor Environment Program. “Facts about Lead-Based Paint”. 2009.
- ⁵⁶ *ibid*
- ⁵⁷ United States Environmental Protection Agency. <http://www.epa.gov/radon/>. 2009.
- ⁵⁸ United States Environmental Protection Agency. <http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/citguide.html>. 2009.
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- ⁶⁰ Sandpoint, Idaho. Sandpoint Comprehensive Plan. 2009.
- ⁶¹ Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Health, Bureau of Community and Environmental Health, Indoor Environment Program. “Radon”. 2009.
- ⁶² *ibid*
- ⁶³ Idaho Rural Partnership. Priest River Community Review Report. http://irp.idaho.gov/Home/Community_Review/. 2009.
- ⁶⁴ *ibid*
- ⁶⁵ *ibid*

Education

Introduction

Education in the Priest River area primarily serves school aged children and teenagers. This section begins with the schools that are located in Priest River including school demographics and resources provided by the schools. In addition to public schools, there are private schools that serve a small number of residents in the area. While these schools provide a limited number of extracurricular activities for their students, there are many resources provided by schools for students who are seeking higher education. There is also a small, but active home schooling community in the area. The educational attainment of Priest River residents is lower than Bonner County and Idaho as a percentage. This section also lists resources available from higher education institutions in the region and county. The latter half of this section focuses on challenges for education in Priest River including lack of funding and the lack of extracurricular activities in the area followed by educational opportunities in and around Priest River.

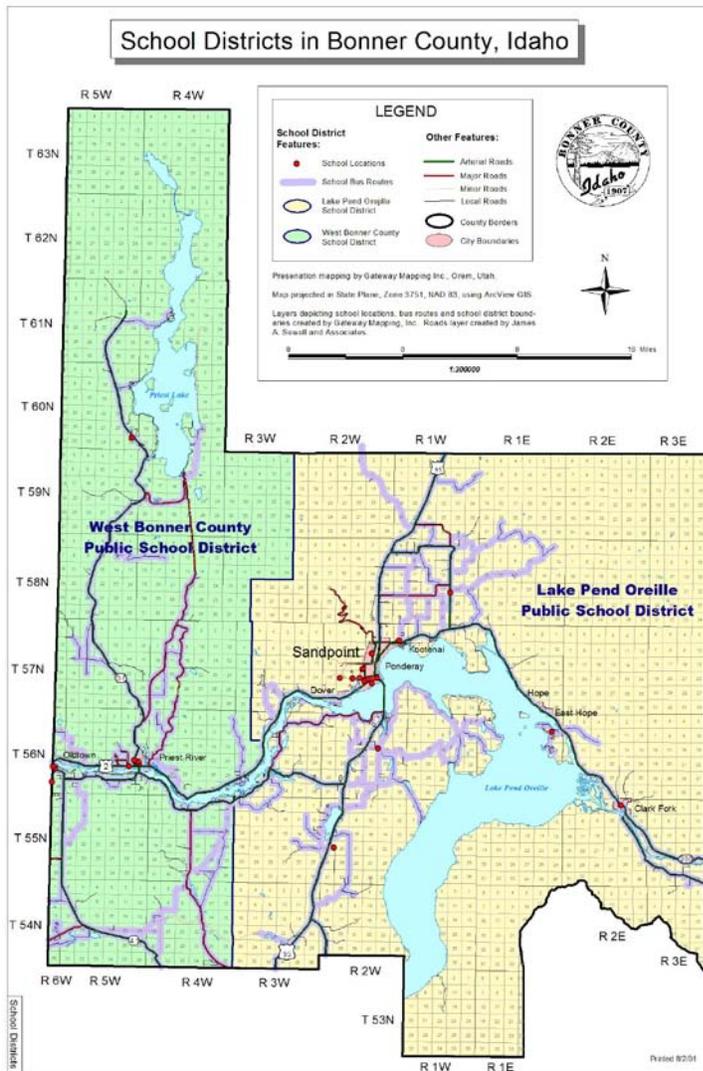
In this section:

- Public schools
 - *Enrollment*
- Private schools and homeschooled students
- Extracurricular Activities and Resources
 - *Gear-Up Grants*
- Educational Attainment
- Higher education
- Challenges
- Opportunities and Recommendations
 - *North Idaho Digital Learning Center*
 - *Spirit Lake Y.E.S.*
- Summary

Public Schools

Students in Priest River are served by the West Bonner County School District (WBCSD) with Priest River Elementary, Priest River Junior High, Priest River Lamanna High, and Priest River Education Program (PREP Alternative High School), all Title I qualified schools. In addition to serving Priest River, WBCSD serves the communities of Blanchard, Coolin, Edgemere, Laclede, Nordman, Oldtown, Priest Lake, and Vay.¹ Other schools in the WBCSD include Priest Lake Elementary and Idaho Hill Elementary.² Figure 13.1 shows the geographic scope of West Bonner County School District as well as the school locations.

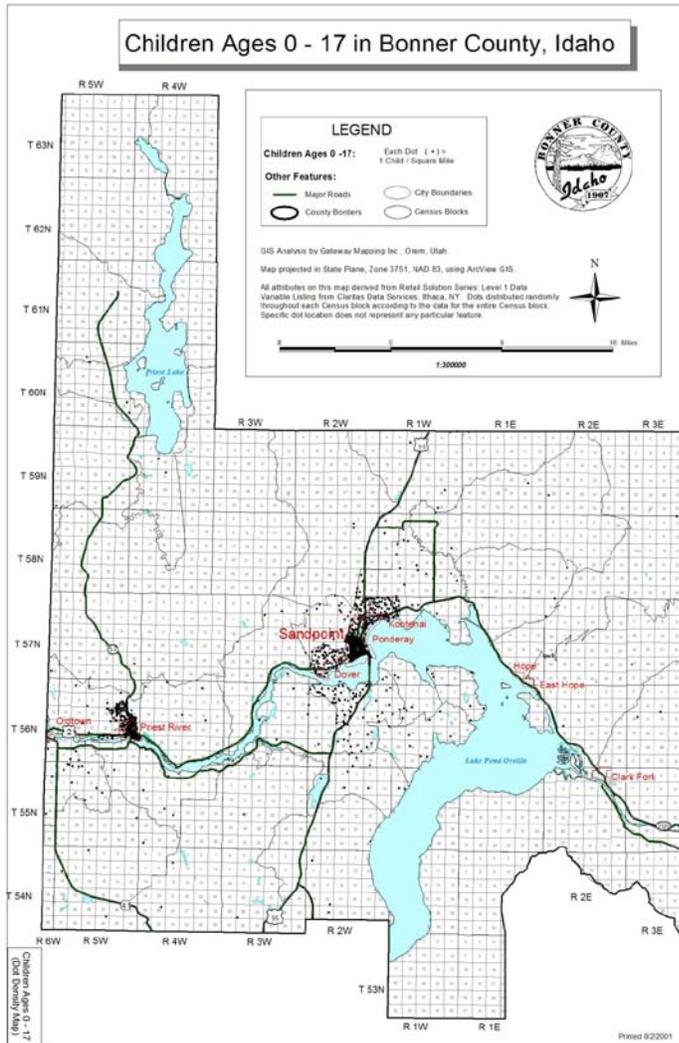
Figure 13.1



Source: GIS Analysis by Gateway Mapping Inc., Orem, UT

Figure 13.2 shows the number of children ages 0-17 per one square mile in Bonner County. Most of the children in WBCSD are concentrated around Priest River, but there are a number of children scattered around the rest of the school district. Many of these children are served by Priest River schools, where the majority of schools in WBCSD are located (see Figure 13.1).

Figure 13.2



Source: GIS Analysis by Gateway Mapping Inc., Orem, UT

Enrollment

There are 444 residents of Priest River who are enrolled in schools. Of those, 404 are enrolled in public schools. The majority of those enrolled are in grades 1-12. There are a small number of preschool and kindergarten students as well as a small number of college and graduate students on the other end.

Figure 13.3: Priest River Elementary Wildcats



Source: <http://www.sd83.k12.id.us/pre/pre%20whole.htm>

As compared with the county, the percentage of kindergarten students in Priest River is less than the county, the percentage of elementary aged students is slightly more in Priest River, the percentage of high school students is about the same, and as a percentage, there are more students enrolled in college and graduate students at the county level than in Priest River (see Table 13.1).

Table 13.1: Enrollment

	Priest River		Bonner County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
School Enrollment (Population over 3 years of age)	444	100	8,413	100
Nursery School/preschool	30	6.8	464	5.5
Kindergarten	13	2.9	359	4.3
Elementary School (grades 1-8)	250	56.4	2,473	53.2
High School (grades 9-12)	118	26.6	2,356	28
College or Graduate School	33	7.5	761	9.1

Source: 2000 US Census

Private Schools and Homeschooled Students

Of all the students in Priest River, 9% of them are enrolled in private schools.³ The primary Private school serving Priest River is the House of the Lord Christian Academy located in Oldtown, Idaho with an enrollment of 176 pre-K to 12th grade students.⁴ There are 19 students in the Bonner County Homeschool group from Priest River, and there may be more.⁵

Extracurricular Activities and Resources

Priest River Lamanna High School offers three kinds of extracurricular activities: athletics, academic decathlon, and drama.⁶ Athletics offered at the high school level during the fall are soccer, volleyball, cross-country, and football. Winter sports at the high school level are basketball and wrestling; spring sports are golf, baseball, softball and track; and cheerleading is year-round.⁷ Priest River Junior High offers sports programs throughout the school year as well and these include football, volleyball, cross-county, basketball, and wrestling.⁸

Priest River Lamanna High School also offers resources for juniors and seniors interested in pursuing post-secondary education including scholarship information, counseling, and advisory materials. Scholarship information includes a number of links from the high school webpage to servers that give specific scholarship information. Counseling information includes a list of important dates including college preview days for Washington State University and the University of Idaho.

Advisory materials include resources for C.A.P.S. (Career, Academic, Personal/Social goals), a school district-wide program that requires students to complete a portfolio project that spans their high school years demonstrating their progress as well as requiring them to complete out-of-school community service hours. This program was recently implemented and the first graduating class that will be required to present portfolios to their teachers, fellow students and community members is the class of 2013. Advisory programs in Priest River hope to follow the national trend of better attendance, and higher graduation rates, grades, and test scores. West Bonner County School District also predicts students to feel more bonded to school and connect with at least one adult involved in their education.⁹

Figure 13.4: Priest River Lamanna High School



Source: <http://www.sd83.k12.id.us/lam/index.htm>

Gear Up Grants

Priest River is a GEAR UP grant recipient community.¹⁰ GEAR UP stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs and is a grant program through the U.S. Department of Education. GEAR UP grants are part of a federal rural community program that assists students and schools to increase the number of low-income students prepared to pursue and be successful in post-secondary education. The program gives six year grants to states in areas that have high poverty rates. Cohorts are served from seventh grade through twelfth with the goal of giving students the tools that they need to succeed in their pursuit of post-secondary education.¹¹

The University of Idaho Extension office located in Bonner County provides 4-H programs throughout the year as well.¹²

Educational Attainment

Table 13.2 shows the educational attainment of Priest River as compared to Bonner County as a number and a percent of the population. Priest River has a higher percentage of high school graduates as a percentage than Bonner County, but Bonner County has a higher percentage of the population completing associate, bachelor and/or graduate or professional degrees.

While Table 13.2 compares the educational attainment of Priest River and Bonner County, Graph 13.1 compares the educational attainment of Priest River to Bonner County and Idaho. The educational attainment of residents of Priest River is slightly lower than Bonner County with most of the residents above the age of 25 graduating high school or earning the equivalent. Priest River has more residents as a percentage having less than a 9th grade education or some high school. Idaho has more residents as a percentage with an associate degree or higher than Bonner County and Priest River. Bonner County has more residents as a percentage with an associate degree or higher than Priest River.

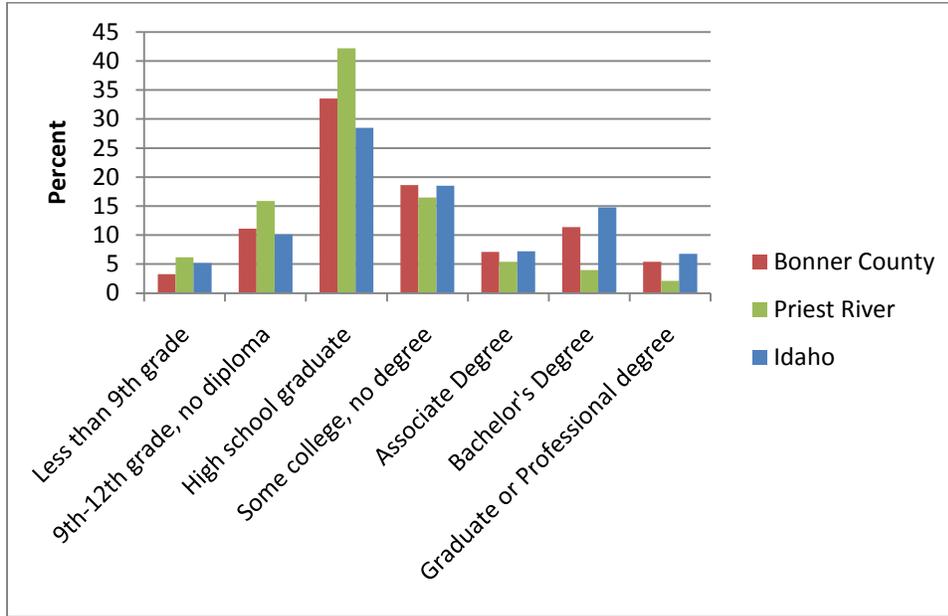
Table 13.2: Educational Attainment

	Priest River		Bonner County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Educational Attainment (Population over 25 years of age)	1,122	100	25,043	100
Less than 9th grade	70	6.2	839	3.3
9th-12th grade, no diploma	178	15.9	2,770	11.1
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	474	42.2	8,394	33.5
Some college, no degree	185	16.5	4,659	18.6
Associate Degree	61	5.4	1,769	7.1
Bachelor's Degree	45	4	2,846	11.4

Graduate or Professional degree	23	2.1	1,381	5.4
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Source: 2000 US Census

Graph 13.1: Educational Attainment



Source: US Census 2000

Higher Education

Though there are not any higher education institutions within Priest River itself, there are a number of colleges as well as vocational schools in the region that provide opportunities for those not wishing to leave the region. Higher education in the region includes North Idaho College (Coeur d’Alene), University of Idaho (Moscow), Gonzaga University (Spokane, WA), Spokane Community College (Spokane, WA), Eastern Washington University (Cheney, WA), Washington State University (Pullman, WA), Whitworth College (Walla Walla, WA), and Lewis-Clark State College (Lewiston).¹³

Challenges

Because of the current economic climate in the area, West Bonner County School District has lost 158 students since August 2006.¹⁴ This has resulted in a significant loss in funding. Not only has West Bonner County been affect, but Idaho State Department of Education’s Superintendent Tom Luna has cut budgets by \$62 million statewide.¹⁵ Priest River projected in August of 2009 that the loss of money in the school district would be \$882,848, a 7% reduction from the previous school year. This loss in funding will obviously affect Priest River in the

coming years unless the town can attract more families to the area and more students in the schools, which would bring in more funding per student.

Another challenge in the area is the lack of extracurricular activities and/or a community center to serve youth during the summer as well as during those times of the school year that extracurricular activities are not happening. Outlined below is a plan by Citizens of Priest River and a nearby resource that could serve as a model for a community youth program.

Opportunities and Recommendations

While Priest River faces educational challenges, there are some opportunities that the community could support. One of these is the North Idaho Digital Learning Center. Priest River might also want to look at the Spirit Lake Y.E.S. program as another opportunity for enhancing educational success in their youth.

North Idaho Digital Learning Center

Citizens of Priest River (CPR), a non-profit 501(c)3 has for the past three years been seeking projects in the town of Priest River.¹⁶ Past projects include a park and an animal shelter. Citizens of Priest River has identified engaging youth of the area as a vital need in the community. About one year ago, the group sought out a similar community as Priest River in Norman, South Dakota as an example. CPR and the town of Norman have had teleconferences and as a result established a goal of engaging high school students to look at their community.

Ken Reed (see description) has proposed the North Idaho Digital Learning Center class to be taught at Priest River Lamanna High School. Eventually, this program could be extended to adults in the area including teachers who were seeking retraining in the area of digital technology. The program will work with Adobe Youth Voices through Apple and Adobe, giving high school students the opportunity to learn to “communicate” through video and social media by telling the story of Priest River as well as gaining certification in Apple and Adobe media. The North Idaho Digital Learning Center is planning to begin offering courses in January 2010.

Figure 13.5: Media Room



Source: <http://citizensofpriestriver.com/>

Spirit Lake Y.E.S.

The lack of a youth community center is prevalent in Priest River, and though it would be a very large undertaking for the town, the region has at least one example as a resource.¹⁷ Spirit Lake Y.E.S. (Youth Equipped for Success) is located in Spirit Lake, Idaho and has a mission statement of being a multi-service organization that helps youth and families identify potentials, overcome road blocks, and help them experience success.¹⁸ They provide services ranging from tutoring and mentoring to job skills development and community service. Spirit Lake Y.E.S. recognizes the lack of out-of-school activities in the area and the level of mischief caused by youth because of boredom. They are open three days a week and there is no need for youth to make appointments. Because Priest Lake does not have a youth center, Spirit Lake Y.E.S. can provide a model for the kind of organization that might do well to serve Priest River.

Summary

Though there are challenges in education for Priest River, there are many opportunities. The lack of state educational funding as a result of families moving out of the Priest River area has presented a challenge. Another challenge is found in the lack of extracurricular and after-school activities for students in the area. There are many opportunities in and around Priest River that residents could take advantage of including the many higher education opportunities around the region, the North Idaho Digital Learning Center and Spirit Lake Y.E.S. All of these present great opportunities for the residents and students of Priest River.

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- ¹ West Bonner Schools, <http://www.sd83.k12.id.us/index.htm> (accessed 8 December 2009).
- ² Ibid
- ³ US Census 2000
- ⁴ Search for Private Schools, http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/privateschoolsearch/school_list.asp?Search=1&Zip=83856&Miles=10 (accessed 8 December 2009).
- ⁵ Email correspondence with Bonner County Homeschool Group, 13 November 2008
- ⁶ Priest River Lamanna High School, <http://www.sd83.k12.id.us/lam/index.htm> (accessed 8 December 2009).
- ⁷ Ibid
- ⁸ Priest River Junior High, "Sports", <http://www.sd83.k12.id.us/jrh/sports.htm> (accessed 10 December 2009).
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- ¹⁰ Interview with Mike McGuire, superintendent of West Bonner County School District, 25 September 2009
- ¹¹ US Department of Education, "GAINING EARLY AWARENESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS (GEAR UP)", <http://www.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html> (accessed 8 December 2009).
- ¹² Email correspondence with Sue Traver, UI Extension Educator, Bonner County, Idaho, 8 November 2009
- ¹³ "Idaho Community Profiles: Priest River", Idaho Commerce and Labor, <http://commerce.idaho.gov/assets/content/docs/Cities/PriestRiver.pdf> (accessed 8 December 2009).
- ¹⁴ "Financial Challenges 2009-2010 Budget", powerpoint presentation, 11 March 2009, http://www.sd83.k12.id.us/Financial%20Challenge%209-10_files/fullscreen.htm (accessed 8 December 2009).
- ¹⁵ Ibid
- ¹⁶ "Citizens for the Beautification, Revitalization, and Development of Priest River", Citizens Group of Priest River, <http://citizensofpriestriver.com> (accessed 8 December 2009).
- ¹⁷ Interview with Ken Reed, Priest River Resident, 25 September 2009
- ¹⁸ Youth Equipped for Success, <http://www.spiritlakeeyes.org/> (accessed 8 December 2009).

Community Health, Safety, and Fire

Introduction

Health and safety are important aspects of a thriving community. This section identifies the facilities in or around Priest River that service the life, health, and safety of the community including medical facilities, health care clinics, assisted living facilities, and police services and facilities. Another important aspect of community health and safety, especially for communities in densely forested areas, is fire management. This section also identifies local fire (rural and wildland) and emergency medical services.

In this section:

- Hospitals
 - *Hospital Services*
- Clinics
 - *Other*
- Police/Prisons
- Fire Management and Safety
 - *City/County Fire*
 - *Wildland Fire*

Hospitals

Figure 14.1: Bonner County Hospital



Source: <http://www.bonnergeneral.org/index.php>

The community of Priest River and Bonner County is part of Panhandle Health District 1, which includes Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah, and Shoshone counties. One of seven health district in Idaho, it is locally controlled and governed, and supported by funds from the state. Their purpose is to promote health and quality of life and ensure access to local and public health.¹ Priest River has a number of options when it comes to medical facilities. Within Priest River there is Priest River Urgent Care, and the Priest River Medical Clinic for immediate and routine medical needs. For more extensive medical needs there are two hospitals nearby. Newport Community Hospital is located in Newport, WA, approximately seven miles from Priest River, and Bonner General Hospital is located in Sandpoint, Idaho, approximately 22 miles away.²

Hospital Services

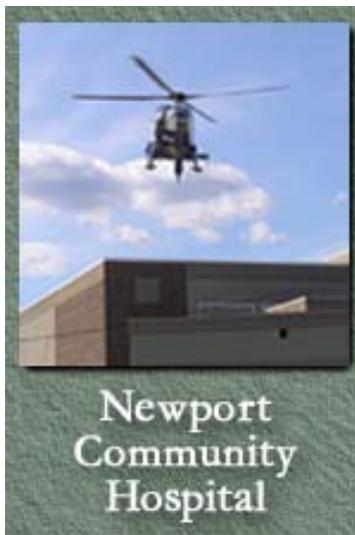
Bonner General Hospital is located in Sandpoint and serves over 57,000 people within a large geographical area. It is a non-profit hospital with a 48 bed capacity, and offers a wide-range of services including: community hospice, general immediate care, pharmacy, cardiac rehabilitation, cardiopulmonary, critical care unit, diagnostic imaging, emergency department, maternity unit, home health service, Kootenai cancer center, laboratory services, medical/surgical unit, occupational health, rehabilitation services, and surgical needs. Bonner General is staffed with 415 employees, 49 active physicians, and 23 courtesy staff. As a non-profit hospital it is committed to giving back and providing services to patients, regardless of their ability to pay. In 2008 they provided \$799,065 in unreimbursed charity to patients in need of financial services. They also offer various community programs, including:

- Community CPR and first aid classes
- Childbirth education classes
- Diabetes support groups
- Fibromyalgia support groups
- Parkinson's support groups
- Children's mental health support groups

- Alzheimer's support groups
- National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI) support groups
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous³

Newport Community Hospital is part of the Newport Hospital and Health Services facilities and is located in Newport, WA. It is a full-service hospital including a level IV 24 -bed trauma facility. Other services offered include: radiology, obstetrics, general surgical care, physical and rehabilitation services, 42 bed assisted living complex, 5 bed short/long term restorative care, and air ambulance services. The other associated facilities are: Family Medicine Newport, Family Health Center Newport, Long-Term Care, and River Mountain Village.⁴

Figure 14.2: Air Ambulance



Source: <http://www.phd1.org/NCH.htm>

Bonner General Hospital

520 North Third Avenue
Sandpoint, ID 83864
(208) 263-1441

Newport Hospital and Health Services

714 W. Pine Street
Newport, WA 99156
(509) 447-2441
hospital@phd1.org
webadmin@phd1.org

Clinics

Sandpoint is also home to Bonner Partner in Care Clinic; a health facility offering basic medical care to uninsured individuals. The clinic operates two nights a week. It is funded in part by donations from local organizations like the Wild Rose Foundation (a non-profit that works to ensure health needs of the county are being met). Tuesday and Thursday evenings a medical staff and volunteers work at the clinic and provide medical services, excluding: general physicals, sports exams, dental care, family planning and STD testing.⁵

There is also a local family medical facility in Priest River. Priest River Medical Clinic is a service of Bonner General Hospital. Dr. Jeffery B. Fowler and Dr. Charles Falter are the on-staff physicians, and offer a variety of services, including: massage and aquatic therapy, occupational therapy, pediatric services, physical and speech therapy.⁶

Other

There are multiple dentists' offices in Priest River, a chiropractic facility, Priest Lake Day Care, Huckleberry Retirement III, and Progressive Physical Therapy. Other services in Sandpoint are: Bonner County Family and Community Health, Bonner County Environmental Health, and Bonners Partner in Care Clinic. For other needs such as dermatology or orthopedic, Sandpoint has accommodating facilities, but for more extensive treatments, such as neurosurgery, patients will have to travel to Coeur d'Alene or Spokane.

Priest River Medical Clinic

314 E. Albeni Hwy ste. 102
Priest River, ID 83856
(208) 448-2321
Hours: M-F 8:30a.m. -5:00 p.m.
Closed: 12:00p.m. -1:00p.m.

Priest River Urgent Care

900 Beardmore Ave.
Priest River, ID 83856
(208) 448-2240

Bonner County Family and Community Health

1020 Michigan
Sandpoint, ID 83864
(208) 263-5159

Bonner County Environmental Health

322 Marion
Sandpoint, ID 83864
(208) 265-6384

Bonnors Partner in Care Clinic

1020 Michigan St.
Sandpoint, ID 83864
(208) 255-9099
catherinep@bpicc.org

Police/Prisons

The Priest River police department is staffed with six members: Ray Roberts, the chief of police, three officers, one animal control officer and code enforcer, one clerk, and one canine officer. The main calls pertain to animal complaints, juvenile complaints, and malicious injury to property, auto burglary, and theft.⁷ The only holding facility for the county is in Sandpoint at the Bonner County Sheriff Detention Center. The detention center opened in 1998, has a capacity for 124 prisoners, and has an average daily population of 85 inmates.⁸ There is a juvenile detention center in Kootenai County that often facilitates the needs of Bonner County, with an average booking rate of 417 juveniles per year. There is also one facility in Bonner County that has a four bedroom residential home converted to a juvenile detention center and can house 12 juveniles.⁹

Priest River Police Department**Chief of Police: Ray Roberts**

209 High Street
Priest River, ID 83856
(208) 448-1521

Bonner County Sheriff's Department**Sheriff: Daryl Wheeler**

4001 N. Boyer Ave.
Sandpoint, ID 83864
(208) 263-8417

Priest River Sheriff Sub Station

75 Eastside Road
Priest River, ID 83856
(208) 448-1521

A search and rescue team operates out of Sandpoint that services all of Bonner County. They have upwards of 200 trained volunteers that deal with rope rescues, extreme snowmobiling, and swift water rescue tactics.

Bonner County has 111,399 acres of navigable waters, distributed throughout Lake Pend Oreille, Priest Lake, Priest River, Pend Oreille River, and many other waterways. There is a marine patrol division located in Sandpoint that patrols these waterways, and provides 12-14 seasonal employment positions to trained professionals.¹⁰

Figure 14.3: Priest River Police Car



Source: <http://www.priestriver-id.gov/law-enforcement.html>

Fire Management and Safety

Figure 14.4 Fire Resources



Source: *Liza Pulsipher*

Numerous agencies share ownership and management of the forested lands around Priest River including Idaho Department of Lands, the Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, and private and municipal departments.

In 1910 one of the worst fires to date swept through Eastern Washington, the Idaho Panhandle, and into Western Montana. It burned three million acres, and took the lives of 86 people. Since then much has been done to manage Idaho's forested lands.

This was not the only fire in history that changed the face of Priest River. On December 12, 1973, a large fire ripped through downtown, destroying several buildings, causing the owners to relocate, and shifting the growth of Priest River.¹¹

Fire continues to be a threat to this community nestled within timber country, and there are various programs in place to help mitigate this threat. The BONFIRE program of the Bonner County Department of Emergency Management is one such program. Its aim is to increase

awareness of wildfire threats and help homeowners take preventative measures in protecting their homes.¹² Priest Community Forest Connection is a non-profit organization that is engaged in forest stewardship collaboratively with the US Forest Service to manage timber areas through: education, research, outreach, and implementation.¹³ Priest River has also created and adopted an All-Hazards Mitigation Plan, which addresses the possibility of wildfires and highlights mitigation projects.

BONFIRE

Contact: Larry Isenberg, Project Manager
10019 Bobcat Trail
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 265-8867 ext. 7
Larryissi@dishmail.net

The Priest Community Forest Connection

223 Main Street
Priest River, ID 83856
(208) 448-0212

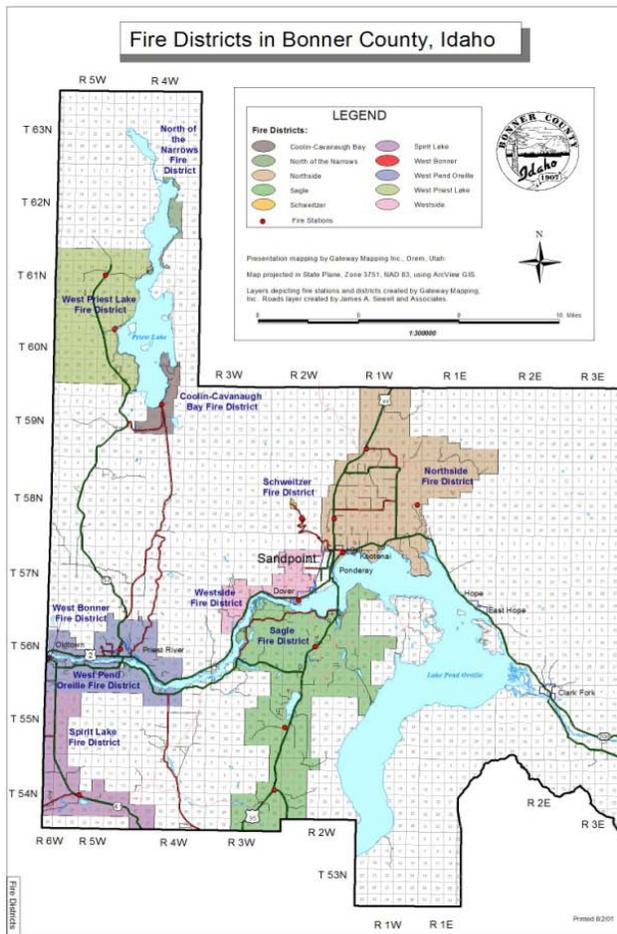
City/County Fire

Figure 14.5: Priest River Fire Station



Source: Monica Walker

Figure 14.6: Map of Fire Districts



Source: <ftp://ftp.co.bonner.id.us/xtemp/>

Bonner County is serviced by thirteen different fire districts. Priest River is primarily serviced by three departments. Within the City of Priest River there is the Priest River Volunteer Fire Department. It is staffed with 22 members, and is equipped with two fire trucks, one water tender, and one field truck. Their primary duty is to respond to structural fires; however they are capable of responding to wildfires as well. The West Pend Oreille Fire District is within Priest River city limits, however they service Bonner County and are responsible for 64,000 acres of land. They are a volunteer department with 50 people on the roster, they maintain 18 vehicles with a combined total of 14,000 gallons of water capacity, six brush trucks for wildfire response, and a first response-extrication vehicle. They provide mutual aid to other departments, 68 of which are outside their district, and they also have contracts to provide aid ten miles outside their district (57 of which are paid by the state).¹⁴ In 2009 they received over 286 calls, pertaining not only to fire, but also HAZMAT, motor vehicle accidents, diesel spills, chlorine leaks, and ice rescues. Les Kokanos is the fire chief and has worked to obtain over \$600,000.00 in funding for the department over the past 26 years.¹⁵ Priest River also has a Volunteer Ambulance staff, which consists of EMT's, first responders, and a certified EMT instructor.¹⁶

West Pend Oreille Fire District

Chief: Les Kokanos

1104 Ninth Street
Priest River, ID 83856
(208) 448-2035

Priest River Volunteer Ambulance

(208) 448-4002

City Fire Department

(208) 448-2123

Search and Rescue

(208) 263-3136

Wildland Fire

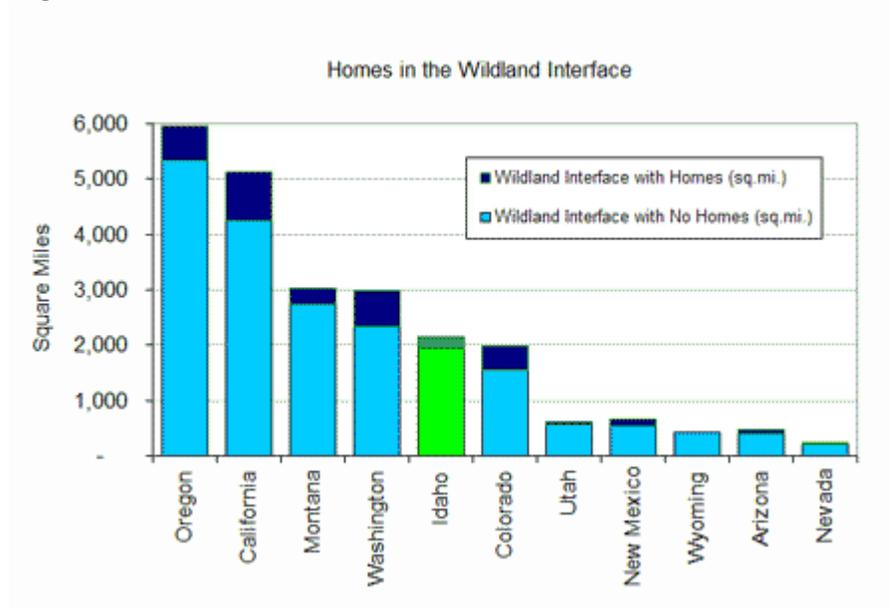
Figure 14.7: Smokey Bear



Source: Liza Pulsipher

As I briefly mentioned earlier, wildfires are a major concern in Priest River, especially with many people moving into or already living in the Wildland Urban Interface. Bonner County is at a significant risk with 8,020 homes existing within 77 square miles of wildland urban interface areas, ranking it fourth highest in the West for wildfire risk.¹⁷

Figure 14.8: Homes in the Wildland Interface



Source: <http://www.headwaterseconomics.org/wildfire/id.php>

Priest River has a history of wildfires. Previously mentioned was the 1910 fire. Additional fires in the region include the year 1926 when 240 fires burned throughout the area, and the year 1967 when 73,000 acres were burned. The year 2000 was significant throughout the nation and Bonner County was declared a federal wildfire disaster area.¹⁸

Bonner County Wildfires By Year, Cause and Acreage

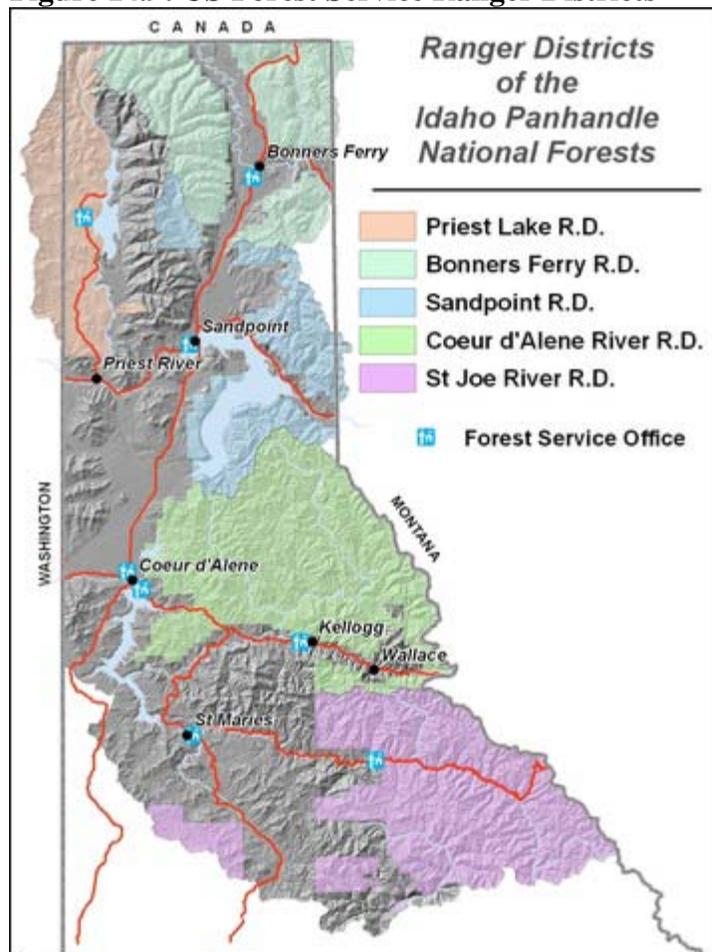
Year	Total Fires	Number Human Caused	Number Lightning Caused	Total Acres	Acres Human Caused	Acres Lightning Caused
1994	190	55	135	3768	685	3083
1995	45	30	15	45	42	3
1996	56	33	23	350	343	7
1997	31	22	9	15	13	2
1998	83	38	45	74	65	9
1999	106	61	45	155	143	12
2000	115	40	75	744	40	704

Source: *Inland Forest Management, 2004 in the All-Hazard Mitigation Plan*

Idaho Department of Lands manages fire issues on state and private lands in and around Priest River and Bonner County. They have two supervisory stations for the area. The Priest Lake Supervisory Area with their office located in Coolin, and the Pend Oreille Supervisory Area, with its office in Sandpoint.¹⁹

The US Forest Service manages fire issues on federal lands. There are five ranger districts in the area as part of the Panhandle National Forest including the Priest Lake Ranger District.²⁰ In 2009, there were 36 fire reports, which burned a total of between sixteen and seventeen acres, the largest one being six and one half acres. Five of the reported fires were human caused. This district office employs sixteen firefighters and two prevention technicians. They have three engines, one is a type four engine and the other two are type six engines.²¹

Figure 14.9: US Forest Service Ranger Districts



Source: <http://fs.usda.gov/>

Priest Lake Forest Protective District

4053 Cavanaugh Bay Road

Coolin, ID 83821

(208) 443-2516

Pend Oreille Forest Protective District

2550 Hwy 2 West

Sandpoint, ID 83864

(208) 263-5104

Priest Lake Ranger District

32203 Hwy 57
Priest River, ID 83856
(208) 443-2512

Figure 14.10: Priest River Fire Resources



Source:

http://www.idl.idaho.gov/nat_fire_plan/county_wui_plans/bonner/update/bonner2009CWPPrevisions0409.pdf

The health and safety of a community are vital elements to its success. Services such as: medical, police and fire ensure that the well-being of community members can be met. Priest River has adequate facilities to fulfill these needs; however there is always room for improvement. By continuously updating equipment, employing a full range of staff, and periodically working within the community through events such as clinics, the health and safety needs of Priest River can continue to be met.

¹ Panhandle Health District 1 <http://www.phd1.idaho.gov> (accessed November 2009).

² Your Quick Reference Guide to Priest River, Idaho

³ Bonner General Hospital <http://bonnergeneral.org> (accessed November 2009).

⁴ Bonner Partner in Care Clinic <http://bonnerpartnersincareclinic.org/> (accessed November 2009).

⁵ Bonner Partner in Care Clinic <http://bonnerpartnersincareclinic.org/> (accessed November 2009).

⁶ Priest River Medical Clinic

http://www.bonnergeneral.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=135:priest-river-medical-clinic&catid=63:medical-services&Itemid=155 (accessed November 2009).

⁷ Jones, Chris. (8December 2009) Priest River Police Department Officer. (L. Pulsipher, Interviewer).

⁸ Bonner County Sheriff's Office <http://www.co.bonner.id.us/sheriff/> (accessed November 2009).

⁹ Bonner County Juvenile Detention Center

www.co.bonner.id.us/.../BonnerCountyJuvenileDetentionFacilityLevy.ppt (accessed November 2009).

¹⁰ Bonner County Sheriff's Office <http://www.bonnerco.org/marine.html> (accessed November 2009).

¹¹ History of Priest River http://www.sd83.k12.id.us/pre/quest/history_of_priest_river.htm (accessed November 2009).

¹² BONFIRE http://www.plrcd.org/NOFIRE/bonner/bonner_fire.htm (accessed November 2009).

¹³ Priest Community Forest Connection http://www.communityforests.com/comm_programs.htm (accessed November 2009).

¹⁴ All-Hazard Mitigation Plan Draft
http://206.127.65.86/bonnercopdm/documents/Plan/Ch3_RiskAssessmentHazardProfiles.pdf (accessed November 2009).

¹⁵ Kokanos, L. (26 September 2009) Priest River Fire District Fire Chief. (L. Pulsipher, Interviewer).

¹⁶ City of Priest River/Public Safety <http://www.priestriver.org/safety.html> (accessed November 2009).

¹⁷ Headwaters Economics <http://www.headwaterseconomics.org/wildfire/id.php> (accessed November 2009).

¹⁸ Bonner County Wildfire Protection Plan
http://www.idl.idaho.gov/nat_fire_plan/county_wui_plans/bonner/update/bonner2009CWPPrevisions0409.pdf
(accessed November 2009).

¹⁹ Idaho Department of Lands <http://www.idl.idaho.gov/Areas/PriestLake.htm> (accessed November 2009).

²⁰ USDA Forest Service <http://fs.usda.gov/> (accessed November 2009).

²¹ Prevention Officer (8 December 2009) Priest Lake Ranger District. (L. Pulsipher, Interviewer).

Community Life

Figure 15.1: Lamana high school futures game



Source: Nick Sanyal

Introduction

A healthy community life is important to the vitality and spirit of a community. Community life creates opportunities where citizens can cultivate relationships, find common interests, and become engaged in community growth. A healthy community is where youth can become involved, and memories are created which help to build the spirit and identity of a place are built upon.

Priest River seems to be at a turning point and struggling with finding or developing that common identity, however, they have a long history of having a vibrant community life and have continued that through present day.

In this Section:

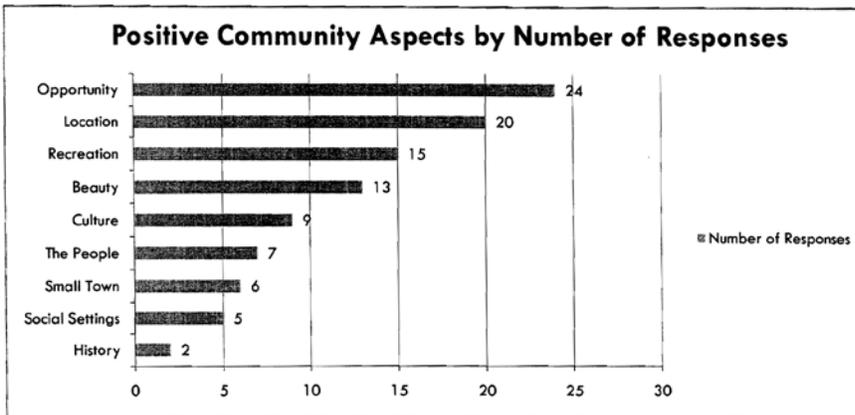
- Gathering Places and Areas of Pride
- Social Activities
- Community Networks
- Areas for Improvement

Gathering Places and Areas of Pride

There are many things to love about Priest River. After an eight month long survey done by the Urban Renewal Agency, it was discovered that Priest River residents found that there are many positive aspects of their community, including: opportunities, location, and recreation, among many others.¹

Figure 15.2: URA Results

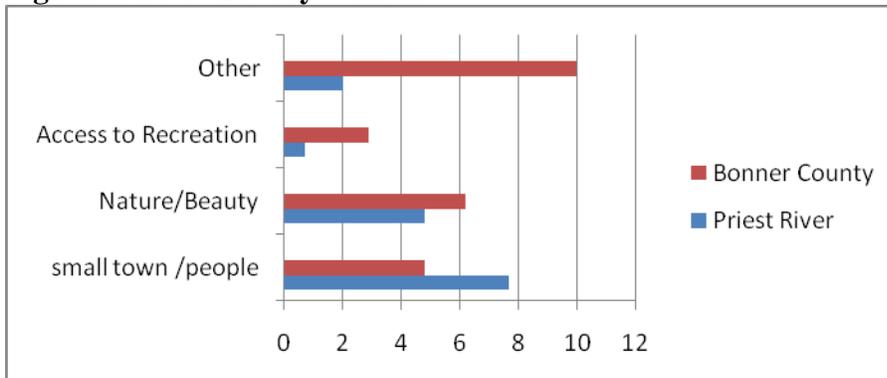
Positive Aspects of the Community



Source: Priest River Urban Renewal Agency 2008 Community Survey Results

Priest River is located within an abundance of natural resources. The survey *Understanding the Bioregional Landscapes of Priest River/Bonner County* administered by University of Idaho Bioregional Planning students during Oktoberfest 2009 revealed that 77 percent of respondents valued the small town/people aspect of Priest River, 48 percent valued the Nature/Beauty, and 7 percent valued access to recreation. Also when referring to Bonner County 48 percent valued small town/people, 62 percent valued Nature/Beauty, and 29 percent valued access to recreation.²

Figure 15.3: UI Survey Results



Source: University of Idaho *Understanding the Bioregional Landscapes of Priest River/Bonner County* survey

Based on the findings from these surveys it makes sense that a lot of the gathering places and areas of pride revolve around Priest River's abundant natural resources. Numerous waterways, including Priest River, Pend Oreille River, Priest Lake, Freeman Lake, and Blue Lake are areas where residents enjoy various water sports. There are many parks available for recreation, like Priest Lake State Park, downtown Priest River Park, Priest River City Park, West Bonner County Park, and the 4-H park.³

Figure 15.4: Priest River



Source: <http://www.priestriver.org/chamber/area-photos.php>

The youth of Priest River can engage in a number of activities. The “Mud hole” is a popular swimming and camping area along the river; Priest River also has a skate park, and a 4-H park. Many youth are active in sports so the high school is a major hub/gathering place for them.

Figure 15.5: Futures Game



Source: Nick Sanyal

You can not mention gathering places and areas of pride without talking about downtown. The newly renovated Beardmore, being the only LEED certified and historically registered building in the state is an area of pride.⁴ The library in Priest River is part of the West Bonner Library District, and is an important gathering place. The Friends of The West Bonner Library District formed in November 2000. After receiving a donation from a local resident, they began working on the renovation of the old library on June 1, 2001.⁵ Now the library is a place where kids, teens, and adults meet; they hold many activities throughout the year, including fundraisers, raffles, and the like. The Keyser house, built in 1895, is a tribute to Priest River's history, and an important gathering place. It is currently a museum and timber education center.

Figure 15.6: Priest River Library



Source: <http://www.priest-river-idaho.com/priest-river-library.html>

Social Activities

Social activities bring the community together and help establish the spirit or identity of a place. Priest River has established a strong network of community involvement based around social activities.

The festivities began with the annual log drive down Priest River in 1901 until 1949, which later evolved into the annual loggers' celebration, through 1980, and now is called Priest River Timber Days, which is celebrated annually in July.⁶

Many other events take place throughout the year, including:

May Day- Always the first Saturday in May when residents and business owners in Priest River take part in a community wide garage/sidewalk sale.

Bonner County Fair- August 23-29

Oktoberfest- The last weekend in September.

Christmas on Main Street- December 5- As a fundraiser for the local food bank, the children of Priest River are encouraged to join in festivities on Main Street, where Santa, gifts, food, and fun kick off the Christmas season.⁷

2010 will mark Priest River's first annual **Winterfestival**. During the last Friday and Saturday in January, downtown will be full of ice sculptures and people participating in activities such as snowshoe golf.

Figure 15.7: Timber Days Celebration



Source: <http://www.priestriver.org/yearcalendar.html>

Figure 15.8: Fourth of July Celebration



Source: <http://www.priestriver.org/yearcalendar.html>

Figure 15.9: Bonner County Fair and Rodeo



Source: <http://www.sandpoint.com/Entertainment/bcfair.asp>

Community Networks

The residents of Priest River have expressed their concern about the importance of building strong community networks, particularly for youth. Currently there are limited youth programs, including:

- Priest River Youth Athletic Association (PRYAA)
- Boy Scouts
- 4-H
- Numerous sports programs

Figure 15.10: Futures Game



Source: Nick Sanyal

Priest River has a fairly active adult community. The Lions and Lioness is an example of one group that is very active. They sponsor events and festivals, and facilitate area fundraisers to give money to local community organizations. Other networks for engaged citizens are:

- Bonner County Economic Development Corporation
- Bonner County Human Rights Task Force
- Priest River Development Corporation
- Urban Renewal Agency
- Citizen's of Priest River
- Pathways
- Adult Boosters for Athletics⁸

Figure 15.11: Adult Futures Game



Source: Nick Sanyal

Priest River has an active senior population. The senior center is very involved and is host to a multitude of activities every night of the week from hosting a soup kitchen and food bank, to

being a gathering place for pinochle and quilters clubs, and hosting potlucks and senior driving classes. It is a gathering place for young and old alike.⁹

Figure 15.12: Priest River Senior Center



Source: <http://www.priest-river-idaho.com/soup.html>

Areas for Improvement

In speaking with area residents a few ideas for improving local community networks have been suggested. The youth need more outlets to become involved; a youth center or YMCA would provide a safe gathering place to participate in events and activities. With all of the recreation lands surrounding the area, residents have mentioned the possibility of starting an organizational camp. With the growing number of seniors, there is a need for more facilities to accommodate them, and possibly a nursing home facility.

¹ Priest River URA Urban Renewal Agency 2008 Community Survey Results

² University of Idaho “*Understanding the Bioregional Landscapes of Priest River/Bonner County*” survey (September 2009).

³ The City of Priest River <http://www.priestriver.org/rec.html> (accessed November 2009).

⁴ Runberg, Brian, “Sustaining the future while restoring the past,” *Daily Journal of Commerce*, (9 April 2009).

⁵ West Bonner Library District <http://westbonner.lili.org/node/18> (accessed November 2009).

⁶ Priest River, Idaho <http://www.priest-river-idaho.com/priest-river-library.html> (accessed November 2009).

⁷ Priest River.org <http://www.priestriver.org/yearcalendar.html> (assessed November 2009).

⁸ Salyer, C. (26 September 2009). Priest River Chamber of Commerce employee (L. Pulsipher, Interviewer).

⁹ Priest River, Idaho <http://www.priest-river-idaho.com/PriestriverSeniorcenter.html> (accessed November 2009).

Conclusion

The sections contained in the Priest River Bioregional Atlas each attempt to illustrate a different yet important aspect of the community. The research explores the biophysical, protected areas, cultural landscapes, history, agriculture, political and nongovernmental institutions, land use, infrastructure, transportation, demographics, economics, housing, education, health and safety, and community life. Through the gathering of all this information, a picture of Priest River has begun to emerge. As the City of Priest River deals with the changing employment and demographic landscape, we hope this atlas can serve as a source of information to aid in redefining Priest River's identity both economically, and socially, within the region. This atlas can also serve as an information base to allow for a more informed consensus on the direction of Priest River, as well as a readily available resource for grant writing and other opportunities. Contained below are short conclusions highlighting each section of the Priest River Atlas.

Biophysical

Priest River is surrounded by a wealth of resources and has utilized many of these since its founding. The region has many forests with a wide variety of plant species which are home to a diverse wildlife, including rare species as well as game species, both of which are an asset to the community. There is wide availability of water resources including two rivers in town and two lakes within thirty miles. As Priest River works to create a new vision for their future, the primary concern for the community is how best to continue using the resources available in a way that is sustainable for the environment as well as the local economy and culture. Understanding the region at a landscape scale will help the community become better custodians of the land. Even though this Biophysical section of the atlas only details the availability of the resources in the region, it needs to be used in conjunction with all the other sections in this atlas when developing plans for the future.

Protected Areas

It is vital to protect and preserve the natural landscape of the region as it not only enhances environmental health, but also presents historical and cultural significance. If a high degree of environmental quality and protection is ensured, economic and recreational opportunities may greatly prosper.

Cultural Landscapes

The Priest River area is rich with natural resources and in the past has attracted tourism to the area by publicizing the variety of wilderness opportunities found in this area. The opportunity to find peace away from the busy sounds of city life still remains today and Priest River could extend the invitation for visitors to find Priest River, and the surrounding area, as a rustic respite area away from the busy ways of cities. It is important to understand and preserve the integrity of Priest River and hold onto the "culture" of this place while attracting business and tourism to the area. Priest River once

was and continues to be a “gateway” to Priest Lake and the wild and scenic places found within the Kanisku National Forest. Preservation of the log slides, logging history and landscapes, natural forests, swimming holes, pubs, restaurants, and hotels are important to preserving the integrity of Priest River. Integrating historical names into new and old business establishments can help preserve the logging and rowdy past of this place. Fish weirs, railroad camps, and native camping grounds, as well as other historic and current cultural landscapes can be identified and interpreted. The economic foundation of Priest River was built on the lumber industry, but as the demand for lumber decreases it is important for the Priest River area to diversify its economic base. Through the preservation of Priest River’s history and cultural landscapes, the community can build a strong sense of place in which to attract industry and new business.

History’s Place in the Present

Priest River is in a transitional period and some of these connections will not be able to serve this community in the same manner in the future. What defined Priest River in the past is its logging tradition. While defining Priest River now it is important to recognize how the present is linked to the past. What aspects of historical Priest River still exist? These links can be found in a number of areas such as natural resources, religion, community involvement, festivals, celebrations, traditions, and historic buildings and sites. Links to the past in present day Priest River may be found at the Catholic Church that sponsors an Italian food drive, Italian pastries are made during holidays, and the annual timber day’s festival. Downtown Priest River has several historic buildings that may be listed on the Historic National Register. Even though Priest River will be opening a new chapter in its history, remembering and celebrating the links to the past will help the individual and the community. This new chapter will facilitate a sense of identity and belonging to a community that is searching for a new personality.

Agricultural Trends

Can agriculture be used to complement Priest River’s changing economy? It appears that Priest River may be transitioning from a timber-based economy to an ecotourism-based economy. The horticultural research, small-scale farming, and specialty crops produced in Bonner County could provide a complement to Priest River’s new ecotourism economy base. Local producers of specialty crops and animals could network with other regional entrepreneurs to organize tours of on site businesses to sample and purchase products. Tourists could participate in on site educational tours, much as wine tours are organized in other regions of the Pacific Northwest.

Political and Nongovernmental Institutions

Priest River's diverse community organizations are an asset that could be better utilized through greater cooperation. The city's position within West Bonner County provides opportunities and challenges. Greater local control over decision-making that impacts the city is a clear advantage--but the disconnect from Sandpoint may be an obstacle to its community development goals.

Land Use

Priest River is a unique community with enormous potential, which residents and visitors are beginning to recognize and embrace. City decision makers have created a clear and easily interpreted set of zoning districts that allow for preservation of Priest River's character as well as encourage economic prosperity and entrepreneurial growth. These community leaders seem to be well aware of what is necessary to achieve a balance between these key attributes and have the skills and knowledge to assess the needs of the community and project those needs into policies.

In addition to the success of the city government, the Priest River Urban Renewal Agency is taking leaps and bounds towards forging a strong and cohesive community land use vision by gathering community insight on issues that affect quality of life and general well-being in their city. The ideas collected by the URA will serve to inform policy makers' land use decisions and work towards fruition of an overall community vision.

If we take a step back and simply observe the positive land use changes that have occurred in the recent past and are continuing to occur now in Priest River, we will see a community on the verge of a magnificent transition, one that has taken a proactive approach to turning threatening circumstances into opportunities. Priest River will continue to make itself an excellent example for other communities in transition.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure plays a pivotal role in the City of Priest River by providing the facilities necessary for its citizens to live. These facilities are usually buried or hidden from view and therefore tend to be forgotten. The condition of publicly owned and maintained water and wastewater facilities are in varying states of condition, ranging from good to very bad, and require improvements and replacements such as water and sewer lines. Stormwater pollution is a problem with the potential contamination of both the Priest River and Pend Oreille Rivers. To accommodate future growth, city leaders will need to evaluate projects and the impact it has on existing infrastructure.

Priest River is an area of great beauty, natural amenities, and independent spirit. With the loss of major employers in the area, it is important to remember the assets that made the City of Priest River possible. The challenge now lies in a Priest River in transition, that struggles to meet the needs and the desires of the community.

This bioregional atlas is meant to serve as a resource and tool in the development of a plan to create an economically, environmentally, socially, and culturally sustainable Priest River. By gathering and compiling data that is commonly found scattered among dozens of documents, the atlas provides a wealth of information and a valuable resource to the community, by enabling community members to see Priest River as a whole. The atlas allows community members and decision makers to see the interactions and connections that exist in Priest River, and more importantly, the human dependence upon nature for the establishment of economic, social, and cultural significance. The atlas lays

a foundation of knowledge and information upon which a community and regional plan for Priest River can be built.

Transportation

The transportation system, services, and planning efforts that exist in Bonner County encourage active lifestyles, sustainability, tourism, and offer mobility. The highway system provides scenic connections between communities and across state borders. Many planning efforts are currently in progress and will only further enhance the transportation system in Bonner County. The trails master plan will continue to provide significant connections for non-motorized transportation, contributing to a multi-modal transportation system. A potential trail corridor that was not mentioned in future trail projects is a multi-use trail connecting Priest River to Priest Lake. A trail making this connection would offer an abundance of recreational activities (snowmobiling, cycling, running, rollerblading, cross-country skiing) and provide a significant connection between these communities. In future planning efforts it will be increasingly important to involve Bonner County citizens in any transportation decision making processes. Additionally, it is equally important for governmental bodies in this region to work together and pursue transportation goals regionally. Doing so will ensure a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system that meets mobility needs of Bonner County residents and visitors.

Demographics

The population of Priest River shows that there is an age gap of people between the ages of 25 and 50, indicating an out-migration of the population in their production years with an increase in population of retirees. The outmigration of residents in their production years is consistent with the shrinking economy and the recent closure of lumber mills in the area. The relatively large number of residents under the age of 18 might suggest there will be an increase in population once these residents become of child bearing age, but because of the trend of out-migration, this group most likely won't be a large contributor to the population. Many residents are seeking employment opportunities outside of Priest River, but people move back to Priest River after their production years. The larger population of retirement-aged residents indicates a strong connection to the area only after employment has happened. It is recommended that this population be taken into consideration in terms of services such as a senior center, activities that appeal to an older age group and possible transportation services for this population. Priest River also has a higher population by percentage of Native Americans than Bonner County as well as a higher percentage of the population than Bonner County of people of two or more races. Though Idaho as a state isn't very diverse in terms of ethnicity and race, it is important to note that Priest River has a small population of Native Americans.

Economics

Priest River's regional economic influence encompasses much of western Bonner County. However, as the City wrestles with a future of decreased timber activity, the need to make connections to neighboring economies such as Sandpoint and Spokane increases. Dangers to economic recovery from the loss of timber industry exports lie in

youth out migration as well as lack of new employment. Revitalization of the downtown core and capturing tourism are two areas helping to drive growing economic sectors in Priest River, continuing these types of activities as well as capitalizing on other natural amenity strengths and retaining entrepreneurial residents will help drive a new economy.

Housing

Addressing issues of housing maintenance, health and safety, affordable housing, barriers to affordable housing and adequate housing choices in a community is essential. The strength and economic vitality of a community is strongly tied to its housing resources. Providing quality, affordable housing to address the needs of community members at all income levels is essential to maintaining a stable community.¹

Re-assessing current land use ordinances in Priest River may be one way to address the housing needs of the community. For example, some ordinances require minimum square footages, perhaps as a way to exclude mobile or manufactured housing from neighborhoods; the affect is that this drives up the cost of housing and increases energy costs and consumption.² Another ordinance which prohibits living in the upper floors of downtown buildings should also be re-visited. Allowing infill in the downtown core and restoring living space in the downtown area could provide additional foot traffic and vitality to the area.³

Increased public education and outreach concerning health and safety issues of homes is recommended. Lead paint and radon are known health threats and toxic mold is increasingly becoming an important health issue. To have a healthy, vibrant community means having adequate, quality housing for community members.

Education

Though there are some challenges in education for Priest River, there are many opportunities. The lack of state educational funding as a result of families moving out of the Priest River area has presented a challenge. Another challenge is found in the lack of extracurricular and after-school activities for students in the area. There are many opportunities in and around Priest River that should be taken advantage of by residents. There are many higher education opportunities around the region, the North Idaho Digital Learning Center will be offering a class to high school students and eventually to residents, and Spirit Lake Y.E.S. serves as model for a youth center-style organization, all of which present great opportunities for the residents and students of Priest River.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of a community are vital elements to its success. Services such as: medical, police and fire ensure that the well-being of community members can be met. Priest River has adequate facilities to fulfill these needs; however there is always room for improvement. By continuously updating equipment, employing a full range of staff, and periodically working within the community through events such as clinics and workshops, the health and safety needs of Priest River can continue to be met.

Community Life

A strong community life creates opportunities where citizens can cultivate relationships, find common interests, and become engaged in community growth; where

youth can become involved, and memories are created that the spirit and identity of a place are built upon. By creating more outlets for community involvement, the aforementioned are strengthened and communities can build networks that will enable them to grow and prosper in the future.

Sources:

¹Idaho Rural Partnership. Priest River Community Review Report.
http://irp.idaho.gov/Home/Community_Review/. 2009.

² ibid

³ ibid