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Comments: Sxwuytn-Kaniksu Connections Trail Project comments

On behalf of the Bead Lake Clean Water Association (BLCWA) Board and its members, please consider the following to the proposed 'improvements' involved in the Sxwuytn-Kaniksu Connections 'Trail' Project:

Bead Lake homeowners are invested in and actively participate to realize the overall environmental health of the lake and its surrounding area. There are three homeowners groups and, in addition, a group of homeowners specifically dedicated to the health of the lake itself.

The Bead Lake Clean Water Association (BLCWA) was established in 1978 and is comprised of a group of approximately 80 lake households whose purpose is to:

- * _Help maintain the ecological purity of the water in Bead Lake
- * _Help maintain the physical, natural aesthetic qualities of the shoreline
- * _Maintain the quality of the water so that residents can continue to use it as a drinking water source
- * _Provide information to members regarding any development plans
- * _Maintain lake serenity
- * _Speak for members on issues regarding Bead Lake

The association was notified of Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) infestation following a lake survey by an Aquatic Plant Specialist with Ecology and the Coordinator of the Pend Oreille County Weed Board (Weed Board) in July 2010. The board of the BLCWA and its members acted swiftly in collaboration with the Weed Board and Ecology trying to mitigate the situation. BLCWA continues to collaborate with the Weed Board and the Pend Oreille Conservation District in the ongoing effort to maintain the quality and clarity of the Bead Lake water. BLCWA and the Weed Board have been awarded EWM control grants by the Department of Ecology since 2011, with 25% of each grant to be matched with in-kind services (surveying, mapping etc.) performed by members of the BLCWA. An Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan was finalized in June, 2020 and is attached. Eurasian Watermilfoil has yet to be eradicated or fully controlled in Bead Lake.

The Colville Forest has not participated in any mitigation efforts to date; any proposed projects in and around Bead Lake that are realized will increase the risk of EWM infestation and the Colville Forest should commit to mitigation and financial participation.

The Environmental Assessment section 3.5 does not consider or assess the environmental impact of increased recreation, specifically with respect to EWM, along the shorelines of Bead Lake. All six of the lake's bays have seen various levels of infestation over the years and increased boating recreation, especially during the 2020 season, has led to infestations along the homeowner's shoreline not previously seen. Any improvement to the parking lot should include a boat washing station and all boats should be cleaned prior to launch. Additionally, EWM information/warning signage and buoys should be included in the proposed projects to inform and educate day-use recreational users.

Control and mitigation of EWM has been the primary focus of the members of the BLCWA for the last ten years and we do not want to see these efforts hampered by increased recreation, and more specifically, lack of oversight. The Environmental Assessment does not include an analysis of the impact of increased recreation traffic at the Bead Lake boat launch facility, which is to include an enlargement of the parking area and the addition of a fishing dock. The Forest Service had secured a camp host who oversaw traffic at the boat launch during the summer months. A camp host has not been employed since the 2018 summer season. As a result,

the last two summer seasons have seen a marked increase in uncontrolled traffic at the launch. Residents throughout the Bead Lake shoreline report an increase in confrontations at the launch and along the shorelines.

A fishing dock could make launching a boat safer and more feasible, but lack of oversight will definitely result in it being used as a day-use swimming and picnic dock. Use of the boat launch as a swimming facility frequently occurs and creates an unsafe situation with children and swimmers in conflict with those launching boats. A dock will only increase this unsafe situation. A sportsman group requested installing a fishing dock at the launch in 2017 and the BLCWA, in addition to the three Bead Lake homeowner groups, voiced their concerns and requested measures directly related to safety and oversight. The dock was never installed.

Finally, the safety of the increasing numbers of people using the Bead Lake area for camping and overnight recreation should be considered. A fire station in the Bead Lake area with emergency medical responders would seem appropriate. The fire station should have adequate space for a staging area for future fire suppression activities in the region.