

LOCAL NORTH IDAHO LORE

From Colin Beggs

Welcome to North Idaho! For your interest and amusement, I have compiled a bit of information from various sources.

STATE FLAG

Torn blue tarp blowing in the wind

LOTS O' TREES

Northern Idaho is home to a diverse array of evergreens including Douglas Fir, Englemann Spruce, Grand Fir, Lodgepole Pine, Mountain Hemlock, Pacific Yew, Ponderosa Pine, Subalpine Fir, Western Hemlock, Western Larch, Western Red Cedar, White Bark Pine and, finally, our state tree, the Western White Pine. Until about 50 years ago, Western White Pine was the most abundant forest type in the Northern Rockies EcoRegion of Idaho. The largest Western White Pine in the world stands 219 feet tall near Elk River, Idaho. In 1910 the white pine blister rust was accidentally introduced to Vancouver Island, British Columbia, on French white pine ornamental shrubs and went on to decimate the species in Idaho, reaching epidemic proportions by 1940.

Sandpoint, a town of 6,000 residents some 45 minutes north of Coeur d'Alene, is located on the northern shore of Lake Pend Oreille (pronounced Pon-da-ray). The town has some beautiful historical photos of W. White Pine river drives at the Ross Hall Gallery www.rosshallcollection.com. More tree info at www.idahoforests.org.

CRITTERS

Northern Idaho is home to many endangered species including the woodland caribou, Canada lynx, grizzly bear, and gray wolf. Other interesting species are the fisher, wolverine, bald eagle, elk, moose, black tail deer and mule deer. More information at www.fs.fed.us.

WATER HUNTING IN THE IDAHO PANHANDLE NATIONAL FOREST

Stream fishing: The St. Joe River is a destination that is well known as the best cutthroat trout stream in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest. Other good locations include the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River and the Little North Fork of the Clearwater, although the best fishing locations take a bit of tenacity to reach.

Lake Fishing: Three large lakes dominate the landscape: Priest Lake, Coeur d'Alene and the largest, Pend Oreille, which holds the world's record rainbow trout (37 pounds). The numerous smaller lakes in Idaho offer anglers many fishing opportunities. Hayden Lake, just 5 miles north of Coeur d'Alene offers the area's best warm water fishery, Spirit Lake, Cocolalla Lake, Bonner Lake, Round Lake among others. More information at www.fs.fed.us.

FIRST NATION PEOPLE (the real deal)

Tribes included the Coeur d'Alene, Spokane's, Kootenai, and Kalispell. The bands of the Colville Confederated tribes and the Kootenai-Salish were not nomadic. Numerous and permanent sites were established on the shores of Lake Coeur d'Alene, Lake Pend Orielle and Hayden Lake and the rivers Coeur d'Alene, St. Joe, Clark Fork, and Spokane.

VERY COOL, IMMENSELY POWERFUL CATACLYSMIC ICE AGE FLOODS

From the Ice Age Floods Institute at www.iafi.org: During the most recent episode of major ice-sheet expansion, between about 18,000 and 13,000 years ago, a lobe of the Cordilleran ice sheet advanced into the Idaho Panhandle to the area that is now occupied by Lake Pend Oreille, thus blocking the Clark Fork River drainage and causing Glacial Lake Missoula to form. At its largest, the lake was deeper than 2,000 feet deep at the dam and held 500 cubic miles of water -- as

much as Lake Erie and Lake Ontario combined. The ice dam, however, was subject to repeated failure. When the dam broke, a towering mass of water and ice was released and swept across parts of Idaho, Washington, and Oregon on its way to the ocean. The peak rate of flow was ten times the combined river flow of all the rivers of the world. The lake may have emptied in as little as 2-3 days. Once again the glacier would advance blocking the river again, and the cycle was repeated.

LET'S GIVE IT UP FOR DAVID THOMPSON

David Thompson was the greatest North American land geographer of his time. A scientific explorer and fur trader, Thompson was a great surveyor as well as an explorer. While best known for his trans-mountain explorations, Thompson spent 28 years exploring more than 55,000 miles of northwestern North America. Perhaps his greatest achievement was establishing an overland northwest passage, sought for 200 years, via the Columbia River to the Pacific. He was perhaps the world's foremost land geographer, mapping 1.5 million square miles of this continent (Lewis and Clark made use of his maps). Highly accurate, Thompson's maps were still in use until the 20th century. In addition, he was a keen observer and kept daily journals detailing his meteorological, astronomical and wildlife observations. More info at: www.davidthompson200.ca.

OLD SCHOOL TIMBER FRAMING IN IDAHO

The Old Mission of the Sacred Heart, circa 1842, is the oldest standing building in Idaho. Present site is in Cataldo, overlooking the Coeur d'Alene River Valley. It is approximately 30 minutes east of Coeur d'Alene, just off I-90. The structure was built by Jesuit priests and the Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe. More info at: www.idahoparks.org/parks/oldmission.html. If you're out that way, Wallace has preserved much of its mining history to look at.

THE LOCALS

Ruby Ridge... Nuff said.

POPULAR BUMPER STICKERS

WELCOME TO IDAHO, NOW GO HOME

911 WAS AN INSIDE JOB

FRODO FAILED. BUSH GOT THE RING

EARTH FIRST. WE'LL LOG (mine) THE OTHER
PLANETS LATER

OVERVIEW

Don't let anyone know that I told you, but North Idaho is a warm and fuzzy kind of recreation Valhalla. We've got the wet Selkirks to the west and the dryer, rockier Cabinets to the east. Plenty of rain (inland temperate climate rainforest), good skiing, On or Off Piste. Plenty of single-track with stable dirt. It's not as extreme as some of the mountain west and the weather is great (for an Alaskan) but that keeps the crowds down. Moderate winters give a mixed blessing in regard to consistent snow fall. Some years epic, some years not so good. And if the good ole USA isn't quite up to your liking, then you can simply slip over the Canadian border and claim the official Refugee From Bush status and live happily ever after in Nelson, BC.

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