

Attachment

Recalling the Lewiston of My Youth

by Richard Scully, longtime Lewiston resident

Prior to 1975, outdoor life in Lewiston-Clarkston was a grand adventure! Clarkston had a number of sandy beaches from the "Three Ponds complex" near the golf course on upriver to the Highland beach out from Highland Avenue. The largest and most heavily used beach by swimmers was the Clarkston beach, the remnants of which is now called Chestnut beach. Each summer it was covered with swimmers, especially high schoolers. Clarkston beach was exceptionally large and had a lifeguard stand, a floating deck with a diving board, a sandstone concession stand and a grassy park just steps away. Beach View Park, just up the hill from Clarkston beach was very popular for picnics for hungry swimmers. Highland beach was moderate sized and was often used by boaters as well as swimmers.

Lewiston Beach was directly across the river from Clarkston Beach, had fewer swimmers and was often used as a base for water skiing. The Hells Canyon Boat Club, which had a large membership of local boaters, was housed in a brick building at the upper end of Lewiston Beach. For a time in the 1960s my dad was the club "commadore".

Some of the highschoolers liked to swim from state to state, between Lewiston Beach and Clarkston Beach. Another really fun activity was inner-tubing from Asotin to Lewiston or Clarkston—a distance of 6 miles.

There were some exciting rapids to play in: The Snake River Rapids under the Blue Bridge, another between the Clarkston Beach and Trade Winds Marina and a third out from KOZE Radio Station. The rapids were mild at low-flow but could be exciting during the spring runoff season.

Boating on the river was a big attraction, just for pleasure or for fishing or skiing. Many residents and visitors water-skied on the river. Clarkston had three marinas, one was the Trade Winds Marina, which was adjacent to the Wild Goose Tavern and Dance Hall, a wild place on a Saturday night! The other Washington side marinas were Deschanes, across the river from the current Elks Lodge and Shadow Park Marina in Asotin. The Lewiston side had two marinas, Valley Boat and Motor not far upriver from the Blue Bridge and Grasser's Marina near where the Speer Bullet Factory is located. Valley Boat and Motor also built a floating tavern called the Barge-inn, which became a very popular hangout for boaters and others. All of these marinas were privately owned, some had boat mechanic shops, and all had covered boat slips to rent. Additionally, Lewiston had a public boat launch at Kiwanis Park, across Snake River

Avenue from the current River View Marina. Had River View Marina existed before the reservoir dikes were built, it would actually have had a "river view"!

Before the natural shoreline was buried under Lower Granite Reservoir and replaced with large sharp-edged boulders (called rip rap), there were innumerable spots for bird-watching, or walking along the riverbank to explore or fish. The riverbank was very diverse, with willow groves, gravel bars, rocky points and sloughs in addition to beaches large and small. The in-tact riparian zone along the river was home to many species of birds and beautiful butterflies including Monarch, Viceroy, Morning Cloak and Tiger Swallowtail. You knew spring had arrived when you heard red-wing blackbirds calling from the willows proclaiming ownership of nesting sites.

There were several islands in the rivers that were well-vegetated with shrubs, willows and cottonwood trees, great places of solitude, where one could throw out a line and catch a mixture of bass, catfish and native non-game fish. The Snake River between Lewiston and Clarkston had the perfect current and depth for steelhead drift fishing--all the way from the town of Asotin to the mouth of the Clearwater.

The Clearwater River islands had sheltered bays that provided desirable habitat for smallmouth bass fishing. Holbrook Island was a popular fishing island. There were good steelhead fly fishing runs out from gravel bars between the Memorial Bridge and the mouth of the Clearwater River. The small Island just upstream from the mouth of the Clearwater was a great place to set out decoys for duck hunting.

On the Snake River there was a large island out from the KOZE radio station where we hunted rabbits, ducks and doves. The island under the Blue Bridge continued down to the mouth of the Clearwater. There was a small, abandoned cabin on the north end of the island that was interesting to explore.

I consider myself very lucky to have grown up in Lewiston during this time of plenty.

Photos for inclusion on this page: Richard Scully as a teenager holding fish (there are 3 photos; would not have to use them all)—see separate email from Lori
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