

Lake Pend Oreille Waterkeeper

Five-Year Strategic Plan

2015-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

Nestled in the northern tip of Idaho, surrounded by three mountain ranges and just 60 miles from the Canadian border, lies magnificent Lake Pend Oreille (pronounced Pon-do-ray). The primary source for Lake Pend Oreille is the Clark Fork River, which drains an extensive region of the Rocky Mountains in western Montana and northern Idaho. The Pend Oreille River flows out of the lake to the west, then turns north and empties into the Columbia River in Canada. At the southern end, Lake Pend Oreille drains into the Spokane Valley/Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer, a sole source aquifer for the drinking water and needs of the Spokane/Coeur d' Alene metropolitan area and it's approximately 600,000 inhabitants.

Lake Pend Oreille is the largest lake in Idaho and the fifth deepest lake in the United States at 1,158 feet deep. Legend has it that the name Pend Oreille, meaning ear pendant in French, was given by early French fur traders because of the ear decorations favored by the native Kalispel Indians, or perhaps the name referred to the shape of the lake which resembles an ear.

Lake Pend Oreille is vast and appears pristine, but it's not immune increasing threats of pollution and inappropriate uses. Lake Pend Oreille Waterkeeper (LPOW) is a non-profit organization located in Sandpoint, Idaho. Founded in 2009, LPOW works in the public interest to minimize water pollution in Lake Pend Oreille and its related waterbodies so that they remain swimmable, fishable and drinkable for future generations. LPOW's "jurisdiction" includes Lake Pend Oreille, the Pend Oreille River down to the Albeni Falls Dam, the Clark Fork River up to the Cabinet Gorge Dam, and all the tributaries that flow into the lake.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

To protect the water quality of the Clark Fork/Pend Oreille Watershed so that our local waterways remain swimmable, fishable and drinkable for future generations through education, community engagement and advocacy.

III. VISION STATEMENT

To defend clean water as a human right instead of a commodity for North Idaho communities.

IV. CORE VALUES

In striving to achieve our mission, the LPOW team seeks to be:

- A. Advocates – We advocate for sound practices and principles that will protect and preserve Lake Pend Oreille and its associated waterways.

- B. Aware – We foster awareness of the issues that impact the quality of local waterways in various stakeholders including community members, elected officials, agency representatives and tribal entities.
- C. Committed – We are committed to accomplishing our mission and achieving the goals and objectives of priority projects and initiatives.
- D. Consistent – We are consistent in our messaging, efforts and actions to achieve swimmable, fishable and drinkable waters.
- E. Honest – We are truthful in our methodology and communications in order to be recognized as a trusted source of water quality information.
- F. Grounded in integrity – We conduct ourselves with integrity as LPOW ambassadors to the community.
- G. Team oriented – We believe that teams accomplish more than individuals and promote a culture of collaboration.

V. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- A. Inspire, educate, and train community members, including youth, to understand and become stewards of local water resources.
- B. Uphold the Clean Water Act and other relevant laws to improve water quality by working to reduce or eliminate pollution from pesticide use, stormwater, municipal, industrial and agricultural waste, fossil fuel by rail transport, urban development, and other sources.
- C. To continue to work with local, state and federal agencies on water quality issues.
- D. Develop and implement a comprehensive monitoring program for Lake Pend Oreille, the Pend Oreille River and associated waterbodies to produce scientifically sound data useful for protection and restoration.
- E. Protect and restore wetlands and riparian habitats throughout the Clark Fork/Pend Oreille Watershed.
- F. Investigate and minimize future negative impacts to Lake Pend Oreille from out of state public and private water demands.
- G. Expand and diversify sources and amount of funding for the organization.
- H. Increase grassroots support for the organization through expanded membership and volunteerism.
- I. Enhance community outreach and organizational marketing such that we are recognized in the community as the number one local organization protecting the water quality of Lake Pend Oreille and its associated waterways.
- J. Enhance collaboration with like-minded organizations to advance programmatic and organizational initiatives.
- K. Maintain active participation in Waterkeeper Alliance.
- L. Strengthen and diversify Board membership, responsibility, and involvement.
- M. Be responsive to the changing landscape of local water quality issues.

IV. PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

- A. Advocacy/Enforcement: To improve water quality by advocating (and, when necessary, litigating) for increased regulatory control of water pollution and for stronger enforcement of water quality-related laws.**

1. Advocate that biological control of aquatic noxious plants is continually allowed as part of Idaho's Noxious Weed Law.
2. Advocate that local environmental impacts of fossil fuel by rail projects are sufficiently addressed and mitigated for.
3. Advocate for no new or expanded coal and crude oil export facilities, terminals, and refineries.
4. Advocate that discharge permits for local facilities (e.g. wastewater treatment plants) be stringent and ensure that facilities comply with said permits.
5. Advocate that local municipalities/county implement effective stormwater best management practices and implement low-impact development practices and projects.
6. Advocate that local municipalities/county and septic system owners/operators implement effective measures to reduce releases of sewage to the environment.
7. Utilize monitoring data and work with local/state agencies to tighten controls on polluted discharges.
8. Utilize monitoring data to identify polluters and secure remedies through agency advocacy and/or LPOW lawsuits.
9. Protect critical wetland and riparian habitat as it relates to water quality or ecosystem function, including through the formulation of Total Maximum Daily Load programs.
10. Advocate that Lake Pend Oreille is not utilized to recharge the Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer.
11. Advocate for a managed lake level that is protective of ecosystem function and minimizes erosion.
12. Establish a process for establishing new campaigns and issues to be addressed by LPOW that allows for a clear and defensible prioritization of efforts.
13. Establish metrics to guide LPOW in determining if and when litigation is necessary.

B. Monitoring: To strengthen LPOW's monitoring program to produce quality data that can be used by regulatory agencies or courts to improve water quality.

1. Establish a stronger "on the water" patrol to monitor "high risk" areas of Lake Pend Oreille and its associated waterways.
2. Expand the LPOW monitoring program to effectively identify point and non-point source problems by adding monitoring stations to the seasonal Water Quality Monitoring Program and begin to monitor storm water quality through the addition of a Storm Water Quality Monitoring Program.
3. Further develop monitoring programs as need arises.
4. Coordinate and integrate our monitoring efforts with those of other entities.

C. Education/Outreach: To expand education and outreach opportunities to engage greater numbers of people and influence a change in individual behaviors that cause water pollution and aquatic habitat degradation.

1. Conduct an in-the-classroom science education program for 5th and 6th grade students utilizing the lake model.
2. Conduct the Watershed Discovery (Day) Camp for 5th-7th grade students during the summer.
3. Develop and implement a five-year plan for educational programming to strategically expand into educating broader audiences on key water quality issues.

4. Improve the Water Quality Monitoring experience for volunteers by implementing volunteer surveys and incorporating relevant recommendations.
5. Keep online resources up to date and optimize accessibility to program information.
6. Develop and implement a citizen pollution watch training and monitoring program.
7. Conduct outreach to educate citizens, boaters, land-owners and businesses about practices which monitoring indicates may be impacting water quality.
8. Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to identify and engage all waterfront property owners.
9. Develop and implement comprehensive volunteer and membership programs that focus on participation and retention.
10. Expand volunteer base by 100 percent.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

A. Fundraising: To strengthen organizational capacity to increase funding for programs and general operations.

1. Develop and implement branding, marketing and communications plan to solidify our message and better communicate our identity, programs, effectiveness and uniqueness to the public, such that LPOW is the first organization people think of for protecting Lake Pend Oreille and its associated waterways.
2. Refine and implement the fundraising plan to increase membership and major donors by expanding appeals to existing members and major donors and prospecting for new ones; strategically targeting foundations, and local, state and federal agency funders and corporate sponsors as appropriate; and diversify sources of funding.
3. Optimize the format of the major LPOW event for maximum return and guest enjoyment; host smaller fundraising events, host major donor appreciation event(s); participate in/sponsor/ benefit from one or more other informal event.
4. Increase Board involvement in fundraising with the requirement of annual membership and a commitment to recruiting 5 new/recurring members per year.

B. Governance: To strengthen and diversify Board membership and responsibility.

1. Strategically recruit new members for the Board of Directors.
2. Establish relevant committees and encourage Board participation.
3. Establish annual board self-evaluation process and implement recommendations.
4. Review and develop policies as necessary.
5. Assure LPOW complies with Waterkeeper Alliance Quality Standards.

C. Administrative: To provide adequate support for staff, programs and organizational strategic initiatives.

1. Hire new staff as financially feasible and as needed in response to expanded programmatic efforts.
2. Establish and implement annual staff evaluation process.
3. Strive to increase employee compensation, including salary and benefits, on a yearly basis.

4. Ensure that staff, programs and organizational strategic initiatives have adequate administrative and technological support.
5. Establish effective working relationships with other Waterkeepers and other organizations.