



PRIEST LAKE WATER MANAGEMENT STUDY

FACT SHEET

The Priest Lake Water Management Study was initiated by the Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) to evaluate opportunities for improving the operation of the Priest Lake and Priest River system.

Purpose and Objective

- Preserving lake levels through the recreational season.
- This goal supports the local economy and meets current lake level requirements.
- It also identifies options to mitigate any adverse impacts to downstream river flows.

The Study Includes:

- Evaluation of alternatives to maintain required lake levels and river flows.
- Potential structural and operation modifications to the Priest Lake Outlet Dam.
- Analysis of options to improve access and navigable conditions for the Priest Lake Thorofare.

Public Involvement

The Idaho Water Resources Board is committed to meaningful participation by all stakeholders in the decision-making process. You are encouraged to visit the project website at www.idwr.idaho.gov/IWRB/projects/priest-lake/ for more information about the project, upcoming meetings, opportunities for public comment and other ways you can stay informed about the project. Throughout the length of the study (approximately 10 months) the public will have ongoing opportunities to respond and comment on any options that may be developed. We encourage you to contact The Project Team at any time with your questions and comments.

Project Study Area Description

- Lower Priest Lake is approximately 18 miles long, has a maximum depth greater than 300 feet, and has active storage space of approximately 76,000 acre-feet.
- It is connected to Upper Priest Lake by a three-mile long channel known as the “Thorofare,” which has long been used by the public for recreation and access to the upper lake.
- A 1,400-foot-long breakwater structure at the north end of Lower Priest Lake is intended to manage sediment from the upper lake, while providing wave and erosion protection to landowners at the north end of Lower Priest Lake.
- Priest Lake Dam was constructed in 1951 to maintain lake levels in Lower Priest Lake and manage downstream flows into Priest River. The current dam was constructed in 1978 to replace the deteriorating original dam. The dam is owned and operated by the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR). The dam is approximately 12 feet high with gates that regulate discharge. It does not have an emergency spillway.