



C. L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

May 8, 2013

Rear Admiral Keith A. Taylor
United States Coast Guard
Thirteenth District
915 2nd Ave. #2664
Seattle, WA 98174

Dear Admiral Taylor,

I am writing in regard to the permit application for the Race the Joe! jet boat race scheduled for May 17-19, 2013, in St. Maries, Idaho.

As required by the U.S. Coast Guard's (USCG) memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR), Benewah County and Shoshone County, race organizers acquired the necessary race permits from both counties and IDPR. After the permits were issued, one complaint was registered with IDPR regarding environmental impacts of the race to protected bald eagles and bull trout. As required under the MOU, IDPR alerted the Coast Guard of the complaint.

The USCG has begun an environmental assessment of the race route as part of the permitting process. This process is estimated to take about 135 days, which will make it impossible for the race to take place.

In an effort to provide the USGC with pertinent information, I have enclosed a document from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG). In this document, IDFG has provided its expert opinion that with logistical precautions there is no significant impact from jet boat activities to bald eagles or bull trout.

The Race the Joe! jet boat race has an important positive economic impact to the surrounding communities, and I encourage the USCG to assess the information provided by IDFG. As you can see from the biological science, the jet boat race should be permitted if proper steps are taken by race organizers.

Since the race is in less than two weeks, I am requesting the USCG use its discretion to assess the merits of the complaint and exercise its authority to issue a permit by May 10, 2013, to ensure that the race can take place.

I look forward to your timely and positive consideration to this matter.

As Always – Idaho, "Esto Perpetua"

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C.L. Butch Otter".

CLO/sg

C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor of Idaho




IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

600 S. Walnut/P.O. Box 25
Boise, Idaho 83707

C.L. "Butch" Otter/Governor
Virgil Moore/Director

MEMORANDUM

To: Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter
Bonnie Butler, Senior Special Assistant

From: Virgil Moore, Director 

Date: May 8, 2013

Subject: St. Joe River Jet Boat Race Permit

Bald eagle nests can be susceptible to abandonment if human disturbance occurs in proximity to the nest site. While the effects of disturbances may vary from one bald eagle pair to another, effects may vary due to type of disturbance. For the proposed jet boat races on the St. Joe River downstream from Calder there are two potential types of human disturbance – the noise and activity associated with boats racing up and down the river, and the noise and activity associated with spectators in proximity to the nest sites. Observations on other river systems (e.g., South Fork Snake River) suggest that bald eagles are often tolerant of boating activity passing by nest sites, and provided boats move past nest sites (as opposed to stopping at the nest site), eagles are not prone to leaving nest sites. Conversely, if either large or small groups of spectators are set up to watch races in close proximity to nest trees, the sustained disturbance may cause or contribute to nest abandonment. Therefore, we recommend that, if the races proceed, the following mitigation measures be adopted and enforced to minimize the potential for disturbance that could lead to nest abandonment:

- Establish a zone within a quarter mile radius of each nest site, to include both sides of the river, where race spectators are prohibited from gathering and/or parking their vehicles to watch the races. This is not intended to include any residents that may have dwellings within the prohibited area. It is intended to include photographers or race officials.
- The nest sites should be monitored prior to and after the races.

We do not believe the proposed races will have any significant impact on bull trout in the migration corridor.