



Email: [Board@BVNABoise.org](mailto:Board@BVNABoise.org)

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Kevin Webb  
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Samantha Owen  
Project Manager, McMillen Jacobs  
[owen@mcmjac.com](mailto:owen@mcmjac.com)

RE: Barber Dam Re-licensing Recreation Study Plan

Dear Mr. Webb and Ms. Owen,

As a means of background, the Barber Valley Neighborhood Association (BVNA) is the City of Boise's Registered Neighborhood Association representing the Barber Valley community, where the Barber Dam is located. Our community's residents experience unique outdoor recreation opportunities, and proximity to and appreciation for wildlife and Boise's finest natural resources and structured, active, and effective conservation programs. BVNA works collaboratively with the numerous governmental agencies and developers, and represents the residents residing in the valley. We advocate for smart and efficient development of our growing neighborhood.

We are extremely surprised to learn that a Draft Recreation Study Plan had been issued for public comment without our knowledge (or apparently the Idaho Foundation for Parks & Lands' either)! *We formally request to be added to your stakeholder list at this time for any future studies.* Please add [Board@BVNABoise.org](mailto:Board@BVNABoise.org) to your stakeholder list.

Your public outreach web site, <https://mcmjac.com/barberdamrelicensing/>, does not have any of the draft study plans posted on it, beyond the one for water quality monitoring. We were only made aware of the Recreation Draft Study Plan because of a neighbor, who heard about it from the Boise River Enhancement Network (BREN). As good neighbors, many of whom can see Barber Dam from their homes, we are terribly disappointed at the lack of proactive public outreach that has been conducted, as well as the conclusions contained in the draft plan. We think you will find that many of our members appreciate the historic, working powerhouse in our

community, and in fact, the structure is incorporated into the BVNA logo, which you can see above, along with a deer, reflecting our commitment to living with wildlife.

Please accept our comments on the Draft Recreation Study Plan, as follows:

1. The plan shows two “Highway 21 Access Points” to the river. The downstream access point is situated such that there is trespass across two private properties: one bordering Warm Springs Avenue, and the other bordering the Boise River. Having this designated as an access point for planning purposes violates private property rights and encourages abuse of property. It is already difficult to police this area, and putting it on a map provides unwarranted and irresponsible legitimacy.
2. This illegal access point is at a dangerous spot, where there is no sight distance on the Greenbelt. Our neighborhood association members already witness collisions and issues here between pedestrians and bicyclists. Although the approach was improved with the recent Ada County upgrade of the Greenbelt, it is a problematic area that has only been made worse recently with the trespass that is occurring.
3. People might desire a higher level of recreation than the wildlife can tolerate. We have been in the thick of managing exactly this type of balancing question with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and the foothills Boise River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). It is even more critical here, as the Barber Pool offers the only water-based habitat. We suggest that we look beyond what the people want, to what the wildlife needs. Your study plan only focuses on human desire for expanded recreation and does not capture this balance.
4. Our neighborhood is bisected by wildlife corridors connecting the WMA to the Barber Pool. Not only does this represent economic loss in terms of developable land and taxes, many of our residents have proactively contributed towards conservation in the neighborhood. From neighbors fundraising for the Twelve Acres Gateway reserve, to our most recent purchase of the Peace Valley Overlook next to the Maynard Gulch Wildlife Corridor, we are a neighborhood that has put its money where its mouth is for conservation. We invest in wildlife, and we do not want to see that go to waste. Your plan does not reflect invested value, but only extracted value; a “what’s in it for me” approach that does not match our neighborhood’s values.

While we understand the desire to recreate and enjoy the Boise River, we believe that this wildlife refuge needs to be protected. The Boise River can be accessed upstream and downstream of the BPCA, so we believe that this small stretch of riverside land should be protected from humans and their pets. This still provides recreational opportunities - it is noted on your own map there is a river access point just upstream by the Highway 21 bridge, so river users can still paddle or wade down this stretch of the river all the way through the BPCA, they just can't leave the river and enter the BPCA above the high water line.

Furthermore, there are a myriad of wildlife viewing opportunities from the greenbelt itself as it passes above the BPCA. Species commonly seen from the greenbelt include deer, bobcats,

coyotes, cottontails, marmots, bald eagles, red tail hawks, osprey, great horned owls, herons, and numerous waterfowl. *The BPCA is a special place that no other city in the U.S. has.*

We are proud to be home to the Intermountain Bird Observatory (IBO) and support their efforts for education and enhancement. We understand and support the mission of the Idaho Foundation for Parks and Lands (IFPL) as well for conservation. The IBO and IFPL have come to our monthly meetings to share their objectives and solicit neighborhood input. Our meetings are challenged right now because of COVID-19, but if you contact us at the board address provided above, we'd welcome you to do the same as Idaho "opens" and we are allowed to meet face to face again.

Thank you for considering our comments and look forward to you doing the right thing for the conservation of wildlife and the natural jewel that this area is. We would encourage a response in writing or as a comment to your proposal.

Sincerely,  
The Barber Valley Neighborhood Association Board of Directors

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