

## Twin Falls Times-News October 13, 2008

Times-News writer

### Bailing out the camp

#### Proposed Stanley Lake changes criticized

By Nate Poppino

Times-News writer

In as little as four years, the campground at the inlet of Stanley Lake may look completely different.

And Eric McQuay's heard from plenty of folks upset about the idea.

They're reactions that McQuay, the recreation program manager for the U.S. Forest Service's Stanley Ranger Station, grasps quite well. He's camped at the site for nine years himself.

"Yes, they're beautiful," he said Friday of the lakeside camping and other scenic amenities. "I absolutely understand that."

But the site is no longer practical, he said. Flooding washes out roads and leaves campsites inaccessible until mid-July. The solution - filling in more of the wetland area - is much harder to get approval for now than it was 50 years ago.

Aging hand pumps can't be replaced because they're within 100 feet of standing water, violating current standards. The same goes for the site's outhouses, "way past needing replacement," McQuay said. And the road to the current boat ramp runs through a wetland full of beavers, meaning Forest Service employees have to take the time each day to clean out its culverts.

The solution, as proposed by the Forest Service, is a complete overhaul of the camp. The plan includes a new 25- to 30-unit campground, a sturdier boat ramp with better parking and a new walking and bike path connecting the area with the nearby Stanley Lake Campground. Some current campsites would be preserved as picnic areas, and some other campsites dispersed near the lake outlet would be closed to reduce their combined effect on the land.

The idea was first broached in a five-year plan of proposed actions developed in 2006 and available on the Forest Service Web site. But it didn't receive much attention from the public until this summer, when McQuay said he started seeking input from campers at the site.

A notice he said was posted at the campground laid out the timeline - a final decision by the winter of 2009-2010, construction completed in 2012. Public input, it read, is welcome at any time, but would be best if received by Sept. 30.

But somewhere, it seems, communication broke down. One example: In letters sent to the Times-News by Wayne Roderick of Chubbuck and Randy Roderick of Boise, the father and son listed a variety of arguments against the change. The proposal will completely shut down access to free campsites and a sandbar area, they wrote, and will destroy the undeveloped feel of the area. The decision, they argue, was already made without public input.

"I think you will be surprised when the need for law enforcement at Stanley goes from among the lowest to among the highest when your crowded campground places campers in a KOA-type atmosphere away from the lake," Randy Roderick wrote in a letter to McQuay.

The Rodericks and others have taken the repeated use of "hardened" in the plan to mean the Forest Service will install a large concrete boat dock and similar facilities to those found at other lakes, McQuay said. But that's just not true, he said. The new boat ramp, bike trail and other amenities would be made with gravel at most, he said. And free campsites would still be available, among access to other areas.

"We're not trying to develop it into a Redfish or even an Alturas," he said.

And while he still hopes to start the official scoping process this fall, that may not even work, he said, thanks to staffing problems. He is transferring to another job at the end of November.

It's a frustrating twist, he said, to an improvement project the site desperately needs.

"It's still an important project to us," he said. "(But) we don't want to get started on something that we're not going to be able to complete."

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#### Learn more

**To receive** the scoping letter once it's released or to comment on the Stanley proposal, contact Eric McQuay or Kelly Jardine at the Stanley Ranger Station, HC64 Box 9900, Stanley, ID 83278. Phone: 208-774-3000. Fax: 208-774-3003. E-mail: [emcquay@fs.fed.us](mailto:emcquay@fs.fed.us).

**A notice** will also appear in newspapers across southern Idaho when the public scoping process begins.

**Visit** <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/sawtooth/projects/> and scroll down to find the five-year plan and other information on Forest Service projects.