



Janna Brown <janna.brown@bonnercountyid.gov>

[EXT SENDER] RE: Bonner County Planning - VA0027-25 Agency Review - Variance - Administrative - Shoreline setback

1 message

Horsmon, Merritt <merritt.horsmon@idfg.idaho.gov>
To: Bonner County Planning <planning@bonnercountyid.gov>

Mon, Sep 29, 2025 at 1:22 PM

Hi Janna,

Please find corresponding Idaho Department of Fish and Game comments attached.

Thank you,

Merritt Horsmon

Regional Technical Assistance Manager

Panhandle Region

2885 W. Kathleen Ave.

Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

208.769.1414 office

208.251.4509 mobile

merritt.horsmon@idfg.idaho.gov**From:** Bonner County Planning <planning@bonnercountyid.gov>**Sent:** Friday, September 05, 2025 9:00 AM**To:** Alan Brinkmeier <alan.brinkmeier@bonnercountyid.gov>; Amber Burgess <clerk@ebsewerdistrict.com>; Army Corps of Engineers <CENWW-RD-CDA@usace.army.mil>; Avista Copr - Jay West <jay.west@avistacorp.com>; Avista Corp - Peggy George <peggy.george@avistacorp.com>; Becky Meyer <becky.meyer@lposd.org>; Bill Berg <billb@bbsewer.org>; Bonner County Assessors <assessorsgroup@bonnercountyid.gov>; BONNER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

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Cc: David Fisher <david.fisher@bonnercountyid.gov>; Alexander Feyen <alexander.feyen@bonnercountyid.gov>; Dylan Young <dylan.young@bonnercountyid.gov>

Subject: Bonner County Planning - VA0027-25 Agency Review - Variance - Administrative - Shoreline setback

CAUTION: This email originated outside the State of Idaho network. Verify links and attachments **BEFORE** you click or open, even if you recognize and/or trust the sender. Contact your agency service desk with any concerns.

The above-named application has been submitted to the Bonner County Planning Department for processing.

Please review the application relative to your agency's area of expertise and include any recommended conditions of approval and supporting code sections. Please see attached for details.

Thank you,

Janna Brown, Administrative Assistant III

Bonner County Planning Department

208-265-1458 ext - 1252

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BC_VA0027-25_PriestLake_WaterfrontSetback.pdf
1013K



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

PANHANDLE REGION
2885 West Kathleen Avenue
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83815

Brad Little / Governor
Jim Fredericks / Director

September 29, 2025

Bonner County Planning Department
1500 Highway 2, Suite 208
Sandpoint, ID 83864

REFERENCE: VA0027-25 – Waterfront Setback

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) has reviewed the above request for a waterfront setback variance for 28 feet where 40 feet is required for the construction of a single-family dwelling. The purpose of these comments is to assist the decision-making authority by providing technical information that can be used to minimize fish and wildlife impacts.

Bonner County Code (subchapter 7.1) states the purpose of the shoreline setback chapter is to preserve both the quality and quantity of Bonner County water resources. Additionally, it aims to reduce erosion and sedimentation into waterways.

Bonner County Code (subchapter 7.2) states that the purpose of the subchapter is to protect property, surface water and groundwater against significant adverse effects from excavation, filling, clearing, unstable earthworks, soil erosion, sedimentation and stormwater runoff, and to provide maximum safety in the development and design of building sites, roads and other service amenities.

Although we recognize that there are extenuating circumstances that justify reducing waterfront setbacks, they remain an important tool for the protection of water quality. Additionally, it is difficult to provide meaningful setback recommendations after construction is already under way. Mitigation for reduced waterfront setbacks can be in the form of a stormwater and erosion plan, biofiltration swales, or riparian buffers.

Should this variance be granted, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game recommends the following:

- The applicant retains as much of the native riparian vegetation as practical to maintain a riparian buffer between new construction and Priest Lake. A riparian vegetation buffer functions efficiently as a biofiltration agent, and does not require the fertilizers, pesticides, and watering that lawns require. Additionally, riparian vegetation has complex root systems that can withstand increased wave action more effectively than banks that are sparsely vegetated, or grass covered. Additional native plantings on disturbed soil or

erosive banks would help to ameliorate any negative effects to water quality and sedimentation.

- Adhering to the most up to date erosion and sedimentation siltation BMPs during construction and maintaining or establishing riparian buffers. One resource to find and evaluate appropriate BMPs is the Idaho DEQ *Idaho Catalog of Storm Water Best Management Practices* available online at:
<https://www2.deq.idaho.gov/admin/LEIA/api/document/download/14968>
- An approved stormwater plan, prepared by a licensed professional engineer, be implemented.

If variances to Bonner County Code become regularly allowed, we would expect that to lead to modified shorelines, increased nutrient inputs into Priest Lake, declines in water quality, and subsequent negative affects to the fishery.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and please do not hesitate to contact the Panhandle Regional Office with additional questions or continued collaboration. We welcome the opportunity to work further with the county on this and other projects that may affect Idaho's fish and wildlife.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carson Watkins for CW". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Carson Watkins
Panhandle Regional Supervisor

CJW:RR:MH
C: eFile M:\