



*Front page figure depicts those features identified on 10 different historic maps dated between 1898 and 1940 that have potential to be identified on the ground during field inventory.*

## **Priest Lake Project Executive Summary**

The Priest Lake Project involved background research, development of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) base layers, research design development, and field work along Priest Lake, Idaho to better understand and interpret past human use associated with this important geographic feature. The Northern Region of the Forest Service (R-1) grant for \$20,000 was matched by over \$20,000 of salary and expenditures by the Idaho Panhandle National Forest during FY 2008. The Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, Eastern Washington University and Priest Lake Museum partnered with the Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF) to complete this year's activities. Accomplishments for FY 2008 included funding a graduate student from Eastern Washington University to complete: 1) Archival research at two-Forest Service facilities, three museums and seven libraries; 2) development of a 53-page annotated bibliography describing documents, maps and photographs regarding the Priest Lake Ranger District; 3) GIS map preparation for previously recorded archaeological and historical sites, Section 106 review projects, bibliographic references, and features identified on nine historic maps for the Priest Lake Ranger District; and 4) initial development of a GIS layer that modeled high probability zones for cultural properties on Federal lands along Priest Lake. This data was used to direct a week long field project that included intensive visual inspection and excavation of 81 shovel probes along one half kilometer of Priest Lake shore line that resulted in the identification of two archaeological sites.

## Priest Lake Project Summary

The Priest Lake area (Figure 1) has a long history of human use that has significant research potential. American Indian habitation and resource exploitation are documented archaeologically for at least the last 5100 Radiocarbon years. Today, it is a significant part of the aboriginal territory of both the Kalispel Tribe of Indians and Kootenai Tribe of Idaho. Starting with Father DeSmet the Priest Lake area contains over 150 years of Euro-American history, including: Fur trapping, settlement, mining, logging, recreation, CCC and Forest Service development. This resource provides significant research and interpretive potential for the community of Priest Lake in the spirit of the Preserve America program. In addition, the project is a priority given that the area is threatened by two of the Chief's "Four Threats": Dispersed recreation use and wildfire damage within an essentially urban interface.

Today, this area draws recreationists from local, regional and national population centers who come to camp, fish, hunt, boat, ski, and snowmobile on the archaeological, traditional and historical sites of years past. Besides dispersed and day use there are 121 recreation residences, several resorts, and numerous campgrounds located along the shoreline. This use has the potential to damage or destroy significant archaeological, traditional, and historical sites. Trends appear to be heading for more, bigger and better recreation opportunities in the Priest Lake area that will place additional pressure on these fragile and irreplaceable resources.

While fuels reduction projects are underway in the Priest Lake area additional work is needed to protect this heavily populated zone from the threat of wildfire. Intensive treatment of forested zones for fuels reduction and wildfire has the potential to damage the historical and archaeological resources on the islands and along the shores of the lake. With expected drying trends, forest disease and increased public use of the islands, lake shores and forested slopes of Priest Lake, wildfire is becoming a more serious threat every year that will contribute to a downward trend in the condition of historical and archaeological resources around the lake.

To date, there has never been an intensive examination of the islands and entire western shoreline of Priest and Upper Priest Lakes in Federal ownership. In order to document the patterns of past human use and identify significant archaeological, traditional and historical sites a complete and thorough inventory of the Priest and Upper Lake western shoreline is proposed. The project involves visual inspection, and subsurface testing of all potential landforms within Federal ownership to identify, record and evaluate traces of past human use for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. The results of the inventory will be used to interpret the history of the Priest Lake area for the public and better manage significant resources for future generations. By partnering with recreation staff, local universities, the Idaho SHPO, affected federally recognized Indian Tribes and local historical associations and communities the remnants of the Priest Lake past can be recognized, protected, preserved through documentation, and interpreted for public benefit.

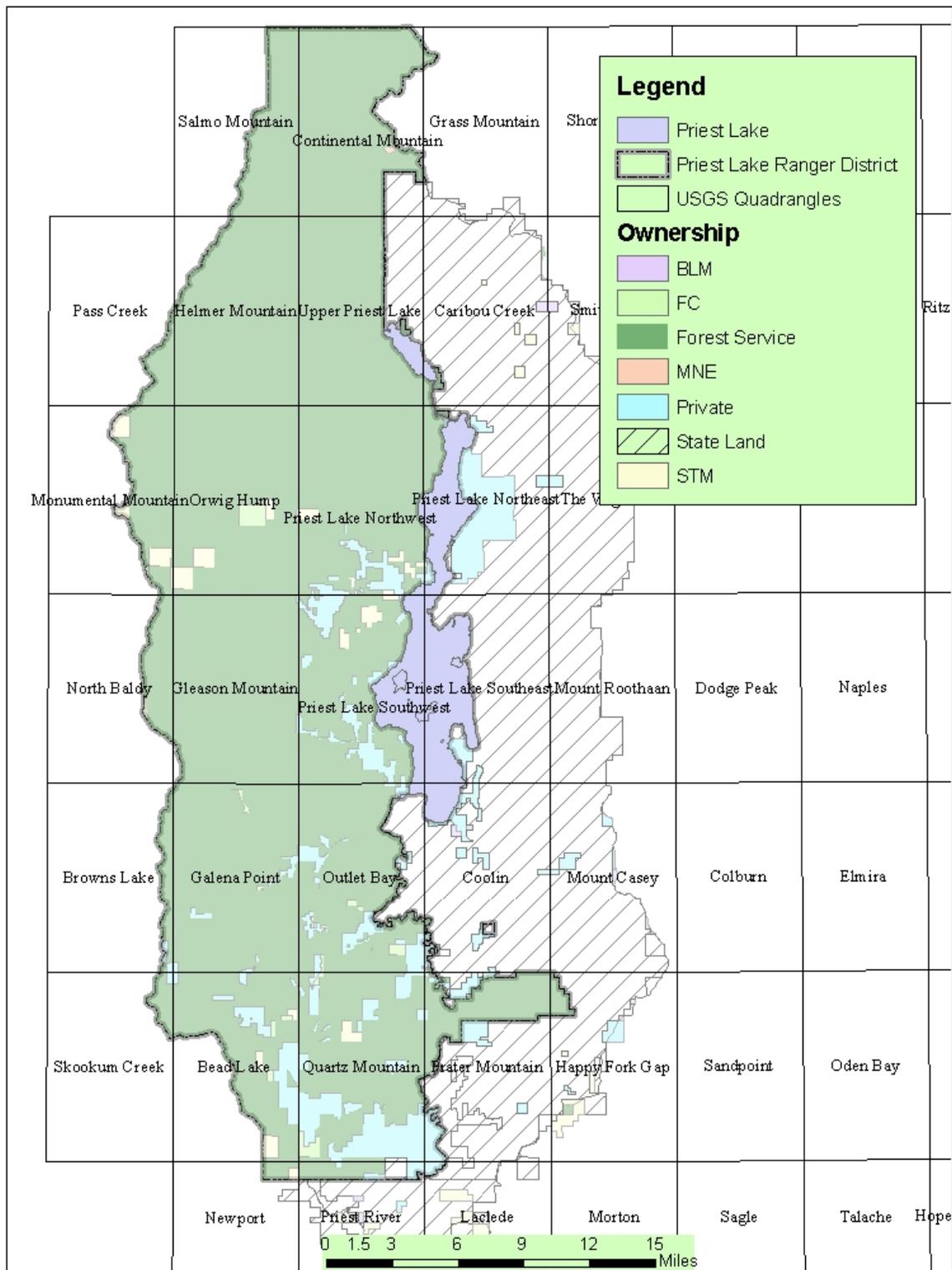
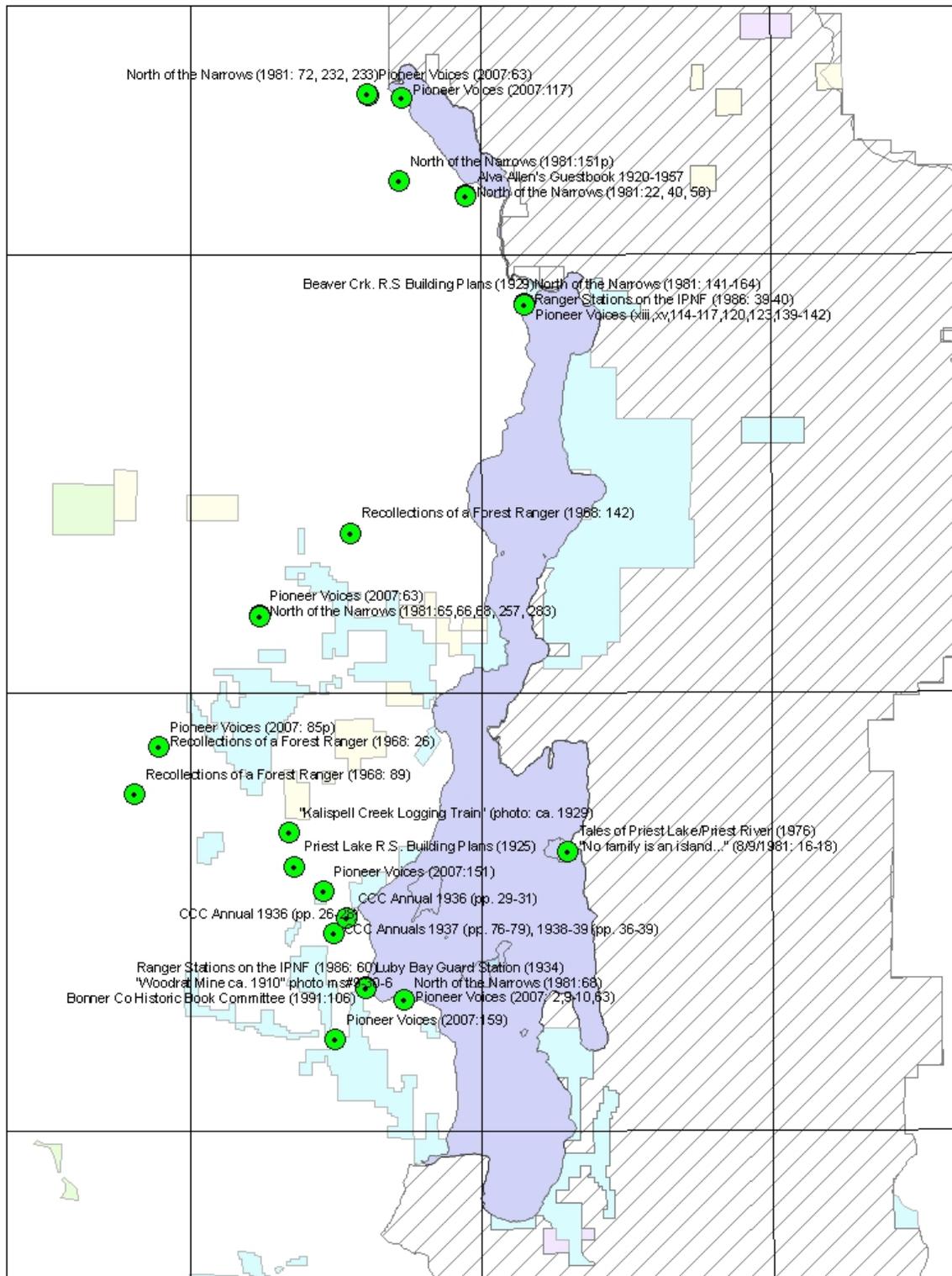


Figure 1. Priest Lake Project area map showing associated USGS quadrangles.

The project is presently scheduled from 2008 through 2010, at which time its future will be evaluated for longer term implementation. In 2008, archival research at two-Forest Service facilities, three museums and seven libraries was undertaken (Table 1) and a 58-page annotated bibliography was prepared. Previously recorded archaeological and historical sites, Section 106 review projects, bibliographic references, and features identified on nine historic maps for the Priest Lake Ranger District were digitized into multiple GIS layers (Figure 2). In September, a one-week field project was conducted to test the model. Eighty-one shovel probes were excavated by three teams along one-half kilometer of Priest Lake shoreline (Figures 3-6). The boundaries of two archaeological sites were confirmed through recovery of a small number of lithic (stone) artifacts and historic trash. Unfortunately, due to a late season budget freeze, scheduled underwater inventory could not be completed. In 2009 and 2010, it is envisioned that a summary historic context/overview document will be produced, along with more in depth papers about certain aspects of the local history. Additional historic archival research and field inventory designs will be developed and refined as necessary. This will allow field inventory work to be focused on high probability zones along the lake to test the inventory design and help us understand past patterns of land use.

**Table 1. Archival resources and responsibilities.**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Northern Region HQ	FS	Catalog of resources is available, but have not been individually reviewed
IPNF HQ	FS	Initial review of resource completed
Priest Lake Ranger District	FS	Initial review of resource completed
Priest Lake Museum	FS/Museum Board	Initial review of resource undertaken, but not completed
Priest Lake Library	FS	Initial review of resource completed, but still need to acquire documents
North Idaho Museum	FS	Initial review of resource completed, but still need to acquire documents
Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture	FS	Initial review of resource completed, but still need to acquire documents
Gonzaga University	FS	Initial review of resource completed, but still need to acquire documents
Idaho State University	FS	Initial review of resource completed, but still need to acquire documents
Eastern Washington University	FS/EWU	Initial review of resource completed, but still need to acquire documents
Washington State University	FS	Initial review of resource completed, but still need to acquire documents
Whitworth College	FS	Initial review of resource completed, but still need to acquire documents
North Idaho College	FS	Initial review of resource completed, but still need to acquire documents
State of Idaho Archives	Idaho SHPO	Review scheduled for FY '09; site forms in pdf format acquired and linked to GIS
National Archives	FS	Catalog of resources available, but have not been individually reviewed
Kalispel Tribe of Indians	Tribal Archaeologist	Unpublished ethnographic material provided, review scheduled for FY '09



**Figure 2. Example of GIS layer showing the initial review of potential historic sites associated with archival references.**



**Figure 3. Tom Sandberg and Jyl Wheaton-Abraham excavating a shovel probe near the present lake level.**



**Figure 4. Sarah Wilson and Jamie Litzkow excavating a shovel probe on upper beach zone.**



Figure 5. Example of shovel probe located in forested zone (at screen), with other beach zones in background.



Figure 6. Priest Lake Project shovel probe locations excavated for FY '08 season overlain on aerial photo in GIS.