

COAST GUARD PERMITS “RACE THE JOE!” EVENT

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter announced today that wildlife concerns had been addressed and the U.S. Coast Guard has issued a permit for the second annual “Race the Joe!” jet boat race on northern Idaho’s St. Joe River. The race is scheduled for May 17-19 near St. Maries.

The event was threatened when the Coast Guard announced early last week that it needed to conduct an environmental analysis of the race’s impact on protected bald eagles and bull trout. The analysis would have taken too long for the race to go on as scheduled.

Commander Eric Belleque, chief of external affairs for Coast Guard District 13, said a marine permit for the Race the Joe! event was issued today.

Last Friday, Belleque said, “Environmental concerns identified by the Coast Guard during its NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) review are being addressed by requirements imposed by federal, state, and local agencies on the event sponsors. As environmental stewards, the Coast Guard is responsible for ensuring that our marine event permit process complies with the letter and spirit of the law. Based on the information we have at this time, the Coast Guard is confident that a marine event permit will be issued early next week.”

Governor Otter, Senators Jim Risch and Mike Crapo and Congressman Raul Labrador wrote to Coast Guard Rear Admiral Keith Taylor in Seattle earlier last week asking him to use his authority to allow the race to go on as planned. Governor Otter also included a memo from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game with information on how the potential wildlife impacts could be mitigated.

Mark Warbis/Governor’s Office news release