

Tribe, DEQ, Counties agree to Lake Management Plan meetings

PLUMMER – The Coeur d’Alene Tribe, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and Kootenai, Benewah, and Shoshone counties have agreed to hold quarterly meetings to coordinate the Lake Management Plan.

The meetings are intended to provide a forum for DEQ, the Tribe, and the counties to work through the specifics of the plan. The LMP has been amended to include language that provides for quarterly meetings among leaders of the Tribe, State and the three counties. The meetings’ host and location will be rotated.

“The new language inserted into the LMP will give the counties a voice,” said Coeur d’Alene Tribe Chairman Chief J. Allan. “The Tribe and the State have pledged to make the Lake Management Plan work, and having positive contributions from the counties will be constructive.”

Chairman Allan further stated “Protecting the lake is the most important issue and is one that we all agree must be done.”

Toni Hardesty, Director of DEQ, added that “this change in the plan has provided a way for everyone to agree on a process for coordinating the LMP.”

Jack Buell, Benewah County Commissioner, agreed with the amendments and said “Benewah County thinks we can make the LMP work with this process.”

“The counties now have the ability to frankly and openly discuss our concerns and suggestions for the LMP face to face with the key decision makers from the Tribe and DEQ,” said Kootenai County Commissioner Rick Currie. “While this does not mean the Counties fully endorse the LMP, it does provide a vehicle by which we can hopefully get there.”

Shoshone County Commissioner Jon Cantamessa further added “the people, businesses, and industry of our counties need a voice in the process of protecting water quality of the lake and its tributaries. This should be a positive process for all our citizens.”

The Lake Management Plan, as amended, will be signed by Coeur d’Alene Tribe Chairman Chief J. Allan and Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter in the coming weeks.