



Pend Oreille Rowing & Paddling Association

Spring 2025
www.porpa.org

4th Annual PORPA Sprints on the Priest River Redux!

In 2025 we will host a re-do of the 4th Annual PORPA Sprints. Unforeseen delays in construction at the Priest River Recreation Area (Mudhole) resulted in our decision to cancel the 2024 Sprints.

The good news is, the beautiful Mudhole is reopened with better roads and other improvements and PORPA is already working with the US Army Corps of Engineers to hold this popular event on **Saturday August 9, 2025. SAVE the DATE NOW!**

The PORPA Sprints on the Priest River welcomes non-motorized boaters of all types (kayaks, paddleboards, canoes, rowing shells, etc.) and all ages fun races on the Priest River in front of family and friends on the beach. The marquis event is a relay race of four non-motorized craft (at least 3 different craft and one youth per team) using a floating dog frisbee as a "baton". It is a super fun day - mark your calendar and plan to participate and/or volunteer.

Sponsors and donors provide free registration and t-shirts for youth up to 18 years old, a free BBQ lunch/awards ceremony, and safety needs. A cadre of volunteers provide 100's of hours for marketing, hospitality, race coordination, safety protocols, and lunch prep and clean up.

PORPA desires to have 25% more kids participate in 2025, as a result, adults and rowers will be limited to two events. PORPA will have some youth kayaks to lend to kids who do not have their own equipment. If you have kayaks or stand-up paddle boards, you are willing to lend to PORPA for this event please let us know.

PORPA is grateful for our continuing sponsors and donors (Kalispe Tribe Giving Fund, Aerocet, Expect-A-Lot Signs, Eagles Nest Motel, Selkirk Ace Hardware, Priest Gardens, Ivory Dental, Synergy Design, and others).

Donations and volunteers are needed, **please email secretary@porpa.org** with your interest. More information on registration will be available at www.porpa.org.



Dues Renewal Deadline: May 31

Renew your dues online at: www.porpa.org under the Membership and Schedule Registration tab. Please be sure to verify email address when renewing. Contact PORPA board members at: secretary@porpa.org.

New Member Fee (per adult rower)	\$100
Family Rowing	\$300
Individual Rowing	\$200
Junior Rowing	\$65
Social/Paddling Membership	\$20

PORPA Board Members:

Gayne Sears - *President*, **Erwin Muller** - *Secretary/Treasurer*,
Cat Trimmingham - *Safety Officer*, **Debbie Foersch** - *Assistant Treasurer*,
Guy Thomas - *Advisor*



Warren Foersch Award

Warren Foersch Award was introduced in 2019 to honor our now departed friend Warren Foersch in recognition of his spirit of prevailing against all odds with never ending optimism and commitment. This award honors the PORPA member who provided benefit to the organization, improved their personal rowing technique/performance, and added value to the sport of rowing.

The 2024 award goes to Señor Erwin Muller. To say Erwin Muller has been instrumental in the success of PORPA these past 10 years is a huge understatement. From stroking the first eight in 2014 to providing dozens of new rowers with free introduction to rowing classes' he has been the backbone and lifeblood of our small but determined group of rowers, paddlers, and supporters. A short list of the benefits PORPA has received due to his efforts are coaching, boat maintenance, activity coordination, equipment maintenance and storage, Board Secretary, construction engineer, parade driver, PORPA Sprints race coordinator, BBQ master, and all-around general merriment provider.

Regarding the criteria to show improvement in personal rowing technique: Erwin claims he continues to improve, but since no one will debate with him on this issue we just have to take his word for it. We suspect his boat mates in the 2018 men's coxed four (Foersch, Tuddenham, Miller, Muller, Barnwell) might have taken it up with him, but it is likely we will never know. Erwin, we cheer you on no matter your claims!

**“There is no strength
Without unity”**

Erwin has been instrumental in adding value to the sport of rowing in the Inland NW. He organized rowing excursions to places like the Upper Priest Lake Thorofare, Spirit Lake, and Sullivan Lake. He traveled to Oregon to pick up boats donated to PORPA and is dedicated to local culture and tradition by naming PORPA boats using native language. Erwin initiated the Warren Foersch Award in honor of our dear past President in recognition of Warren's spirit of prevailing against all odds with never ending optimism and commitment. This award has become an endearing and important PORPA tradition. **Many thanks from a grateful membership for your dedication and unending willingness to support and promote rowing and paddling in Northern Idaho.**

2025 Rowing Opportunities

Every weekend (starting mid-June) there will be an all-club outing in the morning at the Mudhole. Time TBD but likely a 7-8 am start time. All who show up will get to row. We will also plan a Family Day, and social gatherings. Weekday rowing will be available and a groups of rowers can organize rowing sessions by making reservations by logging into www.porpa.org "Sports Engine" for the boat(s) they'd like to take out. There is an effort to develop womens and mens rowing "teams" who will train together for possible racing. If you are interested in any of these options please email secretary@porpoa.org.

Partnership with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

PORPA board of directors is proud to announce the receipt of a 5-year term Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the US Army Corps of Engineers. This MOU recognizes our mutually agreed goals and long-term partnership to store our equipment and hold the same activities as we have for the past 10-years with the possibility of expanding to other uses and/or facilities. PORPA appreciates working with the Corps of Engineers and strives to bring water safety and non-motorized boating opportunities to more people in the area. The Corps staff asked PORPA to consider developing a "Friends of the Pend Oreille" organization to aid the USACE in meeting the current and future needs of visitors and locals. It is an exciting idea- anyone interested in this please contact secretary@porpa.org.





Water Safety and Swim

2025 will mark the 3rd year of providing free swim lessons to families in the Priest River/Oldtown/Newport area. Over 200 kids registered in 2024! The 2025 lessons will be held August 5-21, Tuesdays thru Thursdays at the Riley Creek Recreation Area in Laclede, ID.

The partnership between PORPA, the Sandpoint Long Bridge Swim Association (LBS), and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to provide these free lessons is strong and successful! LBS provides funding for instructor pay and liability insurance; PORPA provides marketing, instructor oversight, registration, and coordination with the USACE; and the USACE provides permits for use of the Riley Creek swim beach, cordons off the swim lesson site, and responds to site needs.

PORPA is looking for swim instructors (paid positions) for this very popular program. Applicants for lead instructor positions should have experience teaching swimming to kids. Lifeguard training is not required. Teens are encouraged to apply if they are comfortable working with kids and can swim. Send an email of interest to secretary@porpa.org. We are thankful for the energy, professionalism, and dedication lead swim instructor Sean Bostrom has invested in this effort. PORPA, LBS, and the Army Corps of Engineers are proud to offer this life saving program to families. More information: www.priestriverwimlessons.com.



Youth Kayaks

PORPA has acquired two youth sit-upon kayaks for loan to members. Please contact Gayne Sears at least 24 hours in advance to reserve, as we will not be leaving them at the Mudhole due to potential for theft. Families will need to bring their own youth life jacket or borrow one from the Corps of Engineers at the boat ramp.



Safety Corner

The sun has started to show itself and temps are warming up!

In 2025, we will continue pushing for safety to be our number one priority. Besides all members being requested to watch the US Rowing safety video again, we will be conducting swim-tests, flip tests for members rowing singles, PFD drills for members missing this certification and we will introduce SafeSport to our organization.

USRowing is the National Governing Body for the sport of rowing under The Olympic and Paralympic Movement and since PORPA is not a member, we can choose how to train our members to be SafeSport compliant. PORPA will need to develop a series of guidelines on how to report and respond to any allegations of abuse (of both minors and adults).

We will require our members to self-attest their involvement with minors, Cat (our Safety Officer) created a Google Form, so that we all can self-attest. Some of our members will be required to be SafeSport qualified.

REMINDER: Before heading out to the water, be sure to check weather. Wind, water conditions and temperatures can all be factors in a successful and safe rowing session. Be sure to row/paddle with a buddy. Here's to a great season!



Assistant Treasurer

With Sheila Thomas stepping away as Assistant Treasurer and Director of Promotions, PORPA welcomes and thanks Debbie Foersch for stepping into this important club position. Many thanks Debbie!

Promotions Director Needed

PORPA is gaining a positive presence in the local area thanks to the press releases, advertisements, and outreach accomplished by outgoing Director Sheila Thomas. PORPA could use your help to keep this effort alive and build on our successes. Your assistance is much appreciated. Sheila has offered to train/assist anyone who wishes to pick up where she left off. Email: Sheila@synergystudio.net, Cell: 509.499.5414.

Introduction to Rowing Sessions to be Expanded

Allison Zimmerman has volunteered to enhance our Introduction to Rowing sessions to a Learn to Row program. Participants in the Introduction to Rowing now have the option to attend a Learn to Row program which provides a structured, more detailed instruction to rowing. If you know of somebody that is interested in either the Introduction to Rowing or the new Learn to Row program, please contact Erwin at secretary@porpa.org. The first session will begin during Maintenance Day weekend.

Boat Maintenance and Annual Meeting June 14

Let's get this season started! SAVE the date for maintenance and team building. We will begin a full day early on the 14th with cleaning, prep and inspection of boats and equipment. Later we will set up racks and move boats to the Mudhole and followup with late afternoon annual meeting and potluck BBQ. For more information: Erwin Muller secretary@PORPA.org.



Nelson Sprints

In August Okju Cha and Erwin Muller decided to head north and participate at the Nelson Sprints in British Columbia. Leaving Priest River with the [npišpm](#), they planned to row the 1000m race as Mixed Masters 2x. The border crossing was an adventure since vessels coming from Idaho required inspection for invasive species. Once it was established that the shell had only been on the Pend Oreille and Priest River waters, they were cleared to pass. Erwin and Okju camped at the Nelson City campground and rigged up the boat Friday evening before the event. Early on August 10th, they showed up at the venue, registered and then Erwin was invited to row a Men's Master 2x with a Nelson rower Peter. Next it was time for Okju and Erwin to row. They started strong but when a rogue wake hit them from the side, the boat was de-stabilized, and their rhythm was lost. Okju and Erwin managed to finish the race and were thankful to do so without capsizing!



"After the races we joined the BBQ and the award ceremony. We met many rowers from different clubs in BC and they all seemed interested in coming to Idaho for the PORPA Sprints on the Priest River in 2025. Since the Nelson Sprints will be on August 16, one week after PORPA Sprints, we are looking forward to participating in both." Said Erwin.

Preorder your PORPA tshirts!



T-shirts, hats, visors and other Porpa gear are available for sale. Contact: secretary@porpa.org for more information.



PORPA acknowledges that we are in the homelands of the Kalispel people. We offer our respect for their history and culture, and for their wisdom in caring for this place for the generations to come.

Welcome New PORPA Members!

As is our tradition we try to give a warm welcome to all our new members throughout the year. Then we combine their bios in the Spring newsletter (please let us know if we forgot anybody):

Chris and Wendy Leavell (Marshall) - Chris and Wendy are in the retirement process and relocating (eventually) to the Sagle area where they own a home. They come from Huntington Beach, California where Wendy is an active member at the Newport Aquatic Center. Chris has completed learn to row and would like to expand his experience. They both compete on the NAC Outrigger team as novices. Wendy is thinking about bringing a women's four to the PORPA Sprints on the Priest River this Summer and also wants to volunteer with the kids kayak racing; kids' education is one of her passions.

Sean Sanders - Sean is a local, born in Coeur d' Alene, grew up in Rathdrum and Hayden. He started rowing at Humboldt State University in Northern California in 1999. "I Mostly rowed port, 6 seat. I rowed for two years," he said, "and did some sculling but never raced." He moved back home (now Spirit Lake) about five years ago and just recently learned about the club in Priest River. Joined up that very day. He is really looking forward to meeting all PORPA members and getting out on the water again. Mostly looking to do some recreational sculling but he might have some racing left in him. This year he has already participated during moving day in March. Sean is a Registered Nurse and loves all things boats, boating, water, and outdoors.

Cooper Romey - Cooper is a WSU Cougar rower. He wanted to continue improving his skills over the Summer and joined PORPA to be able to row the MAAS. PORPA members would like to have him back in 2025 and maybe some of his WSU rowing buddies?

10th Anniversary Celebration

July 13th, 2024 was the 10th anniversary of our maiden voyage on the Arthur Ericsson from Thama Shores to Riley Creek which was our first home for the summer back in 2014. To celebrate this occasion a special 10th anniversary edition of our newsletter was published (check it out in our website www.PORPA.org in the about/newsletter section) and we had a fun day at Riley Creek.

Since there was no storage at Riley Creek for the larger boats, Erwin and Okju trailered them from their home. Members took extra time to prepare the eight for its first time rowing 2025. The eight was joined by several other boats on the Pend Oreille River for this anniversary rowing session.

Following the rowing session, members had a pot-luck picnic and the official naming ceremony of the latest additions to the fleet. The heavy weight double **hpišłpm** (in-peesh-lh-pm, meaning "the area of the Priest River" in Salish) and the mid weight quad **htxwetkw** (in-twet-qu, meaning "the Pend Oreille River" in Salish).



PORPA extends our gratitude to Axel Images (Priest River, ID) for photographic support and Synergy Design Studio, Inc. (Newport, WA) for producing this newsletter.