

TO: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge
FROM: Boise Sailors Association
RE: Deer Flat NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan Preliminary Draft Alternatives

Thanks very much for the presentation to our group; we appreciate the work that you do. Here are our proposed modifications to the Preliminary Alternative 3 shown in the May, 2011 "Planning Update 3":

1. Alter placement of no-wake zone to better fit uses, including ours. Please see map.
2. Permit access at Gott's Point and Southside Access #3 for wind sports.
3. Take into account the minimal impact of wind sports on wildlife, compared to other activities, and that wind sports can be a wildlife-dependent use.

As written, Preliminary Alternative 3 would limit wind sports to the Lower Dam Recreation Area, the only zone in which wakes would be permitted (and there only from noon to sunset). However, this would virtually eliminate wind sports on Lake Lowell, by limiting them to an area where they are rarely possible to practice, due to the prevailing wind direction and the nature of wind sports.

1. Alter placement of no-wake zone to better fit uses, including ours.

Prevailing winds in the Treasure Valley are predominantly from the northwest. For 90% of the windy days at Lake Lowell, the wind comes from a northwesterly direction. (On the other 10%, the wind typically blows from the southeast.) Wind sports adherents, be they windsurfers, kitesailors or sailboat sailors, cannot sail directly into the wind. Instead, we sail across or perpendicular to the wind, and travel upwind by tacking in a zigzag pattern at an angle to the wind.

For this reason, the area from the Upper Dam boat launch to Gott's Point is ideal for wind sports. Sailboats, windsurfers or kitesailors who launch at the Upper Dam boat launch or at Gott's Point can sail across the wind toward Parking Lot 3 and back.

We propose that a zone for unlimited wind sports be designated in this area (please see map). This zone could include a 100- to 200-yard buffer along the southern shore to protect sensitive areas. A small opening through that buffer to allow windsports enthusiasts to launch at Parking Lot 3 and sail toward Gott's Point would be both reasonable and appropriate.

We support altering the proposed no-wake zone to permit wakes in the central pool of the lake, from Upper Dam to Gott's Point, with the above-mentioned 100- to 200-yard buffer along sensitive areas on the southern shore. This would accommodate sailboat sailing, often a wildlife-dependent use (bird watching), but one that often exceeds 5 mph. A sailboat gliding along in a 10- or 12-mph breeze while its occupants bird-watch is not disruptive to birds or other wildlife.

2. Permit access at Gott's Point and Southside Access #3 for wind sports.

Gott's Point has been the launch of choice for windsports such as windsurfing and kitesailing for approximately 30 years. It is separated from other uses, does not intrude into sensitive wildlife areas, and offers ideal conditions for wind sports, including wind direction, ease of launch and wave conditions in high winds. Similarly, Southside Access #3 is an ideal launch for us, and in low-water conditions, it is the superior launch. BSA windsurfers and kitesailors are recreationists who enjoy and appreciate the elements of nature similar to most other low-impact activities, such as sailing and canoeing. We are good stewards of the environment, and would be interested in working with refuge

authorities and law enforcement to maintain and protect this area for continued, appropriate use to match its historical use.

3. Take into account the minimal impact of wind sports on wildlife, compared to other activities, and that wind sports can be a wildlife-dependent use.

The refuge does not wish to ban wildlife-dependent uses such as sailing/bird-watching. Yet, Preliminary Alternative 3 as written would do so, by no longer permitting wind sports in the areas where they typically can be conducted. The BSA strongly supports the revisions outlined above to correct this. As stated above, a sailboat gliding along in a 10- or 12-mph breeze while its occupants bird-watch is not disruptive to birds or other wildlife.

Windsurfing and kitesailing are wind sports that take place only on the windiest of days, when winds blow from 15-35 mph, the water is extremely choppy, and few others choose to recreate on the lake. Our user days are low in number, our impact extremely low. We are non-motorized, non-polluting and wildlife-friendly. We have been a part of the refuge for many decades, and our activities allow us to enjoy nature and this marvelous resource we have here in Idaho.

We have a record of cooperating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help enhance, maintain and protect our sailing areas at Lucky Peak Lake, where our efforts have included annual cleanup days and organizing volunteer support to establish a weather station at Lucky Peak that provides information for all users; we'd encourage you to contact Joyce Dunning, the Army Corps' operations manager at Lucky Peak Lake, about our track record there. We value the Deer Flat Refuge, and are willing to do our part to develop cooperative opportunities to build support for the refuge and increase understanding of the refuge as wildlife habitat. We very much appreciate the opportunity to, with minimal impact, experience this valuable natural resource. We want to keep it a valued feature of our lives and our environment.

