



KELLY'S WHITEWATER PARK

The entrance is on Hwy 55, just south of the RR tracks. Kelly's is the first whitewater park in Idaho, attracting people to play in the man-made whitewater waves. The park stretches 1,200 feet down the Payette River as it flows past the site of the old Boise-Cascade Mill. The park is also home to a 2,660 square foot Welcome Center that overlooks the river and mountains with a gallery that showcases different local historic themes each year. The park is a beautiful place to relax, play, or just be a spectator.

BANK EROSION (Post 4)

Erosion occurs when streams and rivers become inundated with more water than they can hold. This happens due to increased storm-water runoff, actual rainfall events, or a snow pack that melts too quickly. The extra water results in scouring, which is when water eats away at the banks of the river or stream. How much longer do you think a pine tree by the bank can hang on? Just past the largest of the Kelly's Whitewater Park rapids is a huge bend in the river. Notice what was done to minimize scouring there. What other ways can you think of to stabilize the bank and prevent continued scouring here?

HABITAT (Post 4)

The pine, aspen, and cottonwood trees and the chokecherry bushes in this area make this excellent habitat for both deer and red fox. During the spring and fall, deer are regular users of The Strand. Red fox also about in the area, apparently unperturbed by sharing the space with humans. They are solitary hunters that feed on rodents, rabbits, birds, and other small game. They, however, are not picky and will eat what is available, including fruit, vegetables, fish, frogs, and even worms.

SNOWBANK MOUNTAIN (Post 3)

Look west. At 8,322' tall, Snowbank Mountain is the highest peak in the West Mountains and the 29th highest peak in Idaho with over 3,000' vertical rise above the valley floor. Snowbank also houses a Federal Aviation and Aeronautics (FAA) radar facility. May 31 to November 1, the summit is easily reached on a well maintained gravel road. There are several lakes near the summit, and the views are spectacular. On a clear day the Sawtooth Range to the east is visible. Looking west from the summit you can see the Wallowa Range in NE Oregon, and to the NW the Seven Devils Range that flanks Hells Canyon is clearly in view.

HELPING THE BIRDS (Post 3)

As you walk between posts #3 and #4, notice the platforms located on posts on either side of the strand. The one lowest to the ground near the river on the east side is a goose box. The platform on the high post on the west side of the trail is designed for osprey. Osprey use the four corner posts to anchor sticks and other nest material to the platform. If you're walking north on The Strand you'll see more of the osprey platforms, some with active nests.

OSPREY (Post 5)

Look around. You'll see osprey nests on the high poles near here. Unique among North American raptors for its diet of live fish and ability to dive into water to catch them, ospreys are a common site on the North Fork of the Payette River and nearby Lake Cascade. Perched on their huge stick nests with white heads gleaming, you'll likely hear them making a high-pitched warning call as you approach. Our local osprey population typically winter in Baja, California, returning here each spring. These large, rangy hawks do well around humans and have rebounded in numbers following the ban on the pesticide DDT.

WETLANDS (Post 2)

Wetlands perform a dazzling array of ecological functions that we have only recently begun to appreciate. A century ago the president of the American Health Association promoted the idea of a national campaign to eliminate wetlands. Today, scientists recognize the environmental benefits that wetlands provide, which include water purification, flood protection, shoreline stabilization, ground water recharge, and stream flow maintenance. Your wetland is providing ecological functions that are only recently recognized.

Cascade Sports Park

Fischer Pond Park

South River Access

FISCHER POND (Post 1)

Fischer Pond anchors the south end of The Strand. Thanks to the leadership of the Cascade High School Biology Dept. and involvement of various citizen groups over the past decade, the park has developed into a family-friendly destination that includes fisheries education, community gardens, picnic sites, volleyball, and a BBQ pavilion open for public use. It also serves as the site for the annual Free Fishing Day sponsored by Idaho Fish and Game each June. Enjoy!

BANK RESTORATION (Post 1)

Bank restoration and stabilization is underway here through the efforts of Cascade High School's Biology Dept. Heavy human traffic on the porous soils at the water's edge has resulted in erosion and plant degradation. The bank is being restored through the use of native plants and limiting access to the river to specific places. Kindly let these plants flourish by not tramping on them and by using the view points.

HOW IT ALL HAPPENED

The Strand, as an idea, has been lurking in Cascade for many years. It even make it into the City's Comprehensive Plan, where it was called 'the greenbelt'. The real beginning was in the early 90's, in the form of a grant from ITD to build what is now the southern ¾ mile of pavement, from Fischer Pond north, all on City Land. Then in 1995 during the creation of Leisure Time RV Park, its river frontage, about 1/5 of a mile, was given to the city. At the same time another 1/3 mile of the river frontage at the north end of Boise Cascade mill site was given to the city. These 2 sections were then graded and surfaced. In 2007 the Southern Valley Recreation District obtained an easement across the Bureau of Land Management parcel between Leisure Time and Waters Edge. Kelly's Whitewater Park came next. In 2009 when Hans Borbonus donated land to KWP, he also donated easements across the former mill site to connect with the north and south pieces of The Strand. In the fall of 2010, The Strand was truly born. Mark & Kristina Pickard, the philanthropists behind Kelly's Whitewater Park, generously paid for having the entire unpaved portion of The Strand graded & surfaced. Cascade will forever be grateful.

The Strand In Cascade, Idaho

STAY HERE. PLAY HERE.

Lake Cascade Recreation Area



24-III-1-2M

THE STRAND - Take a walk along the Payette River
The Strand is a nice, 10 to 12 foot wide, mostly natural surface that runs from Fischer Pond Park at the south, to Water's Edge RV Park at the north. It meanders along the Payette River, with spectacular views of the valley and surrounding mountains. The southerly ¾ mile is paved. The entire Strand is suitable for walking and bicycles, but it is not legal for motor vehicles. The Strand is also an interpretive trail, at Kelly's Whitewater Park or the intersection with the Pine Street Connector, and learn about our local history.

LAKE CASCADE DAM (Post 12)
Lake Cascade Dam lies just upstream from you. The dam has had significant social and economic impact on the region. Funding for the project was allocated in 1941; however, with the United States entering a war in 1941, construction was postponed until 1946 and completed in 1948. The zoned earth-fill dam is 107' high and 785' long and backs up Idaho's 4th largest lake. Originally constructed to provide irrigation to the Emmet Valley, the lake it created has become a major recreational feature of central Idaho. The controlled water release makes it possible for whitewater enthusiasts to enjoy an exceptionally long season. The diversity of the fishery challenges anglers year round.

THE AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (Post 12)
Often during the summer you'll be able to view 10-20 of these remarkable birds on this section of the river (as many as 350 have been counted on Lake Cascade). With wingspans of 95"-120" and beaks measuring 11"-15", the pelican will dip its head underwater to scoop up fish. If you're lucky you might observe several pelicans fishing cooperatively, moving into a circle to concentrate the fish and then dipping their heads under simultaneously to catch them.

GREAT BLUE HERON (Post 11)
This stately heron with its subtle blue-grey plumage often stands motionless as it scans for prey or wades belly deep with long deliberate steps near the far edge of the river. Don't be fooled by their apparent slowness in the water. These herons can strike like lightning to grab a fish or a gopher. In flight, look for the neck and head tucked into an "S" shape and long legs trailing out behind.

BEAVER (Post 10)
Look for signs of previous beaver activity between posts 10 and 11. The shape of most of the willows here are rounded due to the many shoots produced after the beaver took down a tree. If you examine the base closely you'll see an older, larger stump that was gnawed by beaver. Many of these stumps have been covered with wire mesh to discourage the beaver from destroying the entire tree. Just upstream from post #10 you'll see what looks like an overgrown pile of brush, an active beaver lodge in 2010. A beaver can take down a tree in three minutes, using the tree branches for construction purposes and also as a food source. As plant eaters they feed primarily on tree bark with aspens and poplars their first choice.

MILL SITE CLEAN UP (Post 10)
Those piles of old logs, timbers, and compost that you're looking at to the west are what is left of the Boise Cascade Mill. The mill was closed in 2001. Subsequent to removing the buildings and equipment after the closure, Cloverdale Nursery of Boise got the contract to clean up the site. They were able to convert 80 years of collected log debris into commercial compost operation.

LONG VALLEY'S NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE (Post 9)
This area served as the summer hunting and gathering location for at least three tribes: the Nez Perce to the north, the Shoshone to the southwest, and the Piute to the southeast. Here tribal groups would camp during the summer months (following the annual subsistence cycle) - hunting, fishing from the large salmon runs on the Payette River, and gathering chokecherries, huckleberries, and camas root. Evidence suggests such activities occurred for hundreds of years before the first Euro-Americans entered the area.

WATER SAFETY (Post 9)
If you look toward the river's edge, you'll notice a warning sign that says "Approaching dangerous whitewater, prepare to exit river right". This is because the rapids that make up Kelly's Whitewater Park begin 100 yards downstream and the unsuspecting and unprepared floater can find themselves in a dangerous position should they continue. Remember that when you enter an Idaho waterway you are responsible for your own safety.

BOISE CASCADE MILL SITE (Post 8)
For 80 years, Cascade was defined by "the mill". The smell of the burner and fresh cut lumber, logging trucks, and the whistle that signaled the shift change were inherent to living in Cascade. As the economic backbone of the community, the mill provided a living wage to 80 workers and produced more than 300,000 linear feet of lumber per day.

MILL POND (Post 8)
See the large basin that looks like an old pond just west of here? In the earlier years of the mill, logs were stored in those millponds. A small diversion dam downstream from here raised the water level and slowed down the river current. The head gate in front of you would be used to move water from the river to the ponds. Water storage kept the logs from splitting and cracking until they could be converted to lumber. In later years the logs were decked north and south of the mill where splitting and cracking was controlled by the use of sprinklers placed on top of the decks.

NORTH FORK FISHERY (Post 7)
Native Americans once camped along the North Fork of the Payette, enjoying the plentiful runs of steelhead and salmon. With the competition of the Black Canyon Dam near Emmet in 1924, those runs were terminated. Currently, Salmonids such as whitefish and trout thrive in this section of river, between Lake Cascade Dam and Smith's Ferry. You can catch perch in the slack water upstream near the north bridge.

OSPREY NESTS (Post 6)
See the large stick nests on the old telephone poles nearby? Those belong to osprey, a type of hawk that lives almost entirely on live fish. Don't confuse that white-headed osprey with an eagle; an osprey is a bit smaller and leaner with a white underbelly. Young bald eagles may be extensively mottled with white on their brown bodies but do not have the white head. Mature bald eagles have the characteristic white head and tail and dark body.

WHITewater KAYAKING (Post 6)
Looking downstream you have a good view of the competition area of Kelly's Whitewater Park. The park is used by novice and expert freestyle kayakers alike. Spectators gather annually to view both regional and national competitions. Built in 2009-2010, the park is composed of five separate water features that a full spectrum of kayakers can enjoy as well as a beautiful welcome center in a green-space setting. The Strand pathway continues on through the park to the north and south.

A riparian zone or riparian area is the interface between land and a river or stream. Plant habitats and communities along the river margins and banks are called riparian vegetation, characterized by hydrophilic plants. Riparian zones have a significant role in soil conservation, habitat biodiversity, and fauna and aquatic ecosystems. The word 'riparian' is derived from Latin ripa, meaning river bank.

