

Pineview Reservoir Proposal: Open-Water Swim Course

Pineview — the busiest reservoir of its size in the state — has experienced an increase in swimmers training to participate in regional triathlons as well as hosting a growing number of paddle boards and boats. Lap swimming in a pool is an excellent training foundation but actual open water training is vastly different and triathletes must also train in open water conditions.

Background

Ogden, Utah was once the bustling railroad hub for the Intermountain West. But with the changing economy, the city struggled to reinvent itself. Over a decade ago Ogden focused on rebranding itself as an outdoor recreation destination to highlight the incredible opportunities all within close proximity. Mountain trails, three ski resorts, a reservoir and two rivers are all close by. In addition, Ogden has created and attracted an outdoor recreation industry cluster that today has one of the highest concentrations in the country.

High adventure outdoor recreation activities are now a mainstay for Ogden City. Ogden and Snow Basin Ski Resort annually host the world-renowned Xterra USA Off-Roads Triathlon & Trail-Running Championships. The annual Ogden Marathon has been tagged as one of the ten most beautiful courses in the country. In addition, Ogden hosted the 2015 USA Cycling Masters National Championships. These events have put Ogden back on the national and international stage and have also boosted local participation in a myriad of outdoor activities.

Triathlons are included on this list of activities and are one of the fastest growing sports in the nation. Many local triathletes participate in the Xterra Triathlon which begins at Pineview Reservoir with an open-water swim.

The Proposal

There is a growing concern for the safety of open-water swimmers at Pineview Reservoir which is already an extremely busy reservoir with a continually increasing number of users in all categories — boats, stand-up paddle boards, fishermen and swimmers.

The Pineview Open Water Swim Course Proposal has been a wonderful collaboration between the US Forest Service, the Utah State Parks Division, the Weber County Sheriff's Office, Ogden City and the Weber Tri-Swim Club. The stakeholder group convened to proactively discuss, brainstorm and reach consensus on an identified open-water swim area at Pineview Reservoir. All parties understand swimmer safety is of great importance. Each stakeholder wants the safest and most equitable solution for all concerned. Ogden City helps sponsor and promote the Xterra Triathlon and understands the importance of offering an identified open-water swim area for local and visiting athletes. The Forest Service, Weber County Sheriff and Utah State Parks Division are all tasked with public safety in and around Pineview. And the Weber Tri-Swim Club would like an identified swim area in which to ply their trade safely.

This working group explored numerous options before unanimously agreeing on designating an open water swim area adjacent and east of the existing Homeland Security Buoy Line. This site has numerous advantages and addresses the issues because it is already in a designated wake less zone, it is the least trafficked area on the reservoir and there is an existing parking area and access approach from Highway 158.

The project will be undertaken in several phases:

- **Phase 1** (2016) will include funding and installing additional buoys to outline the swim area and reminding boaters about the designated wake less zone. Signage will be installed above the high-water mark detailing the open water swim course and distances.
- **Phase 2** (2017) will fund and construct a wooden swim deck area above the high water mark. The structure will include benches where swimmers can put on/take off wetsuits.
- **Phase 3** (2018) will fund and install a five-foot wide concrete walkway connecting the existing parking area to the swim deck area. Currently there is an unimproved ramp connecting these points.

Potential Funding

Potential funding for this venture can be a collaboration between many entities including the Forest Service, Utah State Parks, Weber County, GOAL Foundation, Intermountain Health Care Live Well campaign and the Weber Tri-Swim Club.

In-Kind Contributions

Wasatch Civil Consulting Engineering & Mark Miller is creating all the engineering drawings for the swim area, the deck structure and the concrete path.

Public Comment Period

The Forest Service is initiating a 30-day comment period Feb 15 - March 15, 2016. This proposal would not change the current designation of open swimming on Pineview Reservoir. However, the Forest Service would like your input to take into consideration in its final decision of this proposal. The construction of the deck would require an environmental analysis prior to construction. A decision can be expected up to a month after comments are received. Comments can be submitted by mail:

Ogden Ranger District
Robert Sanchez, District Ranger
507 25th St.
Ogden UT 84401

or by email: comments-intermtn-wasatch-cache-ogden@fs.fed.us