



## **12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL WATER DAZE POLSON BAY SWIM RACE**

(August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014)

### **WATER SAFETY PLAN**

#### **Event Venue**

Flathead Lake at Polson, Montana

Flathead Lake, at 28-miles long and 15-miles wide, is the largest natural fresh water lake west of the Mississippi. This picturesque lake is located in northwest Montana at the base of Glacier National Park. The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Polson Water Daze 1.2-mile Polson Bay crossing will take place in the town of Polson on the southern shore. The water ranges in depth from 0-30 feet and the temperature is generally between 70-75°F in early-August. There are no dangerous marine organisms and the water quality is considered the best in the country. The air temperature in August averages 75°F. The nearest hospital is Providence in Polson, approximately 5 miles from the event venue.

#### **Event Courses**

- 1.1-mile Polson Bay Crossing – Shallow water start from the boat launching area at the Best Western Kwataqnuq proceeding east 1.1 miles to the finish at Boettcher Park.
- The race will have men's and women's divisions, 5-year age brackets, and a wetsuit and non-wetsuit category.
- 200-yard Kids Fun Race – Shallow water start from Boettcher Park looping around a turn buoy approximately 100 yards off-shore.

#### **Personnel and Volunteers**

- Professional personnel
  - Lake County Sheriff's Department – the water safety division will provide two deputies on the patrol boat to prevent non-affiliated boats from entering the swim course.
  - Ambulance Service – A fully staffed ambulance will be contracted to remain on site for treatment and evacuation of medically affected swimmers.

- Volunteers on the course
  - Volunteers on paddle craft (kayaks, canoes, paddleboards) will monitor the swimmers constantly. Several kayaks will be provided and additional volunteers will be recruited from local paddle clubs. The paddle craft:mile ratio will exceed 10:1 at all times when swimmers are on the course. Additional paddle craft will be recruited if the paddle craft:swimmer ratio exceeds 1:5.
  - Medical volunteers (medical doctors, EMTs, ARC certified first aid providers) will staff a medical area that contains first aid supplies, warm/cold liquids (depending on weather) cots, ice, towels, and warming/cooling equipment such as thermal blankets and propane heaters (if needed).

### **Course Monitoring**

- Motorized watercraft – ALL MOTORIZED WATERCRAFT WILL BE STAFFED WITH A DRIVER AND A “SWIMMER SPOTTER” TO ENSURE THAT SWIMMERS ARE NOT ENDANGERED BY PROPELLORS.
  - In addition to the Lake County Sheriff patrol boat, the course setup boat will patrol the periphery of the course to ensure that unauthorized boats do not encroach on the swim course. An evacuation boat will be available for evacuation of swimmers in the need of removal from the course.
- Paddle craft (kayaks, canoes, paddleboards)
  - Safety monitors will paddle within a designated 200-meter patrol area alongside the course. Each monitor will be outfitted with a whistle, a red flag, and a flotation device.
    - Swimmers may signal the safety monitors by waving a hand in the air, and the monitor will maneuver to the distressed swimmer. Each boat will have a flotation device that the distressed swimmer may use to assist in flotation.
    - Swimmers may not enter the paddle craft. If a swimmer wishes to exit the course of the safety monitor determines that the swimmer should be evacuated, the safety monitor will signal the evacuation boat by raising a red flag and blowing a whistle.
    - The evacuation boat will come to the swimmers aid and the safety monitor will return to the course. The safety monitor may choose to tow the distressed swimmer part or all the way to the evacuation boat.
    - A sweeper will follow the last swimmer until the swimmer(s) reach the finish or are instructed to exit the course.
- Lookouts will be positioned along the shoreline of the course with binoculars and two-way radios if wave height exceeds about 12 inches. The Director and Safety Coordinator will make the decision to deploy lookouts.
- All swimmers who voluntarily and under their own power leave the course must report to either the Finish Judge or the Medical Coordinator. Swimmers who do not follow this procedure will be invited NOT to participate in future events.

### **Accounting for Swimmers**

- All swimmers will have uniquely numbered and brightly colored swim caps. A corresponding number will also be written on the arm of each participant. Each swimmer will be checked in as they enter the water at the start. At the finish, the event timer will record the swimmers time and confirm each person's exit.
- The finish area will be monitored by keeping a list of race numbers from body markings as swimmers exit the water. The written list will be reconciled with the time every 10 minutes to ensure that all swimmers are accounted for.

### **Evacuation Plan**

If the Race Director, Safety Director, Medical Director, and Sheriff Patrol decide to cancel the race and evacuate the course:

- The Lake County Sheriff Patrol Boat will sound its emergency horn with three short blasts.
- Safety monitors will immediately intercept swimmers and instruct them to proceed to the nearest point on shore.
- Swimmers will be instructed to wait on dry land until conditions are safe to transport them to the event area in a water (or land) vehicle.
- All swimmers must report to the finish line as soon as they return to the event area to be accounted for.

### **Swimmer Safety**

- All swimmers will have uniquely numbered and brightly colored swim caps. A corresponding number will also be written on the arm of each participant. Each swimmer will be checked in as they enter the water at the start.
- Swimmers must stay within the course boundary as defined by the course monitors, buoys, and safety boats.
- Swimmers may signal the safety monitors by waving a hand in the air, and the monitor will maneuver to the distressed swimmer. Each boat will have a flotation device that the distressed swimmer may use to assist in flotation.
- Swimmers may not enter the paddle craft. If a swimmer wishes to exit the course of the safety monitor determines that the swimmer should be evacuated, the safety monitor will signal the evacuation boat by raising a red flag and blowing a whistle.
- The evacuation boat will come to the swimmers aid and the safety monitor will return to the course. The safety monitor may choose to tow the distressed swimmer part or all the way to the evacuation boat.
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**Safety Meeting**

Water safety monitors will meet with the Safety Director at 12:00pm to receive instructions regarding swimmer safety, rules, and procedures.

At 12:45, approximately 15-minutes before the start of the race, all swimmers, coaches, and onshore officials will be instructed in the safety procedures outlined above by the Safety Director, in person. The instructions will be repeated over the public address system every 30 minutes throughout the event. In addition, a printed copy of the safety and evacuation procedures will be posted at all times at the information kiosks, and copies will be made available to any participant requesting a copy.