



## 'Really good' chance hydros will return

**BRIAN WALKER/Staff Writer | Posted: Friday, March 18, 2016 12:00 am**

COEUR d'ALENE — Coeur d'Alene Silver Cup, Inc. is in a race to bring hydroplanes back to Lake Coeur d'Alene this summer.

Race director Keith Allen said there's a "really good" chance the races will return to Silver Beach on the east side of the lake July 15-17.

Allen said obtaining the permits necessary to hold the event isn't the biggest hurdle — the most difficult part is shedding the image the previous group, under the Diamond Cup name, left after unpaid debts piled up from the 2013 race. Races returned to Coeur d'Alene that year for the first time in decades, and haven't been held since.

"We want to present a sporting event that is financially solvent, exciting to watch and that benefits the local economy," said Allen, adding Silver Cup is a nonprofit that will also raise funds for Children's Village and the Kootenai County Police and Fire Memorial Foundation at the event — as opposed to being a for-profit group as Diamond Cup was.

"Some people believe we are the old group that's been rebranded, but none of us were a part of that group," he said.

Allen said the hydroplane race sanctioning body H1 Unlimited asked him to revive the races in Coeur d'Alene after the financial debacle of the previous group, due to his 14 years of experience organizing such races in the Tri-Cities.

Last April the Silver Cup group decided to postpone the races for 2015 until this year because more time was needed to raise money.

Allen said Silver Cup would like to raise at least \$300,000 to launch the event, although it could still be held for less. He said he hopes sponsorships being tax-deductible, the fact that the event will benefit two local nonprofits and the assurance that funds won't be accepted until the event is a definite go will help the group reach its fundraising goals and earn the community's trust.

"We don't want to have to be paying refunds," Allen said.

Allen said he should know in May whether the event will happen this year.

Hydroplanes can reach speeds of nearly 200 mph on straightaways. The race course will be a 2.5-mile oval, and 12 boats are planned to be entered in the event. In addition to H1 Unlimited boats, a second boat race organization known as Grand Prix West is planning an event at the same time. Eight to 10 boats that can reach speeds of more than 140 mph are planned for that part of the event.



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CONTINUED — Silver Cup has submitted its application to Kootenai County for its special events permit to hold the races. The viewing area will be along East Coeur d'Alene Lake Drive and the Centennial Trail. Spectators will be shuttled by bus from a 32-acre, off-site parking area on the north side of Seltice Way west of Huetter Road near Huetter.

An additional spectator area will include a log boom where boats can tie up and view the event from the water.

Allen said the Silver Cup group identified two ways the previous group lost out on admission funding and believes those holes have been plugged. In 2013 people on the Centennial Trail could stop and watch the event for free, but Silver Cup has received state approval to reroute the trail this year during the event.

"We can now lock down the entire event area so that, if you are in the event area, you will have to pay admission," Allen said, adding that a 1.8-mile section will be fenced off. "Folks will still be able to access that end of the lake; they just won't be able to be in the event area for free."

With transportation during the previous race, it wasn't required to purchase an admission ticket to get on the bus as admission could be purchased at the site.

"But, when they got there, many people still didn't purchase tickets," he said. "This year you won't be able to get on the bus without having paid."

A third-party firm specializing in large events and approved by the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office will be hired for crowd management and security. East Coeur d'Alene Lake Drive will be closed to one lane and a pilot car will lead traffic in the event area so the east end of the lake can still be accessed during the races.

Silver Beach residents who need access to their private docks for themselves and their guests will be given wristband passes during the event. There will be bleachers and outhouses in the viewing area.

Allen is working on obtaining permits from Kootenai County Fire and Rescue for emergency services and from the KCSO for the marine. The KCSO must sign off on its permit by May 13 for the event to happen. An encroachment permit from the Idaho Department of Lands has already been approved, along with environmental clearance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"A lot of the infrastructure is already in place from last year when the event was put on hold," Allen said. "We want to be good stewards of the lake. It's the crown jewel of North Idaho and owned by the taxpayers and we don't take that lightly."



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CONTINUED — Allen said some positives occurred during the 2013 event — hydroplanes returned to Coeur d'Alene for the first time in decades and there were no injuries or mishaps — but unfortunately it was overshadowed by the financial mess under the other group.

Allen said a hydroplane with the event dates has been on display at area businesses such as Super 1 Foods in the past year. Businesses can have their name on the hydroplane that's transported to their location for a tax-deductible donation of \$500. Corporate and event naming sponsorships are also available. Community groups can also sign up to volunteer during the event and raise funds.

For more information, contact Allen at [keith@cdasilvercup.com](mailto:keith@cdasilvercup.com).