



# Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association

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Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034  
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March 11, 2013

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources / SB 602

Sen. Jackie Dingfelder, Chair

Sen. Alan Olsen, Vice-Chair

Sen. Alan Bates

Sen. Bill Bates

Sen. Mark Hass

Via email: [jennifer.lutman@state.or.us](mailto:jennifer.lutman@state.or.us)

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association regarding your potential rulemaking concerning floatplanes on Waldo Lake. We ask that your Committee amend SB 602 to allow seaplanes on Waldo Lake, with conditions as proposed by the Oregon Aviation Board. The paddlers already have 85 Oregon lakes designated just for them, and Waldo Lake is an important water body to our group – for safety and recreation.

When the U.S. Congress created the Wilderness areas near Waldo Lake, they specifically excluded the lake, and encouraged multiple recreational use by bringing in a good road, and creating campgrounds and boat ramps on the east side. They excluded the hiking trail around the lake from the Wilderness designation.

Seaplanes use Waldo Lake as part of the chain of lakes when traveling between British Columbia and California (see attached map). While there are other lakes in this chain, seaplane pilots never know which lake is clear of clouds and/or for which the water surface is appropriate for a safe landing. Being a large body of water along this route, Waldo Lake is an important lake for the practical, safe use of seaplanes transiting the Cascade Mountains.

Waldo Lake is needed for more than an “emergency.” Like other modes of travel, pilots using seaplanes need “rest stops” and we need “precautionary landings” to avoid an emergency, i.e. to check or repair equipment or wait for better weather. The decision to make such landings is based solely on “pilot in command” decisions rather than a documented “emergency” of an aircraft on fire. This leads to a common problem where a marine sheriff, unsure of whether or not seaplanes on a given body of water are legal, issues a citation with a summons to appear before a judge. For a transient seaplane pilot,

who may live hundreds of miles away, a summons to a local court appearance to defend their right to operate a seaplane is an expensive and unnecessary inconvenience. Seaplanes need a right to land that is clearly decided by the pilot in command, not a park ranger or marine patrol officer unfamiliar with the operational realities of seaplanes and aviation.

Seaplanes have used Waldo Lake for landings for more than 50 years. There is no documented history at Waldo Lake of either environmental or safety issues attributable to seaplanes. If so, this information would have been touted by those seeking to outlaw seaplanes from Waldo Lake. While challenging the Forest Service's ban on floatplanes (which we won in federal court) CSPA filed a freedom of information act with the Forest Service asking for copies of any information relating to seaplanes from their files. The only information they came up with from their records were eight campground comment cards that contained minor comments, for example, asking simply "are floatplanes allowed" by visitors who saw one parked at the lake. There were no complaints of any actual safety or noise problems with a seaplane. The Forest Service staff we have talked to have all acknowledged that they have never even seen a seaplane on the lake.

We take pride, as pilots, that seaplanes "leave no trace." You will also note on our letterhead that we are active members of the nation's key boating safety groups. As a group we work very hard at being safe and responsible waterway users.

There are even positive environmental reasons to use the seaplane for access to Waldo Lake. The use of a seaplane to fly from Portland to Waldo Lake to camp has in many cases a lower carbon footprint than using an automobile for the same journey. Cars, trucks, RV's, and motorcycles already drive to the lake and bring their noise, oil, and gas into that watershed. Seaplanes are simply one more vehicle of arrival for campers and hikers at the lake.

Seaplanes in fact avoid the enormous environmental damage of oil-based asphalt roads and parking lots - including those in the Waldo Lake watershed that are required for auto visitors. That is why seaplanes are the prime transportation mode in all the wilderness lands of Alaska and Canada. Those who arrive at Waldo Lake by car easily ignore that the roads in the watershed that they use, consist of more than 120 million pounds of asphalt material, and required removal of upwards of 100 acres of forest.

Opponents of seaplanes search for reasons to object to seaplanes. For example opponents bring up the canoe hit by a National Guard Pilot flying a seaplane on the Willamette River. It truly was a terrible accident by a person, whose day job was to defend the United States of America from terrorists. However, it was a freak accident. To my knowledge it is the only accident in 20 years, in the entire United States of a seaplane killing someone in a boat. Cars are not immune from this problem. It is a terrible fact that in the United States, every year, cars kill 5000 pedestrians.

All airplane pilots are licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration, and have safety check rides at a minimum of every two years. The FAA's regulations are extensive. There is zero tolerance for alcoholic beverages. To ensure safety, the rule simply is that if a pilot sips even one drop, they cannot pilot an airplane for the next 8 hours.

Seaplane pilots are a strong environmentally concerned group that has long been proactively concerned about the risks of Invasive Aquatic Species (IAS). Our national organization and local volunteers developed standard IAS seaplane pre-flight inspection procedures under funding from the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission that can be viewed at many web sites including [www.youtube.com/watch?v=luDZptFsQDk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luDZptFsQDk). An IAS brochure for seaplanes was created from a grant from USF&W at Portland State University. Invasive species awareness seminars are conducted at aviation trade shows and exhibitions by trained instructors. Seaplane pilots are federally licensed and monitored, and every two years receive an FAA mandated check ride which in a seaplane nowadays commonly includes IAS awareness training.

For your information, I've attached copies of key letters from aviators and aviation organizations about this issue, which support keeping Waldo Lake open for floatplanes. These are our nation's major aviation organizations, and they request that Waldo Lake be kept open for seaplane use.

Our Oregon organization represents approximately 300 persons, and there are approximately 650 seaplane rated pilots in Oregon. However, seaplane pilots from other states travel through Oregon too, so the need for the waterway is important for other citizens of the United States as well. Nationally there are approximately 33,000 seaplane rated pilots.

In closing, I would point out that under the Oregon Admission Acts of 1859, the federal government granted the waterways to the State of Oregon with the condition that:

*“all the navigable waters of said State, shall be common highways and forever free, as well as to the inhabitants of said State as to all other citizens of the United States.”*  
(Section 2)

Seaplanes are vehicles which still need these waterways as highways in order to remain safe and efficient in their travel. We need Waldo Lake as part of the available landing spots while we travel around the state. In addition, seaplane pilots from other states, need them when transiting through our state.

Thank you for considering our interests in utilizing Oregon's navigable waters for transportation by this seaplane mode, so that we can travel and recreate in our great State of Oregon.

Seaplane Access to Waldo Lake

March 11, 2013

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Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aron Faegre".

Aron Faegre

President, Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association

Attachments:

- Map of common seaplane cross-country flight routes
- Picture of Willamette Pass (near Waldo Lake) during transit by floatplane
- Copies of key letters from aviators and aviation organizations about this issue



Common Seaplane Cross-country Flight Routes





Willamette Pass with clouds from my personal floatplane while flying my daughter, a wildlife biologist, from Klamath Lake Bird Observatory to Portland;  
In this case Waldo Lake was an extremely important lake to have for safety of operations.

Waldo Lake Oil-based Asphalt Pavement existing in Watershed  
 Aron Faegre / January 30, 2013

	Length (miles)	Width (ft)	Thickness (ft)		Asphalt Area (acres)	Volume (cf)	Weight (pounds)
1 Asphalt Type 1	7	30	0.58	=	25.5	643,104	93,250,080
2 Asphalt Type 2	5	24	0.33	=	14.5	209,088	30,317,760
			Totals		40.0	852,192	123,567,840

Notes

Asphalt weight = 145 psf

Mile = 5280 ft

Acre = 43560 sf

Roadway clearing is approx 2.5 x asphalt width



*Seaplane Pilots Association*  
3859 Laird Blvd Lakeland, Florida 33811  
Phone 863-701-7979 Fax 863-701-7588

Oregon Dept. of Aviation Board  
3040 25<sup>th</sup> Street SE  
Salem, OR 97302-1125

Subject: Waldo Lake Seaplane Ruling  
Ref: Public Hearing January 31, 2013

January 21, 2013

Dear Board Members,

As the Executive Director of the Seaplane Pilots Association, the international seaplane advocacy and non-profit organization founded for the promotion and protection of the water flying community, I would like to thank you for the productive and open discussion you have conducted with our pilots.

We respectfully appreciate that you have upheld fair and non-biased access to Waldo Lake in a manner that not only serves the water flying community, but also the non flying general public.

Speaking on behalf of our association's nearly 7,000 members, I would like to encourage the Board to adopt the proposed ruling that would govern seaplane use on Waldo Lake as submitted.

Additionally, I would like to extend an open invitation to both the Board and the Department of Aviation to use the knowledge base and resources of our organization to assist with matters regarding seaplane operations. Throughout our organization's 41 year history we have been the central resource for all matters regarding the safe operation of seaplanes, invasive species issues and seaplane compatibility with other users groups and the environment.

Thank you for your continued efforts and work to preserve fair and equal access to this wonderful resource called Waldo Lake.

Blue skies and calm waters,

Steven McCaughey  
Executive Director  
Seaplane Pilots Association





## Recreational Aviation Foundation

1711 West College St.  
Bozeman, MT 59715  
[www.theraf.org](http://www.theraf.org)

January 14, 2013

Oregon Dept. of Aviation Board  
3040 25<sup>th</sup> St., SE  
Salem ,Oregon 97302-1125

FAX (503) 373-1688

Subject: Waldo Lake Seaplane Rules  
Public Hearing, January 31,2013

Dear board members:

I am writing on behalf of the Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF), a national non-profit organization with supporters in all fifty states. The RAF's mission statement is: ***Keeping the legacy of recreational aviation strong by preserving, maintaining and creating public use recreational and backcountry airstrips nationwide.***

The RAF considers aquatic landing areas and their associated beaching and docking sites to be just as important as terrestrial landing sites. The RAF is well aware that there are competing uses and values on public lands and waterways. However, as long as the functioning ecosystem is not compromised, all means of access to non-wilderness areas should be given equal consideration.

I have reviewed the proposed seaplane operating rules for Waldo Lake. The RAF supports the proposed rules as published. They provide for reasonable seaplane access to Waldo Lake. I would encourage you to adopt the rules as now presented and not adopt any amendments that may in any way restrict seaplane access to the lake or place onerous burdens on the seaplane pilots that are not required of other lake users.

Please place this letter in the public records for the above referenced hearing.

Sincerely,

John McKenna, Jr., President, RAF



421 Aviation Way  
Frederick, Maryland 21701

T. 301-695-2000  
F. 301-695-2375

[www.aopa.org](http://www.aopa.org)

January 15, 2013

Mark Gardiner, Chair  
Oregon State Aviation Board  
3040 25th St. SE  
Salem, OR 97302-1125

RE: Waldo Lake Floatplane Permanent Rule

Dear Mr. Gardiner:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is a not-for-profit membership organization that represents the general aviation interests of over 400,000 members nationwide, including over 6,200 in Oregon. Since 1939, AOPA has been committed to ensuring the safety, future viability, and development of general aviation airports and their facilities, including floatplane operations, as a part of our national transportation system.

We are writing on behalf of our members to strongly support the Aviation Board's adoption of proposed Oregon Aviation Rule 738-040-037, addressing floatplane operations on Waldo Lake. AOPA and our members believe the permanent rule as currently drafted allows for conditional yet reasonable floatplane access to Waldo Lake, consistent with other forms of existing motorized vehicle uses to and around the lake.

As you know, many other public entities, including the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the National Park service have recognized the importance and minimal impact of floatplane operations, and have safely and reasonably accommodated them within their boundaries. We are supportive of the Aviation Board's desire to do the same with the proposed rule.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments, and your strong support for fostering a positive climate for aviation in Oregon. If you have any questions, please contact me at (301)695-2094.

Sincerely,

David R. Ulane, A.A.E.  
Northwest Mountain Regional Manager

CC: Aron Faegre, President- Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association  
Dennis Smith, President- Oregon Pilots Association

**From:** [Mike Thompson](mailto:Mike.Thompson@state.or.us)  
**To:** [osmb.rulemaking@state.or.us](mailto:osmb.rulemaking@state.or.us)  
**Cc:** "Aron Faegre"; [tbrice@northpacificyachts.com](mailto:tbrice@northpacificyachts.com)  
**Subject:** RE: Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association  
**Date:** Thursday, April 05, 2012 12:15:20 PM

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April 5, 2012

George Tinker, Chairman  
Oregon State Marine Board  
435 Commercial St NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
[osmb.rulemaking@state.or.us](mailto:osmb.rulemaking@state.or.us)

Mr. Tinker:

I represent seaplane pilots in British Columbia, Canada and understand the Oregon State Marine Board is considering whether Waldo Lake should be closed to floatplanes.

In British Columbia the BC Floatplane Association has a good working relationship with BC Parks, and BC Parks has seen a great value in allowing floatplanes continued access to remote lakes.

Floatplanes are very low impact type of transportation, when compared to road, trucks and atv's. In BC the BCFA pilots perform volunteer work for parks, flying in materials, flying out garbage, reporting on campsite conditions and providing feedback that otherwise would not be available.

This letter is to request that you not close Waldo lake to floatplanes because you will be losing a potential resource and some of our pilots use this route and occasionally land at Waldo Lake when flying south.

Just as British Columbia welcomes Oregon pilots to use British Columbia waterways for travel north, we request that Oregon keep usable water bodies open for British Columbia pilots to travel south.

We would also point out that our commercial seaplane operators often take Oregon paddlers and canoes into our remote wilderness areas such as Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, where paddlers use the very remote Turner Lake Chain. We welcome Oregon paddler tourists for these trips, and hope that they might recognize that seaplanes are very compatible with the paddler community.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input for your decision.

Mike Thompson  
President, BC Floatplane Association



Washington Seaplane Pilots Association  
WA-SPA.ORG

January 29, 2013

Oregon State Department of Aviation  
Board of Directors  
3040 25<sup>th</sup> St., SE  
Salem ,Oregon 97302-1125  
Fax (503) 373-1688

Subject: Waldo Lake Seaplane Rules  
Public Hearing, January 31,2013

Dear Members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Seaplane Pilots in the Northwest and provide input on the decision making regarding Waldo Lake.

The Washington Seaplane Pilots Association represents pilots from not only Washington, but also Oregon and the other northwest states and the province of British Columbia, Canada. Our mission is to support safety and access to water landing sites. We believe regular access to Waldo Lake, as provided by the current rule, is important both for safety and for fair access by seaplane pilots. Waldo Lake is a key waypoint and uninhibited access is important for safety and effective transportation.

We commend the Board for finding a fair compromise with the proposed rules. We support the proposed rules as published. They provide for reasonable seaplane access to Waldo Lake. We encourage the adoption of the rules as they exist today without any amendments which might restrict seaplane access or place onerous burdens on the seaplane pilots that are not required of other lake users.

Please include this letter in the public records for the above referenced hearing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephen M. Ratzlaff'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Stephen M. Ratzlaff,  
President,  
Washington Seaplane Pilots Association



# SEAPLANEFORUM.COM

## THE SEAPLANE PILOT NETWORK!

Jason J. Baker (Owner/ Admin)  
1051 N Main St. Apt. A/ Winterport, ME 04496  
January 15th, 2013

**Oregon Dept. of Aviation Board**  
**3040 25th St., SE**  
**Salem , Oregon 97302-1125**

### **RE: Comment – Waldo Lake, OR – Common Sense Regulations For Seaplanes**

I am writing to you as the founder and editor of seaplaneforum.com, an international discussion board for seaplane pilots with 460+ members. I also write as a seaplane and general aviation pilot – deeply concerned about retaining fair, equal and balanced access for seaplane pilots at Waldo Lake. I am a supporter/ member of Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association (C-SPA).

Please consider and file my comments as a letter **in support of your efforts** to find common ground with involved stakeholders around Waldo Lake. This must be done by seeking reasonable and fair regulation of Waldo Lake access for **all users**. Additionally, I specifically wish to thank you for working with C-SPA in helping to educate these stakeholders about the realistically minor environmental impact of seaplanes on public & private water. As you have seen in your work with C-SPA, seaplane pilots are willing to work with regulatory agencies to preserve the natural beauty and recreational value of our states and countries waters in fair dialog.

I am interested in preserving our fraternities rights to use the Sovereign Waters of the State of Oregon in the future. Outright bans and prohibitions are often based on unsubstantiated fear, misinformation and additionally, often lack the application of the scientific method to discover facts and truths. Applying **common sense and tolerance** would benefit our populace more than overbearing regulations, which in this case would serve to violate the rights and privileges of a few, just to satisfy a seemingly large group of environmentalists.

The seaplane industry (as a whole) supports the preservation and protection of nature. It works hard to educate and encourage pilots to be good environmental stewards, to be involved in emergency response planning. Further we show leading activity on issues such as invasive species, noise pollution and are generally well self-regulated. Please continue to work on keeping communication, learning and open doors possible, while protecting our legal rights to be treated fairly.

Sincerely,  
Jason J. Baker