

IDAHO RECREATION & TOURISM INITIATIVE



(Photo credit: Idaho Excursions. Location: Payette River.)

2012

Annual Accomplishment Report

The Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative (IRTI), created in 1988, is an active and enduring coalition of state and federal agencies and not-for-profit organizations dedicated to providing Idaho citizens and visitors with expanded recreation opportunities.

Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative

ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

Idaho has a multitude of land management agencies and recreation providers whose roles can be confusing to the public. Recreationists and tourists don't care who manages a campsite – they just want to camp. They are not especially interested in which agency manages a wildlife area – they just want to see wildlife. To accommodate needs such as these, IRTI has facilitated a number of efforts over the years, including these: a statewide campground directory, a statewide scenic byways system, a statewide wildlife viewing guide, an annual statewide conference on recreation and tourism, and statewide information and messages on a variety of recreation topics, including trails, regardless of which agency manages the trail. By working together, the coalition is able to more effectively provide information and services.

Who Is IRTI?

The following partners collaborate through a formal Memorandum of Understanding:

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Idaho Department of Commerce (IDC)
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG)
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR)
- Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (IOGA)
- Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board (IOGLB)
- Idaho Recreation and Parks Association (IRPA)
- Idaho RV Campgrounds Association (IRVCA)
- Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
- Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- University of Idaho (U of I)
- Other public and private entities participate in various IRTI projects.



How Does IRTI Work?

A Steering Committee composed of one representative from each partner agency governs IRTI. The Steering Committee meets three to four times per year to explore opportunities to work together on projects that reflect overlapping agency and organizational objectives. The Steering Committee approves statewide work projects, charters working groups to implement the projects, and approves an annual budget. The annual IRTI budget is funded by contributions from various partner agencies. An IRTI Coordinator provides staff support to the Steering Committee and is funded jointly by the partner agencies.

Where can I find more information about IRTI?

IRT I web page: <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/idaho-recreation-and-tourism-initiative-0>

IRT I Coordinator: Vicki Jo Lawson; vicki.lawson@idpr.idaho.gov; 208.608.8741

How Does IRTI Benefit Idaho?

The following summaries briefly explain each of IRTI's 2012 projects, identify the project leader, and describe the project accomplishments and benefits to Idaho. In 2012, the partners jointly contributed and leveraged \$763,900 to accomplish these projects:

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(Photo credit: IDPR.)

BE OUTSIDE, IDAHO!

Be Outside, Idaho! (BOI) is an ever-widening network of partners working collaboratively to develop ways to connect children with nature in Idaho.

This project exemplifies how IRTI works. In 2007, many partners represented by the IRTI Steering Committee discussed that their agencies had some kind of “kids and nature” initiative. However, none of the partners felt that they were effectively responding to the mandate. So, the Steering Committee chartered an interagency working group to determine how to move forward. The group hosted two community sessions, reaching outside the agencies to the broader community--to education, medical, scouting, environmental, and arts groups. The collaborative efforts of the working group and the community groups resulted in the current BOI organization which currently includes over 150 partners—federal, state, and municipal agencies, and private organizations and businesses. Its mission is to *connect children with nature in Idaho, from backyards to mountaintops*. BOI includes a website, www.beoutsideidaho.org, which serves as a clearinghouse for all kids and nature activities throughout the state.



The project leads, Kendra Witt-Doyle, Executive Director for Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health, and Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor for IDFG, serve as co-chairs of the BOI Steering Committee.

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

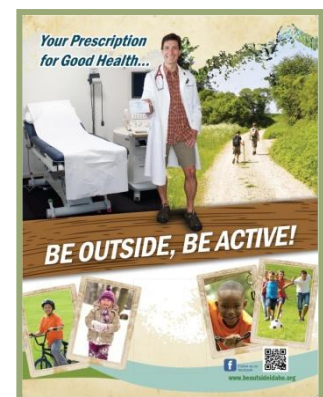
Unplug and Be Outside Week

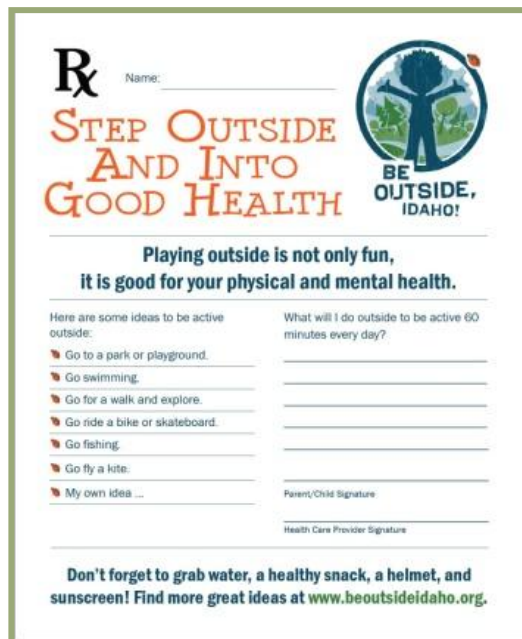
BOI partners hosted a week-long community event in April that encouraged families to reduce their screen time and get outside. Partners offered free activities for children and families that introduced them to the rich opportunities available in Idaho to get outside and be physically active.

- 191 free activities were offered across the state in the Treasure Valley, Idaho Falls, Coeur d'Alene, and Post Falls. Additional communities will participate in 2013.
- Over 2,500 children attended the activities, with an average participation of 54 children per activity.
- 91% of the children who completed passport cards reported that they, in fact, did reduce their screen time.
- Media sponsors were KTVB, News 8, *Treasure Valley Family Magazine*, and *Coeur d'Alene Press*.
- Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter demonstrated his support for the event and its objectives by issuing the Proclamation that the Elected Officials Committee crafted.
- First Lady Lori Otter helped kick off the event at the MK Nature Center by reading the Proclamation and interacting with the children.

Media and Promotion

- Health poster and prescription pads: BOI’s Health Committee developed posters and prescription pads promoting being active





outside. These prescriptions, “*Your Prescription for Good Health: Be Outside, Be Active*”, will be disseminated throughout Idaho to health care professionals to issue to their patients.

- Legislative Day: BOI hosted another Legislative Day at the Idaho State Capitol, reaching out to Idaho's elected Senators and Representatives to increase their awareness of BOI. State Legislators were happy to receive BOI backpacks, water bottles, and pins.

- Boise Parks and Recreation Activity Guide*: The Guide included information about BOI and highlighted local recreational opportunities that are outdoor-oriented.

- Treasure Valley Family Magazine Advertisements*: BOI ran four advertisements in this magazine, promoting outdoor

opportunities targeted for families.

- Website: The BOI website is currently being redesigned to continue to meet the needs of the initiative's growing audiences – teachers, parents, healthcare providers, and children.

Attended Events

- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Conservation Education Webinar Series: BOI participated in the webinar series by providing a presentation, *Go Outside and Play – Getting Kids Back Outdoors*, to 76 participants from agencies and organizations around the country. The presentation included information on Idaho's BOI program and ideas on how other states can collaborate and develop children and nature initiatives.
- Early Years Conference: BOI presented information about Nature Deficit Disorder, the importance of getting children outdoors, and *Unplug and Be Outside Week* at the Early Years Conference which targeted child care providers.
- Kids in the Kitchen: BOI presented information at this event organized by the Junior League of Idaho.

Other Activities

- Explorer Fund Grant: BOI received a \$2,500 grant from North Face's Explorer Fund to expand IDPR's Free Snowshoe Day that will be held in January 2013.
- BOI Strategic Plan: A new strategic plan was developed that emphasizes and accommodates BOI's growth and sets new, farther-reaching goals.

FREE FISHING DAY

Free Fishing Day has been an annual event in Idaho for over twenty years, focusing public attention on fishing activities, resources, and ethics through sponsored events across the state. Many events focus on teaching children how to fish and providing them the opportunity. State license requirements are waived on this day. Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor for IDFG, is the project lead.

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Free Fishing Day on June 9, 2012 was met with inclement weather in much of Idaho. However, that did not dampen the enthusiasm of many anglers who participated in events hosted around the state. At least 43 specific events were held statewide with a total of about 5,000 participants. Youngsters learned casting skills, how to bait hooks, fish identification, aquatic insect identification, angler ethics, fish cleaning, and even how to cook their catch. While sponsored by IDFG, many partners made these events possible. Sportsmen's organizations, sporting goods businesses, agency personnel, and volunteers worked together to organize successful events. These collaborative efforts help children and families discover fishing as fun family and lifetime activity.

2013 PLANS

Free Fishing Day is so institutionalized now that it is an anticipated kick-off-to-summer in Idaho! In 2013, Free Fishing Day will be on June 8!



(Photo credit: Vicki Jo Lawson. Location: Sawtooth National Recreation Area.)



(Photo credit: IDPR. Location: Round Lake State Park.)

IDAHO CAMPGROUND DIRECTORY

Idaho's popular campground directory, *RV Idaho*, is an annually-updated publication which is unique in the nation because it is not a membership directory. It is a comprehensive, consumer-friendly, informative guide that includes detailed information on almost all public campgrounds, private RV parks, and public dump stations in Idaho. It is the third-most-requested travel publication in Idaho, with only the State Travel Guide and Idaho highway map receiving more requests, and it reaches more Idaho campers and those traveling to Idaho than any other publication.



Despite the economy, RVers continue to travel in record numbers. They have extremely desirable demographics and spending patterns with considerable discretionary income which they choose to spend on their RV lifestyle. A conservative estimate of RVer annual spending in Idaho would be in excess of \$200 million.

The mission of the Idaho RV Campgrounds Association (IRVCA) is to develop and implement a sustainable RV tourism marketing program to increase awareness of Idaho as a great RV destination, promote Idaho's RV parks/campgrounds to the 30 million RVers on the road today, and increase RV tourism spending in Idaho each year. Publishing and distributing RV IDAHO is a vital part of this important mission. All 600 private RV parks and public campgrounds in Idaho share in the benefits of IRVCA's targeted RV tourism development programs which are responsible for bringing thousands of new campers to Idaho each year.

Anne Chambers, Executive Director of IRVCA is the project lead. Partners include the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Parks Recreation, and U.S. Forest Service.

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

More than 89,000 copies of 2012 RV IDAHO were shipped and distributed free-of-charge to RVers/campers, both in- and out-of-state, at hundreds of tourist information centers, regional tourism offices, Chambers of Commerce, private RV parks, public campgrounds, gas stations, RV-related businesses and recreation, travel and sports shows.

In addition, more than 16,000 copies were direct-mailed to campers who requested Idaho camping information via phone or the internet.

For campers and RVers who researched their travel options online, the searchable campground database information was included on IRVCA's website, www.rvidaho.org, as well as on Idaho's travel and tourism website, www.visitidaho.org. A downloadable version of 2012 RV IDAHO was also available on both tourism websites.

2013 PLANS

With the help of many IRTI partners, IRVCA updated the campground database information and published 105,000 copies of 2013 RV IDAHO in early October. These will be distributed to RVers/campers throughout the coming year.

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

The Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Travel Management project is overseen by the Idaho Interagency OHV Coordinating Committee (IICC), composed of state and federal resource management agencies responsible for some aspect of OHV recreation or access. The IICC seeks to foster consistent OHV management, quality OHV opportunities, public safety, user responsibility, and protection of natural, social, and economic resources across all management jurisdictions in Idaho. One of the primary projects of the IICC is the Idaho OHV public outreach campaign, *Stay on Trails*, www.stayontrails.com.



This project was developed because the agencies charged with managing OHV travel believed that their individual public outreach efforts were not being effective. This statewide campaign encourages riders to ride safely and responsibly and to reduce impact on the land and other trail users. This campaign began in 2005. Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming have since modeled their programs after Idaho's.

Partners in this project include the BLM, IDFG, IDL, IDPR, and USFS. Project lead for IICC is Dennis Duehren, Montpelier District Ranger, Caribou-Targhee National Forest. Project leadership for the public outreach campaign is shared among the working group members.

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Outreach to OHV users centers around two campaign periods, one in the spring, as people turn their attention to trail riding, and the other in the fall, prior to and during hunting season. The agencies work with a professional advertising firm to identify media strategies and tactics, select types of communication, and develop messages that best accommodate the needs and goals of the campaign, maximizing the benefit of available funding.

Spring Campaign

With limited financial resources in 2012, the spring focus was on radio, public relations, and internet presence:

- Broadcast radio live-reads.
- Roll out IDPR's new online maps at www.trails.idaho.gov.
- Research and post new rides to www.stayontrails.com.

Spring '12	
Radio	
Dates	4/23/12 - 6/17/12
	925 Live Read Spots
Television	
	n/a
Internet	
Dates	3/26/12-6/24/12
Impressions	6,380,358
Clicks	5,946
Average CTR	0.09%
Newspaper	
	n/a
Printing and Point of Sale	
	n/a

Fall Campaign

- Broadcast radio live-reads.
- Run newspaper ads.
- Focus on refining the hunting tips section of the stayontrails.com web site from ten tips for OHV hunters to five tips, working with managers from BLM, IDFG, IDL, IDPR and USFS.
- Issue a press release about the five tips for OHV hunters. The release received excellent coverage throughout the state.
- Craft a blog with the five tips, and share a video about hunting tips that allows hunters/riders to learn which trails and roads are legal to ride on during hunting season. The hunting tips blog received 222 page views; it was shared on the Idaho Recreation Council web site; and it was shared with all of the OHV clubs in Idaho.
- In 2013, more “where to go” rides will be developed for the web site. A budget issue in 2012 prevented the public relations portion of the 2012 campaign from being fully implemented.



(Photo credit: Bear Valley CVB. Location: Bear Valley.)

Fall '12	
Radio	
Dates	9/10/12 - 11/25/12
	500 Live Read Spots
	2,151 radio spots
	51 radio spots w/ Boise State and Univ. of Idaho Sponsorship
	28.6% average reach
	26 average frequency
Television	
	n/a
Internet	
Dates	n/a
Impressions	
Clicks	
Average CTR	
Newspaper	
	September
	40 inch/Quarter Page ad
	Idaho Falls Post Register, Idaho Statesman (2 insertions,) Idaho Press-Tribune, Lewiston Morning Tribune, Coeur d'Alene Press, Idaho State Journal
Printing and Point of Sale	

OUTFITTERS AND GUIDES GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION MAPPING

The Outfitter and Guides Geospatial Information System (GIS) Mapping project has produced digital maps of outfitter and guide-permitted and -licensed areas throughout the state. This information previously was available only in “pieces” from multiple agencies. This collaborative mapping project has made it easier for all agencies to understand exactly which areas are permitted and licensed, and who holds the permits and licenses for which activities. While this information is useful to many of the land-managing agencies, it also has a very useful application for recreationists looking for outfitter and guide services. This information is now available online at www.fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb and at IDFG’s Hunt Planner site, <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/huntplanner>, and includes a variety of search capabilities. Soon, it will be fully integrated on Idaho’s travel and tourism website.



Project partners include BLM, IDFG, IOGLB, and USFS. The project leads are Jake Howard, Executive Director of IOGLB, and Bart Butterfield of IDFG.

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In Idaho, there currently are about 400 outfitters licensed by the IOGLB, many of whom also are permitted by federal agencies. Together, these outfitters operate in roughly 3,000 areas that span a wide variety of public and private land jurisdictions. The majority of these areas are individually limited to the outfitter licensed to provide specific activities to the public. Almost all of these areas have been mapped. This mapping system is critical to all of the partners’ efficiency and effectiveness in coordinating outfitter licensing and permitting among federal agencies and sister state agencies.

2013 PLANS

Director Howard recently reported to the IRTI Steering Committee that Bart Butterfield and his colleagues at IDFG have done a tremendous job of mapping these areas. However, in addition to the maps, there is a need for the descriptive data associated with each area, license, permit, and permit holder to be current and accurate in order for this tool to be fully useful. He also explained that while IDFG continues to map all active license areas, IDFG’s ability to further develop and improve the usability of this tool is limited due to funding and competing priorities. Consequently, there have been discussions with Idaho Department of Administration (IDM) about the potential for it to further develop, enhance, and expand this mapping tool. Such an effort would be a collaborative one with IDFG and the other partners.

At a recent IRTI Steering Committee meeting, Bob Smith of ADM demonstrated a web-based application partly developed by his agency that enhances the mapping tool to be a more effective management tool. This preliminary, web-based application currently is available to all partner agencies. For information on that system, contact Bob Smith at (208) 332-1867 or at robert.smith@cio.idaho.gov.

The types of data that could enhance the current tool and some of the challenges involved in keeping the information current were discussed. There was agreement that further development of the tool would be beneficial, especially to partners who manage and regulate outfitters (e.g., BLM, IDFG, IOGLB, and USFS), and to partners who promote tourism and assist in trip planning (e.g., U of I and ID Tourism). It was requested that scenic byways and ski resorts be added to the tool, and that the photo database maintained by ID Tourism, the “media room”, be part of any enhancement. It was suggested that webinars could be hosted to provide training for agency administrators across the state.

In 2013, IOGLB will facilitate a meeting among the project partners to further explore the best options to more fully develop, enhance, and expand this tool, with the expectation of bringing a proposal to the IRTI Steering Committee in the spring.



(Photo credit: IDFG)

RECREATION INFORMATION FULFILLMENT AND RECREATION/TOURISM DATABASES AND WEBSITES

During 2012, the Recreation Information Fulfillment project included toll-free call and snail mail responses by the Idaho Division of Tourism (ID Tourism) staff to provide recreation-tourism related information. In addition, web-related services were provided that include reader service, online inquiry processing, customer online inquiry reports, and support of live chat customer service at Idaho's primary travel and tourism website, www.visitidaho.org. The Recreation/Tourism Databases and Websites project includes the ID Tourism websites and the database that supports them, www.updateidaho.com. Work on these sites and database is contracted by ID Tourism to ensure that the state's primary site continues to be exciting, accurate, and useful as a one-stop information source for visitors and recreationists. In this way, the IRTI partnership helps eliminate duplication of efforts across agencies and leverages ID Tourism marketing dollars. Karen Ballard, Administrator for ID Tourism, is the project lead.

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recreation Information Fulfillment

The total number of tourism inquiries received between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012 was 1,266,940, up from last year's 1,222,934, reflecting a 4% increase. Tourism inquiries are measured in two ways: the number of toll-free calls and snail mail inquiries received and the number of unique visitors to any of the tourism websites.

The table below compares the number of tourism inquiries received from each source during the past five fiscal years.

Inquiry Source	Inquiry Period July 1 – June 30	Number of Inquiries	% Change from Previous Year
All West contractor (toll-free calls, mail)	2007/2008	105,483	
All West contractor (toll-free calls, mail)	2008/2009	79,447	- 24%
All West contractor (toll-free calls, mail)	2009/2010	149,215	+ 87.8%
All West contractor (toll-free calls, mail)	2010/2011	123,665	- 17%
Toll-free calls, mail	2011/2012	92,261	-25%
Unique web visitors (all ID Tourism sites)	2007/2008	788,397	
Unique web visitors (all ID Tourism sites)	2008/2009	1,042,864	+ 32.3%
Unique web visitors (all ID Tourism sites)	2009/2010	1,084,028	+ 3.9 %
Unique web visitors (all ID Tourism sites)	2010/2011	1,099,269	+ 1.3 %
Unique web visitors (all ID Tourism sites)	2011/2012	1,174,679	+ 6.4 %

In November 2011, the contractor, All West Communications, closed their Boise office and returned to their home base in Salt Lake City. In response, ID Tourism launched an in-house “call center” by routing *Visit Idaho* toll-free calls to ID Tourism’s office. In-bound calls are greeted with a live, friendly, guest services agent on Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5pm.

Recreation/Tourism Database and Websites

The database system created in 2003 by Drake Cooper, www.updateidaho.com, continues to be the online interface for Idaho’s tourism industry to post and edit information about lodging properties, events, attractions, vacation packages, services, and contact information. In 2012, a new “leads and reports” feature was integrated into the database, as well as a meeting room database.

The database delivers data to these IRTI partner and tourism sites:

- www.visitidaho.org
- www.beoutsideidaho.org
- www.idahoparks.org
- www.rvidaho.org
- www.idahogolftrail.com
- www.idahowinter.org
- <http://www.visitidaho.org/lewisandclark/>
- www.touridaho.org
- www.idahowhitewatertrail.com
- www.swita.org
- www.twinfallschamber.com
- www.visitsouthidaho.com
- and the official, printed *Idaho Travel Guide*.

In 2012, ID Tourism received a Mercury Award from the U.S. Travel Association for “Best Overall State Tourism Program” for its *Vitamin ID* winter campaign. ID Tourism launched *Vitamin ID* with a goal of stimulating winter recreation travel throughout the state. The entire promotion was built around the central theme that a ski or snowboard trip to Idaho is alternative medicine for the wintertime blahs. In the spirit of IRTI, the campaign is a partnership among ID Tourism, Idaho Ski Areas Association, and the state’s eighteen ski areas. It includes a dedicated micro-site at

www.idahowinter.org, which includes a 22-consecutive week online sweepstakes and an integrated regional media plan. This promotional campaign focuses on adults, 30-54 years old, including singles, families, and boomers who have a passion for skiing, snowboarding and other outdoor winter activities.



The annual Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism (ICORT) was held in Coeur d'Alene on May 8-10, 2012, during National Tourism Week/Month. Governor Otter kicked off the Conference by delivering a Public Service Announcement to celebrate National Tourism Month, and Idaho's State Troopers encouraged people to slow down and enjoy Idaho's scenic beauty by presenting visitors with an Idaho Travel Guide and map during National Tourism Week of May 5 – 13. Information about 2012's ICORT can be found at: <http://commerce.idaho.gov/tourism-grants-and-resources/conference-on-recreation-and-tourism/>.



2013 PLANS

Upgrades to the database and websites are planned for 2013 which will focus on making the site easier to use, including these things:

- user interface enhancements,
- systems that will allow databases to “talk” to one another, and
- means to offer Idaho visitors easy access to Parks Perks’ partners who offer discounts to holders of current Idaho State Parks Passports.

SCENIC BYWAYS

Years ago, Idaho had a confusing mixture of scenic routes—some were National Forest Scenic Byways, some were State Scenic Routes. There were no consistent standards for such routes, and there was little publicity about them. Since becoming a collaborative project, a system of byways has been established. The Idaho Scenic Byway program now includes a system of thirty scenic, historic, and cultural byways, spanning 2,916 miles of the state highway system, with several “Back Country Byways” traversing some of Idaho’s more challenging and interesting back roads. There is a statewide Scenic Byway Advisory Committee, consisting of multi-agency and private sector members, that provides guidance on scenic byway designations, prioritization of projects eligible for scenic byway funding, and general management of these corridors. The project lead is Randy Kyrias, Transportation Performance Division Administrator for ITD.

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Getting the Word Out

Idaho’s award-winning website, www.idahobyways.gov, continues to provide information to Idaho’s visitors on features of the byways and the communities through which they pass. In 2012, this website was accessed by 74,524 potential tourists, which is up 23% from last year.

The program also continues to provide an informative brochure that is sent out individually to potential Idaho visitors, and, in case quantities, to travel associations and information centers across the U.S. and world-wide. In 2012, 60,000 copies of the brochure were printed and distributed.

Finally, there are videos in development by Idaho Public Television to highlight the uniqueness of each of Idaho’s scenic byways. These videos, when complete, will be used to advertise Idaho’s byways to travelers across the U.S. and world-wide.

Enhancing Local Tourism

Idaho communities successfully applied for federal funds for infrastructure improvements along three of Idaho’s scenic byways. These improvements are described below:

- Improving travelers’ experiences by rehabilitating the rest area at the *Payette River Scenic Byway* Rotary Park (\$57,750).
- Benefiting local economy with an interpretive rest area along the *Teton Scenic Byway* that highlights local points of interest including the wine region, historical sites, agricultural industry, and surrounding small towns (\$383,923).
- Improving travelers’ safety with shoulder improvements along the *Western Heritage Historic Byway* (\$490,000).

Two scenic byways currently are engaging key stakeholders in identifying needed infrastructure investments as well as potential market development strategies that will enhance local economies. The *Peaks to Craters Scenic Byway* just completed their first Corridor Management Plan (CMP). This plan, developed with input from stakeholders and communities, provides a consistent and comprehensive vision to protect the intrinsic qualities along that scenic byway and to take advantage of potential economic opportunities. In addition, the *Payette River Scenic Byway* is undergoing an update to its CMP.

Supporting Statewide Goals

The Scenic Byway program continues to focus on the future and to support overall Idaho goals, including these plans:

- Idaho's Transportation Strategic Plan to improve mobility, safety, and economic opportunity,
- Idaho's Project 60 Initiative to improve Idaho's gross state product, and
- the Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan to improve access to Idaho's public lands.

In addition, there are two projects that started in 2012 with these goals in mind. The first effort is a study to determine how to provide the most effective recreation access to those who desire or require public transportation services along the Top 10 Scenic Drives in the Northern Rockies. Federal funds totaling \$113,000, which will be matched by local funds, are provided to support this 17-month effort. This project benefits byway travelers by conceptualizing and planning a regional network of transportation providers to:

- enable more senior, disabled, and international travelers to access more than 100 state/national parks, forests, and wilderness areas across the Northern Rockies,
- allow hikers to access trails at one point and leave from another,
- enable tourists and community residents to enjoy byways by bus or van rather than by auto,
- increase retail activity and thus add jobs and enhance local economic growth,
- assist residents in commuting to tourism and recreation related jobs along byways, and
- strengthen public transportation knowledge of Idaho's drive coordinators.

The second initiative is a review of Idaho's Scenic Byway program. The transportation bill, MAP-21, signed into law in 2012, no longer includes a separate funding program for scenic byway projects. In addition, the Idaho program has matured over the years and is in need of a variety of different tools, specifically those related to market development and tourism.

2013 PLANS

- It is anticipated that a new framework for Idaho's Scenic Byway program will be in place in 2013, with an increased focus on partnership.
- Idaho Public Television, in partnership with ITD and ID Tourism, will premier a one-hour *Outdoor Idaho* special on Idaho's Scenic Byways in March, during its annual funding campaign.



STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION AND TOURISM PLAN

Each state is required to develop a State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP) every five years in order to be eligible for Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF) funding. Please note that the tourism element is not required, but Idaho has chosen to include it. Rick Just, Comprehensive Planning Chief for IDPR, is the project lead.



2012 Accomplishments

The 2012-2016 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP) was approved by Governor Otter in December. It has now been sent to the National Park Service for final approval.

The public outreach effort undertaken during the planning process gave Idahoans many opportunities for participation in development of the plan. Elected officials and outdoor recreation opinion leaders statewide took part in focused sessions designed to identify outdoor recreation issues and opportunities. Citizens were encouraged to use an interactive, web-based tool in which they were asked to share their opinions and put forth new ideas. A randomly selected sample of state residents participated in a survey about recreation issues and opportunities. Finally, the draft SCORTP document itself was available for review electronically for 60 days.



(Photo credit: Vicki Jo Lawson. Location: Kovalicky Point, Sawtooth National Recreation Area.)

During the review period, several disc golfers commented that they wanted to see more recognition of their activity. The activity had not been included because national survey data used in SCORTP did not include disc golf. Consequently, with data received from disc golfers, a report on the activity was added to Idaho's SCORTP.

VISITOR CENTERS

The Idaho Visitor Centers project includes support of visitor centers located along highways near Idaho's state boundaries. Three visitor centers—Huetter, Cherry Creek, and Snake River View—are funded in part by ITD (bricks and mortar maintenance) and by ID Tourism (operations). ID Tourism does not have personnel for staffing, but provides some funding for volunteer staffing. Currently, the Centers are operated by volunteers recruited by local Chambers of Commerce. Karen Ballard, Administrator for ID Tourism, is the project lead.

2012 Accomplishments

Visitor Center locations are promoted via the annual *Visit Idaho Travel Guide*, online travel resource partners, directional highway signage, and the Idaho highway map. Information on area restaurants, shopping, lodging, and activity recommendations often are more helpful when offered by a local resident, such as the volunteers staffing the visitor centers.

- Gateway Southwest - Snake River View Visitor Center
Center is open May through September, 10 am to 6 pm daily. It also is open occasionally during the winter. 6,221 visitors signed the guest book. WiFi is popular at this visitor center; ITD is working to add a sign notifying travelers of its availability here.
- Gateway Southeast - Cherry Creek Visitor Center
Center is open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, 10 am to 6 pm daily. Only 4,917 visitors signed the guest book, but at least 6,031 passengers on 169 buses actually stopped at the visitor center! Most of the buses were traveling to Yellowstone National Park.
- Gateway Northwest – Huetter Visitor Center
Center is open year-round, Tuesday through Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm, and Monday, 9 am to 1 pm. 11,641 visitors were counted by the staff.



(Photo credit: IDPR. Location: Cherry Creek Visitor Center.)

WATCHABLE WILDLIFE

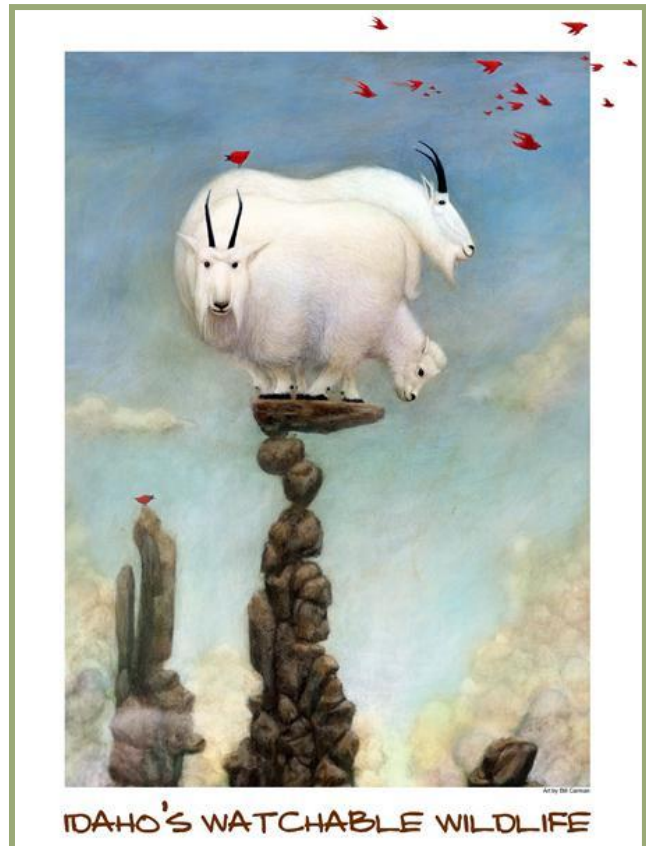
The Watchable Wildlife (WW) Committee is an interagency team that works to promote wildlife viewing opportunities and an appreciation for wildlife across all land management jurisdictions in Idaho. The WW Committee's goal is to enhance Idahoans' and visitors' respect and understanding of wildlife, its conservation, and outdoor recreation resources through viewing opportunities and community engagement. The WW Committee works with IDFG's Wildlife Diversity Program to sustain Idaho's fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend, with an emphasis on threatened, endangered, and at-risk species. Projects focus on promoting appreciation for wildlife and their habitats, wildlife-based tourism, and responsible wildlife observation ethics. In addition to the IRTI partners, the WW Committee includes representatives from Golden Eagle Audubon, Idaho Fish and Game Foundation, and Idaho Power. In past years, the WW Committee produced and published the *Idaho Wildlife Viewing Guide* and *Idaho Birding Trail Guidebook*. The WW Committee's work is supported by revenue from sales of these books and funding from interagency partners. Deniz Aygen, Watchable Wildlife Program Coordinator for IDFG, is the project lead and WW Committee Chair.



2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The WW Committee did these things in 2012:

- Participated in International Migratory Bird Day, BioBlitz, and Idaho Wildlife Summit.
- Developed the Bird by Bird website, www.birdbybirdidaho.com.
- Facilitated, expanded, and participated in the Bird by Bird program.
- Coordinated several citizen science projects.
- Worked collaboratively on inter-agency projects involving wildlife viewing opportunities.
- Developed new a WW poster (at right) to promote Idaho's wildlife and to generate sales receipts.
- Implemented the Idaho Nature Backpack Program.
- Published and edited *Windows to Wildlife* newsletter (4x a year).
- Promoted the Idaho Birding Trail.



2013 PLANS

- Fund additional backpacks through two grant cycles for the Idaho Nature Backpack Program (winter and summer).
- Emphasize programs, events, and publicity for wildlife viewing opportunities.
- Encourage public involvement and collaboration through citizen science.
- Continue collaboration on statewide projects involving wildlife viewing opportunities and conservation education efforts.



(Photo credit: IDPR. Location: Bruneau Dunes State Park.)



Idaho Nature
Backpack Program



2013 Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism

May 7-9, 2013

Shilo Inn, Idaho Falls, Idaho