



**IRTI Steering Committee
April 2, 2013 Meeting Minutes
IDPR Headquarters
Boise, ID**

Participants

Tom Alvarez, USFWS
Karen Ballard, IDC, Division of Tourism
Jan Brown, Yellowstone Business Partnership
Andy Brunelle, USFS
Dan Buckley, NPS
Anne Chambers, IRVCA
Krystal Clair, BOR
Robin Fehlau, BLM
Bob Fleming, IOGLB contractor (Resource Data, Inc.)
Maureen Gresham, ITD
Danelle Highfill, USFS
Jake Howard, IOGLB
Rick Just, IDPR
Ken Knoch, IRPA
Vicki Jo Lawson, IRTI
Meggan Laxalt-Mackey, USFWS
Jennifer Okerlund, IDPR
Bob Pietras, IDL
Vicky Runnoe, IDFG

IRTI BUSINESS

New IRTI Coordinator to start in August

In March, Dave Olson declined the offer extended to him last November to serve as the next IRTI Coordinator. In response, the Steering Committee generated a list of four candidates to consider. After studying their resumes and through a consensus effort, the Steering Committee selected Rick Just to be the next IRTI Coordinator. The Committee gave serious consideration to three other candidates, including Jill Baum, Neal Hitchcock, and Bobbie Patterson. Rick was selected because of his long history with the IRTI Steering Committee and his Statewide and national connections in recreation and tourism circles. Vicki Lawson will continue serving as the Coordinator until Rick can begin in mid-August. Congratulations, Rick!

Given the high quality of the candidates not chosen, there was some discussion regarding how to include them in IRTI. Folks agreed to give some thought as to how best to do this.

Changes in IRTI Steering Committee membership

Amy Ferriter left ISDA to take a position with Crop Production Services Timberland, so Lloyd Knight will serve as the ISDA representative to the Steering Committee. Lloyd was unable to attend this meeting. Susan Hogue MacKenzie left U of I to take a position with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, so Vicki will work with U of I to assure that a new representative is identified. Amy's and Susan's energy will be missed on the Steering Committee!

IRTI Annual Accomplishment Report distribution

Vicki reported that the Annual Accomplishment Report was distributed widely in January, including to selected State House and Senate Committee members (85 of them), Idaho Travel Council, IDPR Grant Advisory Boards, IDPR Board, USFS State Coordinators, Idaho Governor's Natural Resource Advisors, Idaho Statesman, and the broad networks of each IRTI partner agency/organization. A discussion regarding whether or not to promote and publicize IRTI further was postponed until the next Steering Committee meeting.

Obstacles to FY2013 IRTI projects and budget implementation

- BLM - Robin Fehlau reported that it is not likely that sequestration will impact the BLM funds available for IRTI in FY2013. However, she is waiting for final BLM approval to process the grant applications from the IRTI partners.
- FS - Nel Highfill reported that FS funds also will be available as soon she can process the paperwork. The FS expects to receive its final FY2013 budget in May or June.
- USFWS - Meggan Laxalt-Mackey reported that USFWS currently has placed a hold on all contracts/agreements. She expects that when their final budget is received (within the next 6 weeks), she will be able to honor the IRTI commitments. She emphasized that USFWS cannot fund any “sponsorships” other than the few that are sanctioned nationally. The IRTI partnership is NOT a sponsorship!
- IDC Tourism – Karen Ballard reported that State lodging tax is up 5.3% over last year to date, and State sales tax is up 11% over the same period.

IRTI PROJECT UPDATES

Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism (ICORT)

ICORT is scheduled for May 7-9 in Idaho Falls this year. Karen Ballard announced that 115 people are registered for ICORT so far. The Lt. Governor will likely be the final luncheon speaker. In an effort to enable and increase agency attendance, Karen urged partners to do these things: 1. to consider piggy-backing other related meetings with the ICORT date and place, and 2. to consider serving as an ICORT presenter or moderator. Ken Knoch suggested that IRPA could have a member serve on the ICORT planning committee each year. Karen welcomed that suggestion, saying that Diane Norton will call Ken to further discuss this. Vicki reminded Karen that the \$500 from BLM for ICORT will be available through IRTI/IDPR.

Be Outside, Idaho! (BOI)

Vicky Runnoe reported that the BOI steering committee and partners have been working on these things:

- UNPLUG and BE OUTSIDE week is scheduled for April 20-27 in the Treasure Valley, where there will be 150 free or low cost events and activities. Sandpoint and Post Falls hosted UNPLUG and BE OUTSIDE week last week in their communities in order to coincide with spring break. It was noted that Idaho Falls will celebrate UNPLUG and BE OUTSIDE week the same week that ICORT will be Idaho Falls. BOI folks will coordinate with Karen on this.
- The Steering Group is recruiting a new co-chair because Kendra Witt-Doyle is stepping down. Vicky Runnoe is also due to step down.
- A press event is planned to introduce the new BOI poster and “prescription pad” for use in medical offices throughout Idaho. The prescription pad can be used by doctors to prescribe outdoor activities for kids. Posters and pads will be distributed by St. Luke’s and St. Al’s physician/pediatrician networks.
- Brenda Bielke is working on the new BOI web page.
- Bird by Bird programs are in 13 local schools this year. It didn’t seem to be a good fit at the senior center where it was piloted. The program is producing very useful data on bird populations. The limiting factor for growing the program in more schools is the number of trained facilitators available.

Free Fishing Day

Free Fishing Day is scheduled for June 8. Vicky Runnoe reported that plans for the event are similar to those in the past years.

Watchable Wildlife (WW)

Vicki Lawson reported for Deniz Aygen that the Idaho Nature Backpack Program is progressing well.

- The winter grant program was open only to preschools and childcare facilities in Ada and Canyon Counties. Thirty-three applications were received; 50 backpacks were awarded (some facilities requested multiples); 971 children were served.
- The spring grant program was open to preschools and childcare facilities in Ada, Boise, Elmore, and Canyon Counties. Sixteen applications were received; 15 backpacks were awarded; 500 children served.
- The summer grant program will be open to preschools and childcare facilities in SE and SW Idaho. Deniz plans to do more advertising to promote the opportunity.
- Child care providers are enthusiastically taking advantage of the opportunity to participate in WILD ABOUT EARLY LEARNERS, a workshop available to teachers/day care providers who receive the backpacks.

OHV Travel Management and *Stay on Trails* campaign

Jennifer Okerlund reported that the public outreach working group is “freshening” up this year’s campaign. The social media portion of the campaign has had a dramatic increase in followers and likes since launching a free ATV giveaway promotion. The working group is planning a news release to further publicize this promotion. While *Stay on Trails* still will be the message, *Ride Proud* is the new slogan. It is designed to refocus the message and help empower Idahoans to do the right thing.

Recreation Info Fulfillment and Tourism/Recreation Databases

Karen Ballard reported that there is a new campaign on the VisitIdaho.org site (<http://www.visitidaho.org/my-id/>). MyId allows visitors to put faces of themselves and friends in Idaho postcards and videos. It’s a fun way to promote Idaho’s outdoor recreation opportunities!

Idaho Campground Directory

Anne Chambers reported that visits to the RV website are up. She noted that this increase is common at this time of year when people are planning summer trips. Anne announced that Mayor Bieter will be presenting Bobbie Patterson with an award for her years of work as Executive Director of the Boise Convention and Visitors Bureau. Well deserved congratulations to Bobbie!

Idaho Parks Passport, Parks Perks, and Friends of Idaho State Parks

Rick Just reported that this year’s goal of the Idaho Parks Passport program is 20% participation statewide. Currently, there is 7% participation. Marketing is still building. Rick noted that by having raised the camping fee by \$5/day, IDPR already this year has increased revenue by \$250,000! Maureen Gresham noted the ITD is especially proud of the partnership with IDPR in offering the Parks Passport as part of Idaho’s vehicle registration program.

Rick reported that the Parks Perks program will give Passport holders the option of visiting an IDPR office to obtain a discount card good at state and local vendors and attractions. While making the Passports more attractive, these perks also will serve to stimulate recreation/tourism businesses across the state.

Rick will submit the paperwork to apply for non-profit status for Friends of State Parks. Once obtained, Friends will be able to purchase advertising for IDPR through KTVB at half of the regular price!

State Visitor Centers

Karen Ballard noted that a new law allows lottery vending machines to be installed at visitor centers. Money made from sales can be used to fund the visitor center. Karen continues to research this.

Scenic Byways

Maureen Gresham reported that national Scenic Byway funding, as Idaho has enjoyed it in the past, has gone away. The new reality has prompted ITD to consider whether or not a Scenic Byway Advisory Committee (SBAC) is needed. Some of the SBAC functions will still be necessary, including these:

- Recommendation of designation of new Scenic Byways
- Revision of existing Scenic Byways

- Technology transfer (best practices) among Scenic Byways

A SBAC meeting following ICORT on May 9 in Idaho Falls will include discussion of this issue.

The current transportation bill, MAP-21, includes funding for a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Funding for Scenic Byways can come from this program, but those who can apply for funding and criteria for funding have changed. For example, non-profits cannot apply, but those with legal jurisdiction over the route where funding will be used can apply, including schools, local governments, and highway districts. Funding can be used for infrastructure design and construction, but not marketing. There are \$3.6 million available for this reimbursable program. On April 12, the Idaho Transportation Board will determine what portion of these funds will be available for grants such as these. Following the decision, ITD will do its best to make the funding application process easy. Applications will focus on need, feasibility, and benefit. A 7.3% non-federal match will be required. Projects will need to be selected by August, with State and local agreements in place by Sept. 30. The process will begin again in January.

Karen has a list of SBAC members. She will share this with Maureen.

A presentation will be made to the Idaho Transportation Board at its next meeting requesting designation of a new Scenic Byway, "52 on 52". The City of Emmett, on behalf of the Lower Payette River Heritage Byway Committee, will be asking for designation of a 52 mile segment of Idaho Highway 52, extending from the City of Payette to the City of Horseshoe Bend and connecting to the existing Payette River National Scenic Byway.

NEW AND CONTINUING BUSINESS

Outfitter and Guide Mapping Interface Development

Jake Howard and Bill Fleming (contractor from Resource Data, Inc.) discussed a proposal for further development, enhancement, and expansion of the outfitter and guide GIS mapping tool. While IDFG did a wonderful job of developing the initial tool, needs for its consistency and functionality have increased. Phase I (first year) of the proposal, including map transition from IDFG to the ID Department of Administration's server, website integration, and map editing (fixes) would cost about \$35,000; Phase II (second year) includes mapping previously unmapped areas, and would cost about \$35,000 as well. Ongoing monthly support, thereafter, would cost about \$1,000.

Jake emphasized that he was making this proposal prior to getting approval or commitment for some funding from the IOGLB. Jake did this so that he could go to the IOGLB with feedback from the IRTI Steering Committee. Generally, there was support for the added functionality of the tool. However, there was great concern over the costs. Suggestions for off-setting costs and soliciting more funding partners included:

- Consider emphasizing the value of the tool to motorized recreationists, since funding is available for such efforts.
- Explore Homeland Security and other law enforcement entities as partners.
- Consider "chunking" up the work, perhaps on a regional basis, to further phase the work and costs.
- Explain to each end-user within the agencies the benefits of further development of the tool.
- Explain to the outfitters how this can be used as a marketing tool for them.

Jake agreed to send the new cost figures to Vicki after pursuing the above suggestions and visiting with the IOGLB. Vicki will see what the IRTI partners are capable of and willing to do in the 2014 IRTI budget.

Yellowstone Business Partnership

Jan Brown, Executive Director of the Yellowstone Business Partnership (YBP), explained that YBP's goals are to unite businesses dedicated to preserving a healthy environment and shaping a prosperous and sustainable future for communities in the Yellowstone-Teton region. It promotes scientific understanding, informed dialogue, and collaborative approaches to resolving the region's most complex cross boundary socioeconomic and natural resource challenges. Jan described a couple of the projects that YBP currently is working on:

- Buses for Byways – One of the last national Scenic Byway grants awarded is being used to explore transportation barriers and solutions for bringing people to outdoor recreation sites. Jan suggested, as an example, that operating empty river runner shuttle buses (one way) is quite impractical. YBP is working with the University of Montana to develop and conduct a survey to learn who does not visit the region because of transportation barriers and what

capacity (outfitter and guides) may exist to diminish the barriers. This is a 17-month project that was begun last month. This may be the forerunner of an elegant, regional transportation cooperative.

- Multi-state Fishing Licenses – In the spirit of removing outdoor recreation barriers and providing additional funds to game and fish agencies, YBP is developing a multi-state fishing license demo project. A single fishing license that will be good in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Yellowstone will be piloted in 2014. The regional license concept includes adding an administrative fee plus a minimum contribution to a “Stream Restoration Fund” that could be kept in one conservation pool or split evenly among each participating entity. Another opportunity would be to offer anglers a choice of where their conservation contribution would land, along with an opportunity to increase their tax-deductible gift (assuming the funds go to an appropriate foundation/trust.). A link to each state’s licensing web page would be required for the pilot year as no one state feels comfortable sharing its customer data yet. The web page could be designed for maximum convenience and to allow anglers multiple choices for “building” their master license to meet their personal preferences or requirements. If it proves successful, the states likely will ask for legislative authority to make it a permanent program. Jan will craft a formal concept paper within the next two months. She asks that IRTI partners send her web pages from which she could provide a link to the multi-state license opportunity. Jan hopes to help fund this effort, in part, by posting outfitter and guide advertisements on the license web page. There was some discussion about the possibility of using a similar, multi-state, single permit strategy for snowmobiles, as well.

Idaho as a Geotourism Destination

Jan and Karen discussed National Geographic’s desire to help Idaho become a geotourism destination, much like Crown of the Continent and Greater Yellowstone. The concept is that the area from the Clearwater River to the Snake River, perhaps spilling a bit into Wyoming, would constitute the geotourism area focused on wild rivers, scenic byways, and outfitter and guide opportunities. At this year’s ICORT, Jan will introduce the opportunity to work with National Geographic and invite people to identify attractions of the area; at next year’s ICORT folks will be invited to determine what actually should be included in the MapGuide. Jan mentioned the possibility that this area could be blended with the Top 10 Scenic Drives project. YBP now is administrator of the Top 10 project.

Forest Collaboratives

Vicki reminded the Committee of Jon Robison’s (of ICL) presentation to the group a couple of years ago regarding Forest Collaboratives that were starting up across the state. Most National Forests now have one. They function as sort-of-advisory groups, careful to not conflict with FACA rules. The groups are inclusive, independent of the Forest Service, and sometimes have non-profit status with their own funding opportunities. State Tourism was invited to be a part of the new Sawtooth Collaborative. Karen extended the invitation to Vicki. Vicki was able to attend one of the meetings. Fire/fuels management will be the first challenge of the group; others issues may be taken on later if the group wishes to address them. This is a great opportunity! Vicki urges all of the agencies/partners to participate. Since the work is done locally, agency representatives who live locally should be encouraged to participate in the Forest-specific Collaboratives. As the really big landscape issues are addressed by the Collaboratives, recreation and tourism interests need to be included! Vicki agreed to get Maureen information about the various Collaboratives to share with the SBAC.

DATE FOR NEXT IRTI STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, August 20, 1:30 pm, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Headquarters, Boise

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