



**IRTI Steering Committee
September 28, 2011 Meeting Notes
IDPR Headquarters
Boise, ID**

Participants

Deniz Aygen, IDFG
Karen Ballard, ID Division of Tourism
Kathy Browder, U of I
Andy Brunelle, USFS, Idaho NFs
Bart Butterfield, IDFG
Krystal Clair, BOR
Robin Fehlau, BLM
Amy Ferriter, ISDA
Jon Heggen, IDFG
Danelle Highfill, USFS, Boise NF
Jake Howard, IOGLB
Rick Just, IDPR
Mike Keckler, IDFG
John Krause, ITD
Vicki Jo Lawson, IRTI
Meggan Laxalt-Mackey, USFWS
Vicky Runnoe, IDFG
Kendra Witt, Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation

IRTI BUSINESS

IRTI Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), 2011-2016

Vicki Lawson distributed copies of the final, signed MOU. There are four new IRTI partners! They are:

- Idaho Recreation and Parks Association
- Idaho State Department of Agriculture
- National Park Service, which has participated in IRTI meetings and projects in the past, but previously had not been a signatory to the MOU
- University of Idaho

FY2012 IRTI Budget

Vicki distributed copies of the final, signed FY2012 IRTI budget. The overall budget is about 4% lower than last year, at \$737,900, but the projects remain robust. The need for a meeting with the agencies' fiscal folks to facilitate smoother "banking", invoicing, and transferring of funds was discussed. It was decided that such meetings will be convened if problems exist between specific partners. At this time, it appears that the existing problems may be resolved without such a meeting. In the future, problems should be anticipated when there are changes in processes or turnover in personnel.

IRTI Annual Accomplishment Report

Vicki urged all project leads and working groups to get their annual report narratives/photos to her by mid-November so that the reports can be distributed by early December. She will send out a brief outline for the narratives. Karen Ballard offered to include the reports in her mailing to State Legislators in January.

PROJECT UPDATES

Watchable Wildlife (WW)

Deniz Aygen reported that WW has submitted grants for these projects:

- Development of WW opportunities at Kirkwood Ranch, located along the Snake River. The Ranch, where big horn sheep often can be seen, receives numerous visitors annually. This project reflects collaboration among ten partners.
- Support for *Bird by Bird*. First implemented during the 2009-2010 school year, the *Bird by Bird* project is a collaboration among the WW Committee, *Be Outside, Idaho* partners, IDFG, BLM, USFWS, Golden Eagle Audubon, Wild Birds Unlimited, and Nature Conservancy. During the 2011-2012 school year, this bird watching and feeding program will be in twelve schools (elementary and high schools) and one assisted living facility in the Treasure Valley. Equipment, books, optics, and seed are provided for the entire school year. WW Committee members have been visiting participating classrooms once a month to provide informational presentations and hands-on activities. Additional support will help expand the program beyond the Treasure Valley and will help tap the skills of the Master Naturalists across the State to provide classroom visits.
- Development of an Idaho Nature Backpack program. As part of the *Be Outside, Idaho* movement, the WW Committee is developing a program modeled after South Dakota Game, Fish, and Park's program. Through an application process, it will provide licensed, year-round childcare facilities and in-home childcare providers with nature backpacks filled with age-appropriate items to encourage daily outdoor exploration and discovery. Successful applicants also will receive a binder with ideas for activities to utilize the backpacks and to aid in related classroom activities. Applications will open in 2012. One hundred backpacks will be awarded the first year.

The WW Committee is working to develop a new poster that will promote wildlife watching in Idaho.

Deniz requests help from IRTI Steering Committee members in providing articles for WW's quarterly newsletter, *Windows to Wildlife*. Anyone interested in writing an article (of any length) is encouraged to get in touch with Deniz (deniz.aygen@idfg.idaho.gov). She welcomes a broad diversity of topics associated with wildlife watching in Idaho. Article submission deadlines for the coming year's issues are: December 20, March 20, June 20, and September 20.

Outfitter and Guide GIS Mapping Project

Jake Howard (IOGLB) and Bart Butterfield (IDFG) reported that the GIS mapping system developed through IRTI to document licensed and permitted outfitter operating areas and activities in Idaho continues to be very useful. Jake said it has become a critical management tool for the Licensing Board as it administers outfitters licensed on public and private lands statewide. He explained that it is a significantly important tool in making good resource management decisions that often is used by or in conjunction with partnering agencies such as USFS, BLM, IDL and IDFG. It also is an outstanding web-based promotional tool being used by IDFG and the Division of Tourism to market and advertise Idaho outfitted hunting and boating opportunities worldwide. He said that the Mapping Project and effort behind it continue to be a success story that was made possible through IRTI, and is something that IOGLB would not have been able to do without this partnership.

Jake and Bart pointed out that there is need to continue improving the mapping system's accuracy and functionality to assure the availability of up-to-date, accurate operating areas and activities. This is needed in response to increasing use of the system by agencies, outfitters, and the general public, and in response to the ever-changing dynamics of the industry. Due to new demands on staff involved with the mapping system's maintenance, changes in software, and related resources needed to maintain the system, additional help and, possibly, a request for additional funds from the partnership may be necessary in the future. Jake and Bart are currently looking at options.

The GIS Maps can be accessed at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb>. The partnering agencies can also arrange to download a copy into their GIS systems.

Be Outside, Idaho! (BOI)

Vicky Runnoe, BOI co-chair, reported that BOI's other co-chair, Jamie Heinzerling, took a position as Deputy City Clerk for the City of Boise, and, consequently, was unable to continue in the co-chair role. She has been replaced by Kendra Witt, Executive Director of Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation. Kendra has recently served as BOI's Health Sub-Committee chair. (Jamie will be missed, and Kendra is enthusiastically welcomed!) Vicky and Kendra reported that the BOI Steering Committee and partners have been busy doing these things:

- Mike Shipman, BOI's Arts Sub-Committee chair, will attend the annual National Children and Nature Network conference, representing BOI.
- Brenda Bielke, BOI's Partnership Sub-Committee chair, is organizing a meeting of all BOI partners for sometime in November in Boise.
- BOI Steering Committee is working with Access Idaho to build a new BOI website, having outgrown the current website developed several years ago by Division of Tourism.
- BOI plans to participate in another "Rotunda Day" with State Legislators in January 2012, focusing on the health benefits of getting kids outside.
- Last April's "Unplug and Be Outside" week, led by Kendra Witt, was a huge success. It built on national "No TV Week", responsive to the fact that kids, on average, spend over 30 hours per week in front of a media screen. Boise and Meridian schools participated in "Unplug and Be Outside" week. The event included publicity about the value of unplugging and going outside, promoted and provided outdoor activities across the Treasure Valley, and encouraged healthy living. Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation was the primary partner organizing this. It was piloted in the Boise/Meridian area and, because of its success, has generated interest in other parts of Idaho including Idaho Falls, Post Falls, Lewiston, Moscow, and Nampa. BOI will be working with these communities to expand the 2012 "Unplug and Be Outside" week.
- The cities of Boise and Moscow have been designated as two of the fewer than 500 nationwide "Let's Move" communities. BOI will be collaborating with both Cities to achieve their mutual goal.

OHV Travel Management

Jon Heggen reported that the Idaho Interagency OHV Coordinating Committee (IICC) has been focusing on outreach and legislation. IICC continues to make recommendations for consistency in definitions of trails and vehicles, in management, and in safety requirements. Jon reported that in the near future, IDPR will be developing a clearinghouse for all things OHV.

Stay on Trails Public Outreach Campaign

Andy Brunelle reported that this fall's *Stay on Trails* campaign will include statewide radio spots in the same markets that receive Bronco football coverage. A new poster is being developed that will focus on the theme of "even though it's an all-terrain vehicle, not all trails are open to it". The website, StayOnTrails.com, will continue to provide fresh ideas and maps of where folks can ride, and will deliver *Stay on Trails* messages. Additional Forest Service Motor Vehicle Use Maps have been purchased so that IDFG offices and other points of sale for fishing/hunting licenses can have adequate supplies for distribution. It is anticipated that the State Legislature may provide direction to integrate BLM, FS, IDPR, and IDFG maps.

Free Fishing Day

Vicky Runnoe reported that Free Fishing Day is scheduled for June 6 in 2012.

Scenic Byways

John Krause reported that the 2010 FHWA Scenic Byway grant awards were made very late. Idaho received about \$213,000 to fund these projects:

- Payette River National Scenic Byway Way Finding Implementation
- Hagerman Wildlife Viewing Area
- Stanley Beautification (Really? How could Stanley be MORE beautiful!?)
- Salmon, Idaho Scenic Byways Shared-Use Pathways, Phase 1

The 2011 FHWA Scenic Byway grant application process was abbreviated, extending only for one month. Awards were made very quickly afterwards. John noted that the awards did not reflect the priorities recommended by the Idaho Scenic Byway Advisory Committee. Idaho received about \$332,000 for these projects:

- Sawtooth, Salmon River, and Ponderosa Pine Scenic Byways Interpretive Enhancements
- Payette River National Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan Update
- Thousand Springs Scenic Byway Interpretive and Directional Signage Project
- Sandpoint Byways Interpretive Center

John reported that 60,000 Scenic Byway brochures were printed in 2011. No changes, except contact information, were made. Brochures are being shipped to outlets and partners now. With 25,000 brochures left from 2010, John anticipates that additional reprints in 2012 will not be necessary. Funding for the 2012 printing, already included in the 2012 IRTI budget, will be redirected. John agreed to provide a proposal at the next IRTI meeting outlining alternative uses of those funds. Karen Ballard will work with John to appropriately redirect the ITC grant funds.

Karen reported that EMSI has contracted with the State to conduct economic studies to determine the value of tourism/number of tourism-related jobs, county by county. Karen suggested that consideration be given to redirecting the brochure funds to support further study on the economic impact of Scenic Byways to local economies. She suggested that the partners could identify specific Byways for study.

Idaho Public Television (IDPTV) is developing an hour-long *Outdoor Idaho* program on Idaho's Scenic Byways that is expected to air during IDPTV's fundraising campaign in spring 2013. Karen would like to use the footage that already has been captured to develop a series of videos for use on the Tourism website as soon as possible. She would like to post the footage online at the VisitIdaho.org media room. She suggested that some of the redirected brochure funds could be used for doing this work.

The national Scenic Byways Resources Center will cease operations in January 2012, responsive to SAFETY-LU.

State Visitor Centers

Four visitor centers located near Idaho state boundaries—Huetter, Cherry Creek, Snake River View, and Dubois (a new one)—are funded in part by ITD (bricks and mortar maintenance) and by ID Division of Tourism (operations). Karen Ballard reports that Tourism doesn't have the staffing capacity, but doesn't mind paying for staffing. IDPR has helped coordinate and support these operations in the past, but no longer is able to. Currently, the Centers are operated by volunteers recruited by local Chambers of Commerce. Right now, the Snake River View Visitor Center has a new manager (a paid "volunteer" from the local economic development association) and it is working well. Huetter is not open because it has no staffing. There is a possibility that Post Falls or Coeur d'Alene could take over management of Huetter, or that it could be closed and used only as a rest area. Huetter's closure generated a complaint from a State Senator. Karen suggested that this could result in a formal legislative look at statewide visitor centers in general.

Laurie McConnell, on Tourism's staff, is now in charge of visitor centers. She has some contacts with the National Association of Visitor Centers, based in Oregon.

Idaho Campground Directory (Directory)

Vicki Lawson reported for Anne Chambers that the updated Directory was sent to the printer on September 16. 105,000 copies will be printed this year. The printer will ship to outlets on the mailing list during late September to early October. There was a plea made for all agencies and outlets to immediately recycle any old Directories and to distribute only the most current ones. The new Directory cover was well-received by the Steering Committee because it is distinctive from previous editions' covers, which will make it easier for visitor services personnel to recognize the most current edition. Krystal Clair suggested that the current year be printed prominently on the cover of each edition to reduce confusion (and the number of inquiring camper phone calls that she receives).

Recreation-Tourism Databases, Websites, and Information Fulfillment

Karen Ballard reported that tourism-related phone calls to the fulfillment house call center are plummeting. It appears that texting to receive such information may be the coming preferred method. Facebook is driving tourists to the VisitId.org website. Google Analytics reveal that the key words searched on are: Idaho, Idaho tourism, Shoshone Falls, and Idaho map. Karen indicated that additional highway maps will need to be printed. John Krause will work on that.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP)

Rick Just explained that Idaho is the only state that includes Tourism in its SCORTP. This plan must be updated every 5 years in accordance with NPS standards and oversight in order to be eligible for LWCF funding. Although the national process and standards are in some flux currently, Rick reported that the NPS has agreed that Idaho may use regional NSRE data (from Idaho and surrounding states) for development of its SCORTP. In addition to this data, Idaho will be

conducting a SWOT analysis with 8,000 Idahoans—4,000 recent-arrival Idahoans and 4,000 long-term Idahoans. Recent-arrivals will be identified by having surrendered an out-of-state driver's license.

Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism Conference (ICORT)

Karen Ballard reported that the 2012 ICORT will be held May 8-10 in Coeur d'Alene. This year's conference will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Tourism Division in Idaho and mark the 25th anniversary of a statewide tourism conference. Past members of the Idaho Tourism Council will be invited to participate in the conference. This year's conference focus will be on reputation management and customer service. Anyone with ideas for effective speakers should contact Karen.

NEW/OTHER BUSINESS AND UPDATES

America's Great Outdoors (AGO)

Rick Just described AGO as a re-visioning of what outdoor recreation can be in the U.S. Early in the summer, Idaho was invited by the Secretary of Interior to prepare a shovel-ready project proposal that would help illustrate the re-vision. Idaho's project proposal included completion of Eagle Island State Park and continuation of the Boise Greenbelt west to the Snake River. IRTI, with consent of the partners, provided a letter of support for this proposal. After submission to the DOI, the project proposal was touted by DOI as an example of HOW a project proposal should be drafted. Meggan Laxalt-Mackey and Robin Fehlau reported that the proposal, along with others, is being circulated throughout DOI bureaus, for review. All seem uncertain as to when and what the final outcome will.

Idaho's Invasive Species Program

Amy Ferriter reported that ISDA has collected over 100,000 boater interviews over the past three years of the invasive species sticker program. She can make these interviews available to whomever needs them—EMSI, University students, etc.

The invasive species inspection program has detected boats fouled with quagga mussels as follows:

- 2009: 3 fouled boats
- 2010: 8 fouled boats
- 2011: 24 fouled boats

Amy explained that the increase in 2011 may be due to the fact that inspections began earlier in the season than in past years. Half of the fouled boats detected in 2011 were commercially-hauled boats, and only five of the total 24 were headed to Idaho. Amy noted that the cost of decontamination is several hundred dollars per boat. She speculated that this may have affected lower annual visitation this year at Lake Mead, a known source of quagga muscle contamination.

Amy Ferriter asked Karen Ballard for a list of visitor centers statewide so that ISDA can provide invasive species information at each. Robin Fehlau requested additional invasive species signs for BLM boat launch sites.

IDPR Marketing Plans

Rick Just distributed copies of the marketing plan developed by IDPR for Old Mission State Park. Similar plans are being developed for each State Park. Each plan is being developed with input from Park staff and local stakeholders. All plans will be finalized very soon. Karen Ballard requested that each Idaho Travel Council member be provided with a Travel Region-specific set of plans. She also offered to participate in the upcoming annual IDPR conference to discuss how the Division of Tourism can help in implementing the marketing plans.

Pending new legislation and proposals

- IDPR will be carrying legislation in 2012 that will provide an option on vehicle registration forms for vehicle owners to pay an additional \$10 for annual unlimited day use of Idaho State Parks. Rick Just observed that if 100,000 vehicle owners opt in, IDPR will break even with current receipts. Since overnight Park users also will have to pay day use fees, the incentive for opting in may be high.
- IDPR proposes to refine the registration and renewal processes for boats, snowmobiles, ATVs, and motorbikes, emphasizing online/electronic registration and renewal.
- S.T.O.R.E., the State Trust for Outdoor Recreation Enhancement, was established in 1995 by the Idaho Legislature, but funding for it has never been authorized. The Idaho Recreation and Parks Association is

considering proposing a specialty license plate for parks and recreation to help fund S.T.O.R.E. While such a program would not fully fund S.T.O.R.E., it may help.

150th Anniversary of Idaho Territory

Karen Ballard observed that 2013 will mark the 150th anniversary of establishment of the Idaho Territory. Relative to this, there may be opportunities for tourism-related activities. While there is no real budget for the anniversary, the Idaho Historical Society is putting together projects for cities and counties to participate in that acknowledge the anniversary. It will be important to identify who the stakeholders are for such an anniversary celebration/acknowledgement.

Bike Routes

John Krause reported that IDT is interested in designating routes for the U.S. Bicycle Route System as a transportation system that supports mobility, economic vitality, and tourism potential for communities. The ITD bicycle and pedestrian office currently is working on developing systems will support the national effort, including conducting a bicycle corridor suitability project and forming a state bicycle and pedestrian committee. Maureen Gresham, who leads the effort for ITD, is interested in identifying specific routes that should be included system. Anyone with suggestions or interested in working on this should contact bikeped@itd.idaho.gov.

DATES FOR NEXT IRTI STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

In order to facilitate participation of all IRTI Steering Committee members, especially those who must travel a great distance to attend, the group agreed to try to establish dates for the next three IRTI meetings very soon. Vicki will send out links to Doodle polls for the December 2011, April 2012, and August/September 12 meetings to learn of Steering Committee members' availability, and then schedule the meetings.

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