



**IRTI Steering Committee
November 27, 2012 Meeting Minutes
IDPR Headquarters
Boise, ID**

Participants

Deniz Aygen, IDFG
Karen Ballard, IDC, Division of Tourism
Dan Buckley, NPS
Amy Ferriter, ISDA
Maureen Gresham, ITD
Danelle Highfill, USFS
Susan Houge-MacKenzie, U of I
Jake Howard, IOGLB
Vicki Jo Lawson, IRTI
Jennifer Okerlund, IDPR
David Olson, USFS
Peg Owens, IDC, Division of Tourism
Bob Pietras, IDL
Larry Ridenour, BLM
Vicky Runnoe, IDFG
Bob Smith ID Administration
Lori Thomason, IOGLB

IRTI BUSINESS

IRTI Annual Accomplishment Report

Vicki Lawson explained that she hopes to produce a shorter, smarter, leaner annual accomplishment report for 2012. She distributed a template that she sent to each working group lead. She requested responses from each group by Dec. 3 so that the report can be completed and distributed to IRTI partner staff and executives, Idaho Legislators, and opinion leaders before the holidays.

Ideas for additional ways to acknowledge and/or promote IRTI were discussed. They include:

- Develop a 2-4 minute video annual report; establish a You Tube channel for IRTI.
- Share report with other states.
- Attend various organization meetings, get on agenda to explain role of IRTI in Idaho (e.g., IRPA conference, ICORT, etc.).
- IRTI Steering Committee members share annual report with colleagues/counterparts in other states.
- Send annual report to the Governor's Natural Resource Advisor.
- Organize and participate in a Partnership Day at the State House, highlighting IRTI.
- Establish a Facebook account for IRTI.
- Pitch stories to the media relative to each of the IRTI projects; Division of Tourism and IDFG could help.
- Develop focused cover letters to include with the annual report responsive to various special interest groups, user groups, etc., thereby "customizing" delivery of the report.
- Support or co-sponsor events that can showcase IRTI projects as economically stimulating to Idaho.

There was no conclusion regarding WHY such acknowledgement or promotion would be beneficial to IRTI, and, consequently, there was no conclusion regarding the desired level of such efforts. Vicki pointed out that ideas #2 and #3 regularly occur, and agreed to work with Steering Committee members on #5 and #9 this year. Additional dialogue is needed to develop a strategy for meaningful promotion of IRTI/IRTI partners/IRTI projects. Vicki will include this topic on the next meeting agenda.

Maureen Gresham observed that the Governor's cabinet meetings tend to group various departments together, but not necessarily in a combination that can best tackle recreation and tourism problems. She encouraged all IRTI partner agencies participating in the cabinet meetings to illuminate the role of IRTI.

IRTI Finances

No obstacles to FY2013 project and budget implementation were identified. Larry Ridenour offered to check on the status of Grants.Gov relative to accepting applications for agreed-to project contributions. He will let the partner agencies know when to submit applications. Danelle Highfill explained that the Forest Service needs to establish a new CCS agreement with IOGLB to facilitate contributions to the GIS mapping project. She said that CCS modifications will be sent to the other partner agencies soon.

IRTI Coordinator Position

Vicki Lawson reported that Dave Olson, whom the Steering Committee selected as the next IRTI Coordinator, will transition into the position in early April. Dave promised to give Vicki an exact date soon. It was great having Dave participate in the meeting!

IRTI PROJECT UPDATES

Be Outside, Idaho! (BOI)

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

- Helped sponsor UNPLUGGED week in March-April. It included special events and activities in six Idaho communities, including the Treasure Valley and Coeur d'Alene. In 2013, Twin Falls and Sandpoint communities will be added. Susan MacKenzie stressed that the U of I would like to participate and help facilitate UNPLUGGED events this year. Vicky Runnoe agreed to help Susan make the necessary contacts.
- Hosted an informational Legislative Day at the Capitol.
- Produced a new 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.
- Updated BOI's strategic plan to embrace more projects and pursue 501(c)(3) status.
- Making a webinar presentation to the National Conservation Education Association.

Maureen Gresham suggested that BOI connect with Active Living Task Forces across Idaho. She will send contact information for the primary leads to Vicky Runnoe. Karen Ballard announced that Saturday, June 8, is National Get Outdoors Day, and may present an opportunity for BOI.

OHV Travel Management and *Stay on Trails* campaign

Jennifer Okerlund reported that the Stay on Trails campaign did not receive a motorbike grant last year. The Stay on Trails working group investigated why they didn't get the grant, and will be applying what they learned when IDPR drafts and advocates for the grant this coming year.

Idaho Campground Directory

Anne Chambers was participating in the annual RV trade show, but provided the following information to the IRTI Steering Committee.

RV IDAHO remains extremely popular!!! In September this year, the IRVCA fulfillment house (Fleet Street) ran out of their 40,000+ copies of 2012 RV IDAHO! Thanks to IDPR for sharing their remaining bulk inventory. IDPR's extra boxes went into Fleet Street's inventory which allowed them to continue fulfilling requests until the 2013 edition was published in mid-October.

In early October, 105,000 copies of the 2013 edition of RV IDAHO were published (same number as published last year). About 65,000 copies already have been bulk-shipped to visitor information centers and various other distribution outlets both in- and out-of-state, including to IRTI partners' offices locally and around the state. 40,750 copies also have been delivered to Fleet Street for additional fulfillment requests over the next year.

Thank you to everyone for help in updating agencies' campground information prior to publication and for updating agencies' initial bulk-shipment list information! 2013 looks to be another great year for RVing in Idaho!

Watchable Wildlife (WW)

Deniz Aygen reported that the WW Committee has been working on these things:

- A new Bird by Bird webpage (www.birdbybirdidaho.com) has been developed to complement the continuing Bird by Bird program. The data input to this site supplements the Ebird site.
- In mid-December, the Idaho Nature Backpack program will award 100 backpacks to 75 southwest Idaho applicants (some facilities requested multiples). The next cycle of grant applications are due on January 14, with awards anticipated by March 15. Deniz is working on a grant from Cabela's to provide binoculars and packs to supplement the next cycle of awards. She has determined that each pack costs about \$60. An Early Learners' Workshop is available to teachers/day care providers who receive the backpacks.
- The new WW poster has been released! (Sales flyer is attached.) It is beautiful! Proceeds will go to fund watchable wildlife viewing sites across Idaho. Suggestions for points of sale include: State Parks gift shops, Capitol City Market, Capitol gift shop, and ICORT.

Idaho Parks Passport and Parks Perks

Jennifer Okerlund and Karen Ballard reported that the State Parks Passport will include "perks". The Division of Tourism is working with various Idaho vendors and attractions (using the database associated with VisitIdaho.org) to establish discounts/deals for holders of the Passports. While making the Passports more attractive, these perks also will serve to stimulate recreation/tourism businesses across the state.

Recreation Info Fulfillment and Tourism/Recreation Databases

Peg Owens described Tourism's efforts to make the database supporting the VisitIdaho.org site more useful and complete. More fields are being added each year; she and her staff work with business owners to help them get the right information in the database in order to maximize the site's effectiveness. She observed that it is difficult to get all tourism providers/businesses to participate. Given the power of the website to drive business, this is perplexing. Karen Ballard urged agency folks to look at opportunities to link what they provide for visitors to VisitIdaho.org.

State Visitor Centers

Karen Ballard noted that a new law allows lottery vending machines to be installed at highway rest areas/visitor centers. Money made from sales can be used to fund the visitor center. This may provide an opportunity to sell State Parks Passports, fishing and hunting licenses, and other items at visitor centers. Karen reported that an invasive species intercept was established at Huetter Visitor Center and maybe at Cherry Creek Visitor Center. Karen distributed the 2012 Idaho visitor center statistics (attached) which are not final yet for all visitor centers, but which reflect an 18% annual visitor increase at Huetter Visitor Center.

Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism (ICORT)

Karen Ballard announced that ICORT is scheduled for May 7 – 9 at the Shilo Inn in Idaho Falls. She urged partners to consider piggy-backing other related meetings onto ICORT, on this date and at this place. That could effectively expand attendance at ICORT, as well as that of the other meetings. Karen solicited ideas for keynote speakers. Suggestions included Kenny Chapman from the film industry.

Scenic Byways

Maureen Gresham reported that ITD still is trying to transition the Scenic Byway program to a marketing program within the Tourism Division. However, ITD has some concern regarding its role or lack of role. In particular, ITD District staff

is concerned about the likely additional work that may fall to them associated with Byways. For now, transition continues, but not quickly. An annual meeting of Scenic Byway local representatives is planned for ICORT.

Outfitter and Guide Mapping Interface Development

Jake Howard and Bob Smith (Idaho Department of Administration) discussed the potential for further development, enhancement, and expansion of the outfitter and guide GIS mapping tool. In Idaho, there currently are about 400 outfitter and guide permit holders operating within 3,000 outfitter and guide operating areas that span a wide variety of public and private land jurisdictions. The data associated with each permit and area need to be current and accurate in order for the current tool to be effective and for any tool enhancement to be useful. Jake discussed some of the challenges involved in keeping this information current. Jake also emphasized that use of the current tool needs to be promoted, and suggested that webinars could be hosted to provide training for folks across the state. Bob demonstrated the types of data available that could enhance the current tool. There was agreement that an enhanced tool would be especially useful to partners involved in regulating uses or promoting tourism (e.g., BLM, USFS, Division of Tourism) and to partners and the public involved in trip planning (e.g. U of I and Division of Tourism). It was requested that scenic byways and ski resorts be added to the tool, and that the photo database maintained by Tourism, the “media room” be part of any enhancements.

Jake concluded that he will host a meeting for interested partners after the first of the year to further explore expanded development of the tool, with the expectation of bringing a proposal to the next IRTI Steering Committee meeting. Karen Ballard requested that Josh Mercaldo from Drake Cooper be invited to any meetings relative to enhancement.

NEW BUSINESS

Friends of Idaho State Parks

Jenn Okerlund reported that Rick Just, Vicki Lawson and Yvonne Ferrell have taken the first steps toward getting nonprofit status for the Friends of Idaho State Parks by getting it designated as an Idaho corporation. The Friends group, to this point, has operated mostly as a Facebook entity, with 2700 “likes.” As a 501 (c) 3, the group will be able to accept donations and develop resources for the benefit of Idaho’s state parks. IDPR often has a difficult time working with business entities for the benefit of parks because of state rules that don’t fit a service agency. The Friends group hopes to provide more flexibility for the agency and another avenue for people to show support for parks. It was suggested that this Friends group, once it gets going, could host/sponsor ICORT or other recreation-specific gatherings.

OTHER BUSINESS, AGENCY UPDATES, and UPCOMING EVENTS

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan

Jenn Okerlund reported that the 2012-2016 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP) is on the Governor’s desk for his approval. The draft plan was posted for 60 days for public comment. A handful of disc golfers commented that they wanted to see more recognition of their activity. The activity had not been included because the national survey data used in SCORTP did not include disc golf. Consequently, with data received from disc golfers, the activity has been added to Idaho’s SCORTP. Once the Governor approves the plan, it will be sent to the NPS for final approval, likely in December.

National Park Service

Dan Buckley announced a number of events and changes at Craters of the Moon, including these things:

- The annual bird count will be Dec. 14 at Craters of the Moon.
- Craters of the Moon will be hosting a Winter Fest on February 16, 10 am to 3 pm.
- Craters of the Moon will be hosting a fun run in late September.
- Twelve new wayside exhibits have been installed along the Peaks to Crater Scenic Byway.
- NPS has developed a new app for wildflower identification, for use on Android and, soon, for use on Apple products. Karen Ballard suggested putting a download link for this on the Craters page at VisitIdaho.org.
- 2014 will mark the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Craters of the Moon includes the first designated Wilderness within a National Park Service unit!
- Dan will be heading to Sandyhook in Gateway National Recreation Area to assist with storm (Sandy) damage repair.

University of Idaho

Susan Hogue-MacKenzie reported that U of I's College of Education's Recreation and Movement Sciences Department revised their undergraduate curriculum last summer resulting in stronger recreation and tourism integration and focus. In addition, U of I is trying to make its recreation Masters program more accessible, similar to executive MBA or MPA programs.

DATE FOR NEXT IRTI STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, April 2, 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm, Boise

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