



**IRTI Steering Committee
May 7, 2010 Meeting Minutes
IDPR Headquarters, Boise, ID**

Participants

Brett Adler, Boise Rec Connection
Deniz Aygen, IDFG
Karen Ballard, ID Division of Tourism
Anne Chambers, ID RV Campgrounds Association
Troy Elmore, IDPR
Danelle Highfill, USFS
Kevin Johnston, University of Idaho
Rick Just, IDPR
Vicki Jo Lawson, IRTI
Nancy Merrill, IDPR
Vicky Runnoe, IDFG
Brent Thomas, IDFG
Garry Young, ITD

Thanks to Nancy Merrill for briefing the Steering Committee on the various strategies being discussed regarding how to support Idaho's State Parks.

IRTI BUSINESS

IRTI Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The current MOU among IRTI partners will expire in 2011. The Steering Committee discussed the existing MOU and suggested minor updates/editorial changes and deletion of the clause (F.1.) that calls for electing a chairperson. Since IRTI has never operated with an elected chair in the past, the group felt that this should not be carried forward. Vicki Lawson will incorporate the changes and updates and send the new draft MOU to each Steering Group member so that each agency's/organization's grants and agreements staff can review it.

Status of FY2010 IRTI Budget

Steering Group members noted that some entities have not yet invoiced for or paid FY2010 commitments. Specifically, ITD only has invoiced BLM and IRVCA; ITD agreed to invoice all other contributing partners as soon as possible. The Forest Service has not yet paid any of the invoices it has received, but Danelle Highfill is working on getting all partners paid. Vicki Lawson will be checking with the NPS to expedite payment of their contribution.

PROJECT UPDATES

Watchable Wildlife (WW)

Deniz Aygen, the WW Committee Chair, reported.

- WW will receive about \$17,000 from the ID Foundation for Fish and Wildlife auction. WW will need to leverage this, preferably with non-federal funds. Karen Ballard suggested that ITC funds may be a good match. Deniz agreed to send the funding criteria to Karen to review.

- One-third of all Idaho Birding Trails will be signed after the most recent batch of signs is installed, totaling 84 signs at 53 sites. Last year, the online Idaho Birding Trail site received 100,000 hits. Karen Ballard agreed to help improve the site's visibility on the visitidaho.org site.
- Deniz agreed to include a birding/tourism topic on next year's Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism agenda.
- The WW Committee has been working with Ed Bottom to get a watchable wildlife-related sign installed at the Hwy. 21/Oregon Trail/Warm Springs location.
- The second big horn sheep viewing area in Challis opened last week near the Land of the Yankee Fork Interpretive Center.

Outfitter and Guide GIS project

Brent Thomas reported that information gathered and displayed for this project was included in the IDFG Hunt Planner website this year. This project will require continual maintenance as new outfitters and guides are licensed. FY2011 funding for this project will support mapping efforts to keep the data current. Karen Ballard mentioned that the Tourism Division will draw from this data base for advertising for outfitters and guides.

Online Trail and Recreation Mapping

Troy Elmore reported that the application for the mapping website has been completed. While it functioned well on the contractor's server, it hasn't proven to work as well on the Department of Administration's server (it's intended "home"). This problem is being worked on currently, and a new server is being installed at the Department of Administration. All data is being loaded. While motorized and non-motorized trails are still included in the project, some changes in the applications have been necessary. Users will be able to select a use and an area and view the resulting map. They also will be able to do a screen capture and print the resulting map. Unfortunately, for now, they won't be able to download maps to a personal GPS device. This is due to the fact that the GPX file is too large to be loaded on such devices. The contractor is working to remedy this. Troy is hoping that a public release of the mapping tool will be possible in July.

OHV Travel Management and Public Outreach Campaign

Troy reported that the spring campaign includes radio spots. The fall campaign will drive people to the website. The Forest Service has requested that safety information be included on the website. IDPR is sending a letter to each household with a registered OHV inviting OHV operators to safety training classes. The letter also addresses this year's failed attempt at changing the OHV legislation, and hopes for next year's successful attempt.

Recreation-Tourism Databases, Websites, and Information Fulfillment

Karen Ballard reported that the "Adventures in Living: The Great Idaho Getaway Project" website booted visitation to visitidaho.org site by 20% on the first day it was published. As a result of the campaign, Karen has 55 hours of high definition video of Idaho attractions. The video is not yet cataloged, but it is available. There may be an opportunity to share equipment and expertise relative to the video among ITD, IDPR, IDFG, and Tourism. Karen indicated that IRTI partner agencies will have to contribute to the "Recreation-Tourism Databases, Websites, and Information Fulfillment" project this year, unless a partner has a specific, additional need from the project.

Scenic Byways

Garry Young reported that the Scenic Byway Advisory Committee has been active:

- They have approved and submitted 8 grant proposals to be considered for \$1.4mm federal funding.
- They voted to retain a loop of the International Selkirk Loop which had been proposed for deletion from the system.

In FY2011, the Scenic Byway project will include PSAs, which BSU Radio offered to produce to help promote Idaho Scenic Byways. Garry will work with Karen Ballard and Jeff Stratton to help realize this opportunity. The project will also include printing of brochures- more regional brochures than statewide brochures, given the demand. New regional brochures will promote the Peaks to Craters Byway and the Western Heritage Snake River Canyon Byway. Funding needs for FY2011 will be the same as 2009, reflecting no funding for videos and an ITD contribution of \$30,000.

Idaho Campground Directory (Directory)

Anne Chambers reported that recreational vehicle use continues to be a bright spot in the tourism industry, with a 15% growth in RV ownership forecast over the next 10 years (relative to a 5% growth forecast for the U.S. population during the same period). Additionally, the age of RVers, 35 – 75, appears to be getting younger than previously reported. Anne also noted that in 2009, 25% of all Idaho tourism information requests included the Directory; in 2010, 38% of requests included the Directory. IDPR will submit an RV grant proposal to help fund the Directory in FY2011. It was mentioned that Anne would be a good candidate to serve on the RV Advisory Committee.

Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism Conference (ICORT)

Karen Ballard reported that the ICORT held earlier in the week was a great success. Attendance, however, was lower than expected for a Boise venue. Although, only 175 people attended, sponsorships helped make the conference financially viable. Next year's ICORT is scheduled for May 3-5 in Lewiston. The challenge, again, will be advertising, and getting folks to attend. It was suggested that an outfitter and guide theme may be effective in Lewiston. It also was suggested that each IRTI partner could select and sponsor a speaker for next year's ICORT.

Free Fishing Day

Vicky Runnoe reported that Free Fishing Day is scheduled for June 12. IDFG's new "Take Me Fishing" trailers, full of fishing equipment, will function as portable fishing clinics for families and kids across the state. The schedule for the trailers is published on bookmarks going out to all Idaho schools. A survey demonstrated that if children go fishing 3-4 times, then they are "hooked" for the rest of their lives. Free Fishing Weekend is still being discussed. If that gets implemented, it may be possible to work jointly with State Parks to host a free camping weekend at the same time.

Idaho Children and Nature Network (ICNN)

Vicky Runnoe reported that the ICNN is solidifying. It now has several strong working committees (communications, legislation, arts, education, partnerships, and budgeting) and a well-functioning steering committee. The communications committee is moving into social networking to promote children in nature and making improvements in the *Be Outside* website; the media crew is still producing weekly television stories. The education committee is networking with the Idaho Environmental Education Association and teachers at various events. The budgeting committee is exploring the desirability and possibility of transitioning the ICNN to non-profit status. Karen Ballard reported that the Division of Tourism is working on a kid-friendly seal of approval to identify appropriate tourism activities.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan

Rick Just reported that funding for the economic impact study to support the next State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan may become available. The funding source will be a state RV grant or LWCF. The study will include a survey. Rick did a "mini-mega" study to determine the economic value of Idaho State Parks to Idaho. He estimates that the Parks generate \$40 million/year, excluding economic multipliers (which generate an additional \$18 million).

NEW/OTHER BUSINESS

Boise Rec Fest

Brett Adler reported on Rec Fest planning efforts:

- The Rec Fest will have some significant financial sponsors, including KTVB, Brundage, and Coca-Cola.
- Ward Hooper painted the wall at 8th and Main Streets to help promote the Rec Fest;.
- While more exhibitors are being sought, at least 40-50 are already expected to participate.
- There will be a workshops tent.
- REI has announced that they will be a sponsor.
- ICNN will benefit from the raffle.

Date for Next IRTI Steering Group Meeting

Tuesday, August 31, 1 pm to 4:30 pm

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Headquarters, 5657 Warm Springs Avenue, Boise, ID

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Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative (IRTI)
Current Steering Group Members (*), Working Group Leads (+), and Other Contacts

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IRTI WEBPAGES are located at: <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/aboutus/irti.aspx>
<http://commerce.idaho.gov/travel/irti.aspx>