

2008

*Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative*

ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT



# 2008 IRTI *Annual Accomplishment Report*

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## Idaho's Recreation and Tourism Initiative...

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### INTRODUCTION

The Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative (IRTI), created in 1988, is a coalition of state and federal agencies and others dedicated to providing Idaho citizens and visitors with expanded recreation opportunities. IRTI's primary objective is to develop partnerships and cooperate with any and all interested agencies, organizations, groups, and individuals in order to improve public information and services associated with recreation and tourism opportunities in Idaho.

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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 byway system, a statewide wildlife viewing guide, and an annual statewide conference on recreation and tourism. Simply, the coalition strives to make it easy for people to come outside and play. By working together, the coalition is able to more effectively provide recreation and tourism information and services.

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IRTI partners include these agencies:

- 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 Licensing Board (IOGLB)
- Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- Other public and private entities participate in various IRTI projects; among them are the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), Idaho Division of Aeronautics (IDA), Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (IOGA), and the Idaho RV Campgrounds Association (IRVCA).

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A Steering Group composed of one representative from each partner agency governs IRTI. The Steering Group meets three to four times each year, approves statewide work projects, charters working groups/committees to implement the projects, and approves the annual budget. The annual IRTI budget is funded by contributions from various partner agencies. An IRTI Coordinator, funded jointly by the partner agencies, provides staff support to the Steering Group.

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More information about IRTI can be found at these websites:  
<http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/aboutus/irti.aspx>  
<http://commerce.idaho.gov/travel/irti.aspx>

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This report includes a brief description of each of IRTI's 2008 projects and accomplishments and a glimpse of 2009 priorities.

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## **FREE FISHING DAY**

Free Fishing Day has been an annual event in Idaho for almost 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.

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## **2008 Accomplishments**

Free Fishing Day events were held June 7. Fishing derbies, clinics, workshops, and fishing opportunities were available for children and families. IDFG sponsored events across the state and provided staff to help new anglers learn the ropes and to give pointers to parents interested in teaching their children about fishing. Members of angling clubs also helped, bringing their enthusiasm and expertise.

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## **2009 Priorities**

Free Fishing *Weekend* is being discussed as a possibility in 2009.

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## IDAHO ACCESS GUIDE

This project has evolved from a feasibility study to actual project implementation. The study was conducted by Drake Cooper in 2007 to determine the feasibility of providing online Idaho outdoor recreation map-guides. The project now is intended to provide all trail users with accurate, online, on-demand maps of Idaho trails across management and jurisdictional boundaries, including search functions by appropriate use and other factors. Steve Frost, Recreation Resource Bureau Chief for IDPR, is the project lead.

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## 2008 Accomplishments

The State Legislature approved funding for this project last spring. Steve Frost met with representatives from the Idaho Department of Administration and land-managing agencies regarding the data necessary for the trail mapping project. A collaborative relationship continues to develop.

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## 2009 Priorities

As the project has evolved, so has the title. It now is called the Online Trail and Recreation Mapping project. In 2009, this primarily will be in a planning mode.

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## IDAHO CAMPGROUND DIRECTORY

The Idaho Campground Directory is an annually-updated guide containing almost all campgrounds in Idaho. It is unique in the nation in that it is not a membership directory, but is "consumer-friendly", including both public and private campgrounds. Ann Chambers, Executive Director of the Idaho RV Campgrounds Association (IRVCA), is the project lead.

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The State of Idaho has identified the recreational vehicle camper (RVer) as a high priority visitor, and the Idaho Travel Council has given the IRVCA responsibility for marketing Idaho as a great RV destination to this very important and lucrative travel segment and for providing comprehensive RV information to RVers in Idaho and/or on their way to Idaho.

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RVing is the fastest growing segment of the traveling public. RVers have extremely desirable demographics and spending patterns with a considerable amount of discretionary income which they choose to spend on their RV lifestyle. A conservative estimate of RV annual spending in Idaho

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would be in excess of \$200 million. Idaho's approximately 350 public campgrounds and 260 private RV parks all share in the benefits of promoting RV tourism and bringing new campers to Idaho.

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## 2008 Accomplishments

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- *Idaho Campground Directory* – IRVCA updated the database information and published 150,000 copies of the 2008 edition of the annual statewide campground directory which includes comprehensive information on all private RV parks, public campgrounds, and dump stations in Idaho. It is the third most requested travel publication in Idaho. (The Idaho Travel Guide and map receive more requests.) The directory is distributed free-of-charge to thousands of RVers and reaches more Idaho campers and those traveling to Idaho than any other publication.

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- *Fulfillment* – Getting the Idaho Campground Directory into the hands of RVers who will use it as their guide while traveling in Idaho is critical. IRVCA bulk-shipped approximately 120,000 copies throughout Idaho and the surrounding states to hundreds of locations that offer tourist information, including:

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- Idaho's three gateway visitor centers;
- more than 100 chambers of commerce and city/community visitor centers statewide;
- private RV parks throughout Idaho;
- public campgrounds and offices statewide;
- RV dealerships and RV businesses;
- Idaho attractions and local area events;
- visitor centers in OR, MT, NV, UT, WY, and WA;
- major RV shows and RV rallies in ID, AZ, UT, WA, and CA; and
- nationwide, from the Idaho Tourism Development office to more than 30,000 RVers requesting information on RVing in Idaho.

- *Website* – IRVCA, with help from campground managers across the state, updated the database information and upgraded the information content. The website received thousands of hits and is located at [www.rvidaho.org](http://www.rvidaho.org).

## 2009 Priorities

Priorities in 2009 remain the same as 2008.

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## IDAHO CHILDREN AND NATURE NETWORK

The Idaho Children and Nature Network (ICNN) project, previously called “Kids and Nature Initiative”, matured to a project during 2008, and will be a new IRTI project in 2009.

The ICNN’s mission is to connect children with nature in Idaho, from backyards to mountaintops. Its vision is to collaborate with private and public partners to empower all Idahoans to lead healthy lives by developing a sense of place in Idaho’s outdoors. The ICNN’s goals are to do these things:

- leverage collective resources to increase community awareness;
- provide access to information;
- increase participation in outdoor activities and foster respect and appreciation for Idaho’s outdoor heritage;
- improve integration of environmental education;
- create private-public partnerships; and
- work to improve the physical, mental and emotional health of Idaho’s children.



**BE OUTSIDE**  
IDAHO CHILDREN IN NATURE

Meggan Laxalt-Mackey, External Affairs Specialist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, chairs the ICNN.

### 2008 Accomplishments

During 2008, the IRTI’s “kids and nature initiative” working group developed a statewide network and campaign through some well-planned steps.

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- The working group engaged the public. IRTI's working group sponsored and hosted a Community Session, *"Connecting Children and Nature: Making it Happen in Idaho Communities,"* in March. Over 85 people from a broad diversity of professions and interests participated. A great deal of enthusiasm with generated by this. By October, a broader group, the ICNN hosted another Community Session #2, *"Connecting Children and Nature in Idaho: Building Statewide Public Awareness."* Barbara Morgan, former NASA astronaut and "Teacher in Space," offered remarks about the effort to connect children and nature. About 80 people from an even broader range of professions and interests participated.



- The working group applied for and received official status for Idaho with the National Children and Nature Network. Idaho, now recognized by the national movement, has the opportunity to post events, activities, and other items in support of connecting children and nature.
- The working group corralled the large coalition of municipal, state, federal, and private entities that emerged to address organizational structure and a public awareness strategy. This led to the formation of the ICNN, and the new body began to draft a strategic plan, with a mission, vision, goals, action items, timelines, and organizational structure.
- The ICNN engaged Drake Cooper, a Boise-based advertising agency, who offered pro-bono work to develop branding, identity, and a website for the ICNN. "Be Outside" (Idaho Children in Nature) was developed.

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- The ICNN engaged elected officials. The ICNN, working with key recreation and tourism agency executive leaders and representatives from the arts and medical communities, briefed Governor C. L. “Butch” and First Lady Lori Otter on the ICNN’s Strategic Plan. The Governor and First Lady committed their support to the ICNN, and offered to help with the official launch in January 2009. ICNN representatives, at the request of Senator Mike Crapo, provided a briefing about ICNN and efforts to raise statewide awareness. The Senator offered his full support to the ICNN’s mission.

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- The ICNN prepared media products in anticipation of a January 2009 launch of the “Be Outside” campaign. ICNN’s Media Committee completed development of a promotional DVD, filmed children and nature activities across the state, and nurtured specific media partnerships for the ICNN campaign. An original musical theme was

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developed by Belinda Bowler; a kids’ nature journal was created; and a poster, power point presentation, and brochure have been developed.

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- The ICNN core group spoke at various meetings, including a Fish and Game Commission meeting, an Idaho Recreation and Parks Association

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meeting, and in other formal and informal venues.

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- The ICNN won the Idaho Environmental Forum’s *Outstanding Achievement Award* for “making a difference in Idaho.”

### 2009 Priorities

The ICNN anticipates a January 2009 launch of Idaho’s statewide “Be Outside” initiative with a series of kick-off events. The “Be Outside” website portal hosted by the Idaho Division of Tourism will be available in January also, along with print materials, television and radio series, a kids’ journal, and other elements.

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## OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

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The Idaho Interagency Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinating Committee (IICC) was established to enhance off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation and management in Idaho through better coordination and collaboration among resource management agencies. Terry Heslin, Recreation Planner for the BLM, chairs the Committee.

The IICC initiated the Idaho Off-Highway Vehicle Public Outreach Project in FY 2005 and it has continued through FY 2009. It employs outdoor billboards, radio advertising, a website, direct mail and other support products to promote the responsible use of OHVs on Idaho's public lands. The main goal of the campaign is to raise public awareness that cross country travel is inappropriate, and that riders should stay on designated or established roads and trails. A second important goal is to promote rider safety.

The OHV Outreach Project is sponsored by the USFS, BLM, IDPR, IDFG and IDL. The project is implemented by an interagency team consisting of the lead public affairs specialists from each agency. Management oversight is provided by the IICC, which consists of managers and line officers from each partner agency. Contracting and administrative support are provided by IDPR. Jennifer Wernex, Communications Manager for the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, is the project lead.

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## 2008 Accomplishments

The integrated awareness program ran over two timeframes, including spring (May and June) and fall (September and October). The radio campaign aired over one month in each timeframe and included a media mix of spot radio (commercials) and live read on traffic reports (scripts). The radio campaign ran in the Boise market on 11 stations during the full campaign period. The total number of spots that aired included over 1,944.

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Forty-nine outdoor billboards were displayed statewide during each campaign period, including key markets in Eastern Idaho (Idaho Falls and Pocatello), Western markets in Ada and Canyon Counties and Northern Idaho cities including Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls. The billboards appeared in the months of May/June and September/October.

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In addition to the advertising campaigns, the program included a robust public relations campaign that spanned the entire year. Media relations, content creation in the form of video and photo assets and editorial coverage were highlights of the PR efforts. Areas of PR focus included UTV and ATV trail access, hunting safety tips, and "stay on trails" messages.

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The website, [www.idaho-ohv.org](http://www.idaho-ohv.org), complemented the billboard, media and PR campaigns. The site included detailed information about how to ride responsibly, how to use an OHV for hunting, how to register a vehicle, and a guide to OHV recreation opportunities on USFS and BLM lands in Idaho. Google Analytics was added to the site free of charge in August to track the web stats of the fall campaign. From 8/08 to 11/30, the site generated 7,684 page views and 2,363 visits. Average time spent on the site was over three minutes (3:18) and the most popular pages were /ride.htm and /index.htm. Together, these pages represent 77% of the page views for this time period. 43.97% of traffic came via Search Engines and 43.04% came from referring sites, which reveals the site has a strong mixture of keyword placement and use of external links.

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In addition to the high profile OHV Outreach campaign, the IICC sponsored and conducted two statewide OHV workshops and produced a couple of brochures addressing safe and ethical OHV use.

## 2009 Priorities

An assessment will be conducted in 2009 to measure the success of the most recent OHV Public Outreach campaign efforts. Based on these results, it will be decided if the program should continue.

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Billboard and radio copy follow.

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*Idaho OHV Outreach Project Outdoor Billboard*

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*Idaho OHV Outreach Project Radio Advertisements*

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## **Spring**

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*Power gives freedom. The freedom to see the world fresh from the path less taken. To see Idaho's beautiful backcountry up close. Freedom to put you, the public, smack dab into Idaho's public lands.*

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*Your trail bike or ATV gives you the freedom to get away from the crowd. The power to get closer to those you love as you get farther away from the routine, the television, the rut we call everyday.*

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*Power gives freedom, but power comes with responsibility. Do the right thing. Take a trail bike or ATV education class. You'll learn how to ride in the safest manner, why it's so important to stay on trails and other valuable tips and techniques to make your ride more enjoyable.*

*Staying on the trail protects the land and ensures these areas remain accessible to us all. Use your power wisely. Please stay on trail.*

*Find out more at [www.idaho-ohv.org](http://www.idaho-ohv.org).*

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## Fall

*In the fall, the call of the hunt is a powerful thing. The brisk mornings, the careful study and tracking, the companionship of the camp after a successful day.*

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*As a hunter, you understand the importance of responsibility. Proper gun safety, licenses, tags and permits are second nature to you.*

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*An ATV can help you cover more area and make carrying your game easier. If you use an ATV to hunt, even if you only use it for a few weeks, remember to register it.*

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*Consider taking an ATV Education class to brush up on rider safety, don't shoot from the trail and never ride off trail – even to collect game.*

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*Staying on the trail protects the land and ensures these areas remain accessible to us all.*

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*The call of the hunt is a powerful thing. You have the power to keep it safe.*

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*Use your power responsibly. Please stay on trail.*

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*Find out more at [www.dot.idaho.dash.ohv.dot.org](http://www.dot.idaho.dash.ohv.dot.org).*

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## OUTFITTER AND GUIDE GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION SYSTEM MAPPING

This project has produced digital maps of outfitter and guide-permitted/licensed areas throughout the State. This has made it easier for all agencies to understand exactly which areas are permitted/licensed, and who holds the permits/licenses for which activities. Bart Butterfield, Fish and Wildlife Information Systems and GIS Manager for IDFG, is the project lead.

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## 2008 Accomplishments

All hunting outfitter-permitted areas have been digitized or are pending clarification from the permit administrator or the IOGLB. Twenty-eight private land outfitter areas remain to have their licensed game management units (GMUs) identified. Once this information is obtained, all private land outfitter areas will be digitized. Currently, all but ten fishing outfitter areas are digitized. These remaining areas will be digitized soon. IDFG and IOGLB meet on a regular basis to finalize the digital boundaries of all outfitter areas.

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IOGLB is using ArcGIS via an internet connection that allows them to log into the IDFG network. This allows IOGLB to directly access the digital outfitter areas, create map overlaps, and make custom maps with any of IDFG's GIS data layers (e.g., aerial imagery, land ownership, GMU, etc.). IDFG is providing training to IOGLB staff, and has prepared an ArcGIS template that

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provides most of the functionality IOGLB needs in a customized interface. IOGLB continues to successfully use the administrator interface to update outfitter licenses. This allows IOGLB to keep the license database up-to-date remotely without the unnecessary delay of sending change requests to IDFG.

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Two new automated scripts have been implemented that keep information on the website updated. One script, which runs every night, creates a GIS layer that allows IOGLB to map license areas by activity. A second script produces map images of new license area boundaries as they are created, and then displays them immediately on the website.

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The link for this site is <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb/>.

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### 2009 Priorities

This project primarily will be in a maintenance mode in 2009, with funds going toward completing mapping of “non-consumptive” operating areas, keeping information updated, and developing links to other sites, including [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org).

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### SCENIC BYWAYS

The Scenic Byways project provides coordination for what, at one time, were disparate scenic routes through Idaho. This project has created a cohesive statewide Scenic Byway system that now has national standing for funding and enhanced marketing opportunities. Garry Young, Senior Transportation Planner and Scenic Byway Program Manager for ITD, is the project lead and provides staff support to the Idaho Scenic Byway Advisory Committee.

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### 2008 Accomplishments

- *Grant funding* - Four Scenic Byway projects were submitted from Idaho to the Federal Highway Administration for grant funding. The projects, totaling \$1,014,250, included these:
  - statewide interpretive signage;
  - regional marketing of six North Central Idaho Byways;
  - International Selkirk Loop corridor management plan implementation; and
  - Western Heritage Historic Byway corridor management plan implementation.

Three projects, excluding the marketing project, were funded for a total of \$672,000.

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- *Scenic Byway brochures* – A first printing of 60,000 copies of the *Taking the Scenic Route* brochure was completed in April. An additional printing of the brochure will occur with a new look in the next few months.
- *Scenic Byway website* – The new [www.idahobyways.gov](http://www.idahobyways.gov) website was completed and has received two awards. It was granted a first place award from the Idaho Press Club. It also received the “Nation’s Best Website” award given by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials for being well-designed, interactive, and providing a comprehensive way for travelers to view Idaho’s scenic byways in great visual detail.

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### 2009 Priorities

Priorities in 2009 remain the same as 2008.

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### STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION AND TOURISM PLAN (SCORTP)

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan provides a contemporary assessment of outdoor recreation and tourism in Idaho. In consultation with the SCORTP Task Force, IDPR determines how public, private, and independent institutions might meet their needs within the constraints of the state’s social, economic, and natural resources. Developing such a plan every five years is required in order to retain eligibility to participate in the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program administered by the NPS. Rick Just, Comprehensive Planning Manager for IDPR, chairs the SCORTP Task Force.

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### 2008 Accomplishments

The 2006-2010 Idaho SCORTP was officially approved by the NPS in 2008. It is posted on the web at [http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/datacenter/statewide\\_planning.aspx](http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/datacenter/statewide_planning.aspx).

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### 2009 Priorities

The SCORTP Task Force will be reconstituted in early 2009 to begin developing the 2011-2015 Idaho SCORTP. The Task Force will be reconfigured to include more executive, rather than technical, oversight from the partner agencies. The Task Force also will include more representation from elected officials, recreation user groups, the business community, and the general public. The purpose of this reconfiguration is to obtain broader support for implementation of the plan.

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## **TOURISM AND RECREATION INFORMATION DATABASES, WEBSITES, AND FULFILLMENT**

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This project includes the [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org) and [www.updateidaho.com](http://www.updateidaho.com) websites and databases that support them. Work on these sites/databases is contracted by the Idaho Division of Tourism to ensure that the visitidaho.org website continues to be exciting, accurate, and useful as one-stop information for visitors and recreationists. The updateidaho.com site is the online interface for Idaho’s tourism industry to post and edit information about lodging properties, campgrounds, events, attractions, vacation packages, and contact information. The updateidaho site delivers data to these sites: [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org) [www.idahogolftrail.com](http://www.idahogolftrail.com) [www.idahowinter.org](http://www.idahowinter.org) [www.lewisandclarkidaho.com](http://www.lewisandclarkidaho.com) [www.touridaho.org](http://www.touridaho.org) [www.idahowhitewatertrail.com](http://www.idahowhitewatertrail.com) [www.idahoparks.org](http://www.idahoparks.org) [www.rvidaho.org](http://www.rvidaho.org) [www.swita.org](http://www.swita.org) [www.twinfallschamber.com](http://www.twinfallschamber.com) [www.visitsouthidaho.com](http://www.visitsouthidaho.com) and the official Idaho travel guide.

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This project also includes 1-800 call center operations contracted by the Division of Tourism to provide recreation-tourism related information for Idaho visitors. Ongoing services include reader service, online inquiry processing, customer online inquiry reports, and support of live chat customer service on [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org). Karen Ballard, Director of the Division of Tourism for the IDC, is the project lead.

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### **2008 Accomplishments**

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Accomplishments are reflected by numbers of recreation/tourism-related inquiries. Inquiries are measured in two ways: those that are received by mail or phone by the fulfillment contractor, All West Communications, and those that “hit” one of the websites, designed and managed by ad agency contractor Drake Cooper . As reflected in the table below, web inquiries far exceed phone and mail inquiries.

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<b>Inquiry Source</b>	<b>Period of Inquiries</b>	<b>Total Inquiries</b>
All West (toll-free calls, mail)	July – December 2007	33,137
Web (unique visitors to all sites)	July – December 2007	403,646
All West (toll-free calls, mail)	January – June 2008	72,346
Web (unique visitors to all sites)	January – June 2008	384,751
<b>Total Inquiries</b>	<b>July 2007 – June 2008</b>	<b>893,880</b>

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In December 2008, the Idaho Children and Nature Network will launch the web gateway [www.beoutsideidaho.org](http://www.beoutsideidaho.org). This site will guide children and parents to various outdoor activities and resources, and emphasize the benefits of outdoor play.

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### 2009 Priorities

Work in 2009 will be focused on maintenance, continued integration of related sites, improvement of navigation functions, and improved reporting capability of sites. Specific additions include:

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- a “Girlfriend Getaways” package category;
- capturing regional travel inquiries through the destination checklist; and
- improving the idahowinter.org website with a minor re-design to include social media content through Facebook and Twitter.

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### WATCHABLE WILDLIFE

The Watchable Wildlife Committee works with Idaho Department of Fish and Game’s Nongame 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, this working group includes representatives from Golden Eagle Audubon, and Idaho Power. Sara Focht of IDFG currently chairs the Committee.

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### 2008 Accomplishments

*Windows to Wildlife* These newsletters were issued quarterly, and included these topics: aspen trees, Idaho Master Naturalist Program, fall birding, Idaho giant salamanders, merlins, summer wildflowers, sagebrush, Dubois Grouse Days, hibernation, Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge



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viewing blind, and wolverines. The newsletters were issued to the 3,181 Idaho Wildlife License Plate holders who returned RSVP postcards attached to their new plates. The newsletters generated \$1,174 in donations, which are tax-deductible.

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- *Idaho Wildlife Viewing Guides and posters*  
Sales from these items generated \$746.

- *Events* The Watchable Wildlife booth was staffed at the following events:

- Bald Eagle Days in Boise (January)
- Dubois Grouse Days in Dubois (March)
- International Migratory Bird Day in Boise (May)
- Idaho Governor's Conference on Recreation and Tourism in Pocatello (May)
- Morrison-Knudsen Nature Center Bird Seed sale in Boise (December)

- *Projects*

- Bighorn Sheep Viewing Stations - The bighorn sheep viewing stations are located in Lemhi and Custer Counties. One station, now completed, is located along State Highway 93, and provides a viewing scope, shelter, ADA-certified sidewalks and parking spaces, and interpretive signs. The other viewing station, still underway, is planned to be located along State Highway 75. This project was initiated by IOGA and the Idaho Chapter of North American Wild Sheep. Along with the IDFG, these partners created these viewing opportunities for residents and visitors to increase awareness of the sheep's presence along the Salmon River Scenic Byway. The Watchable Wildlife Committee was a key member of the



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project planning team, and provided funds, personnel time, design work, interpretation, news releases, and partnerships.

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- Snake River Birds of Prey Festival – In May, the Watchable Wildlife Committee began helping the Western Heritage Historic Byway Committee to plan for Idaho's

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new birding festival. This festival is scheduled for May 2009 in Kuna. Modeled after Othello's Sandhill Crane Festival in Washington State, this festival will include tours, lectures, children's activities, and a banquet.

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- *Kids and Nature Initiative* For the Watchable Wildlife Committee, 2008 was dominated by efforts to launch the Idaho Children and Nature Network (IDCNN). The Committee helped plan and implement the initial community session in March at the Idaho Environmental Education Association Conference. Eighty-five people participated in this community session which ignited intense interest and enthusiasm. The Committee then reached out to other interested parties to form the founding committee for the IDCNN. By summer, the IDCNN project was officially handed over to this new community. Many of the Committee members continue to play a significant role in the project. The Committee contributed funds for theme music, poster production, community session hosting, and kids' nature journal development, as well as hundreds of hours of staff time.



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- *Budget* With a beginning balance of \$31,880, the Committee generated \$6285 in sales and donations, expended \$17,923, and ends the year with a balance of \$20,923.

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## *Annual Accomplishment Report*

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IRTI

### **2009 Priorities**

Projects for 2009 will include bidding good bye to a very effective and successful Watchable Wildlife Committee chair, Sara Focht, and welcoming the new chair, Deniz Aygen. The Committee also will participate in planning and implementing the Snake River Birds of Prey Festival, develop a strategic plan for the Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee, and secure funding for future projects.