

# IRTI Meeting Notes

August, 20, 2014

In attendance: Steve Stuebner, Dan Buckley, Deniz Aygen, Larry Ridenour, Danelle Highfill, Vicky Runnoe, Anne Chambers, Andy Brunelle, David Langhorst.

## Participation and Funding

Rick noted that we have recently lost representatives from Agriculture, US Fish and Wildlife Service, ITD, and U of I. Also, Jake Howard has informed the group that budget constraints keep him from further participation. Rick will work with the agencies to find new representatives, and he will encourage the Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board to continue attending meetings in spite of reduced funding. Funding is not a requirement to belong to IRTI.

On that note, Rick informed the group that the US Army Corps of Engineers has expressed some interest in joining the organization. Participating with funding is very difficult for that organization. The steering committee agreed to extend an invitation to the Corps. Larry Ridenour mentioned that his wife, Ellen Berggen, was the public outreach coordinator for the Corps and might be a good contact.

Dan Buckley said that committing funding from NPS is difficult, however, he may be able to assist on a project specific basis by making a purchase under \$2,500.

For the most part, partners agreed to funding IRTI projects for 2015 at about 2014 levels.

## Tourism

Planning for next year's Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism will begin in September. Diane offered a seat on the planning to committee to IRTI. Rick will fill that role, unless someone from another agency has a particular interest in doing so.

Diane reported that new, more colorful and more informative, rest area signs are due to go up around the state next spring.

Commerce is beginning to spec out a new updateidaho.com database system to replace the agency system from which much of the rich website contain flows. This system does much more, including serve as the depository for the Idaho RV Campground Directory information.

Commerce has been handling 1-800 calls internally in recent months and is eager to turn this over to a new call center vendor. The experience has shown that they may be serving as a resource for services they were not aware of. Before contracting with a new call center they will work with other agencies to assure calls are going to the right place.

Diane is excited about a new film project based loosely on the Historical Society's "Idaho at 150" exhibit that was so popular. It will feature 101 things about Idaho.

Commerce is retooling the travel guide, making it a more inspirational piece that makes you want to come to Idaho.

Commerce has undergone some staff changes lately. Diane provided the attached list so we know who to contact.

## **OHV**

Steve Stuebner and Andy Brunelle told us about the latest OHV campaign, this one encouraging kids to wear helmets. Although helmet use for adults is not required in Idaho, those under 18 are required to wear helmets. The focus of the campaign is not on the requirement, but encourages adults to model good behavior for their kids. Working with dealers the campaign will feature helmet give-aways and a top prize of an ATV. Those who pledge to wear a helmet will be eligible for the drawing.

Although the focus of this year's campaign has shifted, the Stay on Trails website is still being maintained, featuring 50 rides in Idaho.

Larry Ridenour wanted to draw everyone's attention to a new map opportunity.

<http://www.avenza.com/pdf-maps>, offers free and low cost maps for mobile devices that are useful even when there isn't a cell tower in range. The maps use GPS to pinpoint where the operator is located, giving them much versatility.

Later in the meeting, new IDPR Director David Langhorst joined the steering committee. He said that one of IDPR's strategic plan goals is "no net loss of trails." Discussion followed regarding what constituted a desirable trail, and how creating a more desirable trail could result in a net loss of trail mileage, but an enhanced experience for users. Larry Ridenour also gave examples where the BLM had closed adjacent and braided trail sections, resulting in the perception of trail loss, but giving no reduction in point to point experiences.

## **Watchable Wildlife**

The new Ponderosa Pine Scenic Byway Wildlife Viewing Guide is out. Similar guides will follow.

All the Idaho Birding Trail signs have been delivered and they're going up around the state at 175 sites.

Deniz is working on an Idaho wildflower guide. At this point the vehicle has yet to be identified, i.e., a book, an app, a series of smaller guides.

## **Idaho RV Campground Directory**

Anne reported that we printed 106,000 of these this year and that we're starting to run a little short. She has been calling around to find a few extra cases for visitor centers that need them.

**The new guide will be printed in mid-October, as usual. If you have changes, be sure to get them into updateidaho.com ASAP.**

The printing of the guides is timed so that they are ready for the Pamona, CA RV show, a major event.

Anne said that of the 49,600 information contacts coming through Commerce from Jan 1 through August 15, 10,887 requested campground directories. This is fairly typical, with 20-25% wanting guides.

## **NPS**

Dan tells us the southern Idaho NPS units are partnering with the Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce in the new canyon overlook visitor center. They are supplying interpretive panels about each of the area units.

NPS will celebrate its centennial in 2016.

Craters has a Facebook page. There are a couple of junk pages out there, so be sure you go like <https://www.facebook.com/CratersoftheMoonNationalMonument>.

NASA recently visited the park as part of a research effort. They are ground-truthing LIDAR images and comparing them to real features to determine how to evaluate images sent from other planets using similar technology.

Craters has an active wildflower app available and will soon be releasing a geology app.

September 27 is "Wild Saturday," featuring 5k and 10k runs, a puppet theater, star party, new exhibits and more. Parts of Craters of the Moon are designated Wilderness, and were the first such designation in the National Park Service.

## **Fish and Game**

Unsold nonresident deer and elk tags as second tags are now available at a discounted price for a limited time. The discounts are available to resident and nonresident hunters purchasing second tags in 2014. This discount program seems to be working well.

## **Forest Service**

The Boise National Forest now has a [Facebook page](#).

The Frank Church Conference, on October 20, will focus on the Wilderness Anniversary. The Chief of the Forest Service is expected to speak, along with the BLM Director.

## **IEF**

Rick suggested that IRTI become a supporter of the Idaho Environmental Forum, the lunch and lecture series that started the same year IRTI did, 1989. There was no objection from the steering committee. Rick will check the budget for the coordinator and commit from \$300-\$500.

### **Friends of Idaho State Parks**

IRTI has been following the progress of this non-profit which was created to support Idaho's state parks. Rick Just is the president. Board members include Vicki Jo Lawson, Dennis McLane, Dave Ricks, Betsy Johnson, Jana Kemp, and Bill Drake. Yvonne Ferrell is an emeritus board member.

The primary focus of the group is on finding sustainable funding for Idaho's state parks. In its early stages, Friends has been just a board of directors. They're now ramping up to make it a membership organization. This will provide a little funding that will in turn help them support their efforts.

The Friends are considering sponsorship of a State Parks Summit in 2016, probably in association with the Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism. The summit would bring in experts from around the country to discuss funding strategies, marketing, partnerships and potential efficiencies. Legislators, park and tourism officials and other opinion leaders would take part. The product of the summit would be a white paper on funding recommendations for Idaho's state parks.

### **SORP/RMS Conference**

Rick reported that Boise is under consideration as a site for the 2016 National Outdoor Recreation Conference, jointly sponsored by the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals and the River Management Society. The conference would bring in about 350 attendees from out of state and offer national level speakers for local attendees. BVCB has a FAM tour planned for the group in September. Rick is on the board of SORP and is co-chairing the 2015 National Recreation Conference in Annapolis. He will be pressing for the selection of Boise as the site of the 2016 conference.

### **Next Meeting**

To accommodate some schedules, the next IRTI meeting will be 9 am to noon, November 12 at IDPR HQ.