



**IRTI Steering Committee
December 1, 2011 Meeting Minutes
IDPR Headquarters
Boise, ID**

Participants

Deniz Aygen, IDFG
Karen Ballard, ID Division of Tourism
Andy Brunelle, USFS, Idaho NFs
Bart Butterfield, IDFG (via phone)
Anne Chambers, ID RV Campgrounds Association
Doug Eastwood, IRPA
Amy Ferriter, ISDA
Terry Heslin, BLM
Danelle Highfill, USFS, Boise NF
Keith Hyde, USACE
Rick Just, IDPR
John Krause, ITD
Vicki Jo Lawson, IRTI
Nancy Merrill, IDPR
Vicky Runnoe, IDFG

The IRTI Steering Committee welcomed two new partners to the group—Doug Eastwood, recently-elected president of the Idaho Recreation and Parks Association (IRPA), a new signatory to the IRTI MOU, and Amy Ferriter, invasive species manager for the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), which also is a new signatory. Doug explained that IRPA membership is represented primarily by municipal recreation managers, and he hopes to integrate that element of recreation with IRTI. Amy explained that ISDA wants to work with IRTI partners on messaging relative to invasive species prevention, eradication, and/or control.

IRTI BUSINESS

IRTI Finances

Given the level of uncertainty regarding all things fiscal, Vicki Lawson urged partners serving as fund managers (bankers) to invoice contributing partners soon.

IRTI Annual Accomplishment Report

Vicki Lawson already has received reports from most projects for the consolidated report, but is waiting to receive those from Free Fishing Day, Scenic Byways, and OHV Travel Management. Vicki anticipates completing the consolidated report by mid-December. In addition to the usual distribution, Karen Ballard offered to include the report in the packets that each Legislator receives in January.

Federal Parks and Recreation Newsletter

IRTI has renewed its subscription to this bi-weekly newsletter that provides continuous coverage of key national issues associated with recreation and tourism. Those who are not on the mailing list but wish to be should contact Vicki.

Boise RecFest

Vicki Lawson reported that Brett Adler may not be able to coordinate the 2012 Boise RecFest. Brett has been able to successfully cover all the expenses of the past RecFests, but he has not been able to make a living doing it. So, he has to get a full time job. He is interested in working with someone who would like to take on the role of Boise RecFest coordinator. Interested folks should contact Brett at brett@boiserecfest.com or at 208.412.9095.

PROJECT UPDATES

OHV Travel Management and *Stay on Trails* campaign

Andy Brunelle shared a summary of the specific media elements of the 2011 *Stay on Trails* campaigns, including radio, television, internet, newspaper, and print material available at hunting/fishing license point-of-sales. The centerpiece of the *Stay on Trails* campaign is the website. Andy shared analytics showing the website's weekly number of page views since August 2009. The data indicated that the number of views peaks relative to the spring and fall campaigns (with more views in the spring), though not proportionate to the amount of money spent. Fifteen percent of visits to the *Stay on Trails* website are coming from other websites, primarily IDPR, and, secondarily BLM. Visits coming from the FS website were ranked about #9 or #10. New analytics from Facebook are available, and Andy will be reviewing those. Andy and other members of the Idaho Interagency OHV Coordinating Committee (IICC) are working to obtain and consolidate FS and BLM data relative to OHV warnings, citations, and incident reports. They anticipate that analysis of this data can help them determine the effectiveness of the *Stay on Trails* campaign.

Andy reported that the *Stay on Trails* campaign helped fund an additional printing of the FS's motorized vehicle use maps (MVUMs) in an effort to make them available at locations beyond offices. Specifically, the maps have been made available at locations where IDFG licenses are sold, thereby increasing the breadth of distribution. The reprinted maps were of the Payette and Sawtooth National Forests.

Nancy Merrill reported that she met with State Senator Bair, co-chair of the ATV Task Force. He requested that IDPR set up a clearinghouse for ATV users. Nancy told him that the *Stay on Trails* website provides that function. He was unaware of the site. So, Nancy requests that each agency include a very visible link to the *Stay on Trails* site. She suggests labeling it something like "First Time ATV Users".

Doug Eastwood recommended that a stronger effort be made to work with alerts to local ATV groups. He observed that hunters don't always consider themselves motorized recreationists, so they may not be getting the word through motorized recreationist channels.

Karen Ballard asked that the *Stay on Trails*-related blogs be shared with her or Laurie McConnell, who is on her staff, so that they can be used on the Tourism website. Tourism can amplify all elements of the campaign via Twitter.

The *Stay on Trails* website can be found at <http://www.stayontrails.com/>, and the state trail map website can be found at <http://www.trails.idaho.gov/>.

Watchable Wildlife (WW)

Deniz Aygen reported that the WW Committee is continuing to host the *Bird by Bird* program again this year. In addition to elementary and high school classrooms, the program will be offered in a senior center in Boise. Seniors, like students, will be engaged in watching and identifying birds and entering their observations into an IDFG database. Periodically, IDFG will push the data to Ebird, a national database.

A new Idaho WW poster has been created by Ward Hooper. The next WW poster will be created through a competition by BSU students.

Deniz reported that WW will not be hosting Bald Eagle Days this year. As a part-time employee, she doesn't have the time this year and the event, because of its success, has outgrown the facility at the Shakespeare site. Karen Ballard suggested that event could be "gifted" to the Discovery Center or the World Center for Birds of Prey. Doug Eastwood suggested that it could be hosted by folks in Coeur d'Alene who offer commercial eagle watching tours. Karen reminded folks that whomever hosts it needs to enter it into the events database at updateidaho.com. Doug will get contact information for the Coeur d'Alene folks to Deniz.

Deniz and the WW Committee have been working on a strategic plan for Idaho WW. Deniz noted that she will be working full-time, instead of part-time, 6 to 8 months from now.

Outfitter and Guide GIS Mapping Project

Bart Butterfield reported that within the past few months, all of the IOGLB mapping data has been entered. All 1,200 active license areas are mapped, but the 40 areas on private lands still are not mapped... This is because no good boundary descriptions exist for these areas. IOBLB has transferred its database to the State Department of Administration, consistent with other state agencies. IDFG now links to the database there. The outfitter and guide site can be found at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb/>.

Be Outside, Idaho! (BOI)

Vicky Runnoe reported that BOI will help sponsor “Unplug and Be Outside” week on April 21-28. This coming year, the event will occur not just in Boise, but in Idaho Falls, Nampa, Caldwell, Coeur d’Alene, Lewiston, and Moscow.

BOI approached the Idaho Community Foundation about serving as a fiscal sponsor for BOI. The Foundation agreed, so BOI can now receive donations. This may be an interim step in BOI eventually establishing itself as non-profit organization.

Meggan Laxalt-Mackey is active in BOI again, serving as Chair of the Legislative Committee. She is leading an effort to host another “BOI Rotunda Day” this winter, in order to keep the State Legislature apprised of the need for and accomplishments of BOI.

Scenic Byways

John Krause reported that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has just opened its third funding award cycle for Scenic Byways within the past 12 months. About half as much grant funding is available this cycle than in past cycles. Project criteria include livability, job creation, and geographic distribution of funding. John indicated that there will be at least one statewide project being submitted, and that will be for signage at rest areas across the state. ITD and Division of Tourism will be working on this.

The State Scenic Byway Advisory Committee (SBAC) is working to draft a strategic plan. It will be out for review in December, and will be discussed at the next SBAC meeting on January 31. SBAC membership is among the elements of the plan. John observed that State Code stipulates membership inclusive of federal and state agencies, the historical society, and other interested parties.

Maureen Gresham, ITD Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, is working on an update of the States Bicycle/Pedestrian plan. John urges folks interested in this to contact Maureen at maureen.gresham@itd.idaho.gov. There was interest expressed regarding broadening the context of the plan to include motorcycling. Karen Ballard will be going to Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver bike shows to promote the bicycling opportunities in Idaho.

John agreed to provide the IRTI Steering Committee, at its next meeting, an update on how he proposes to redirect the IRTI funds for Scenic Byway brochures this year to other Scenic Byway-related projects.

Concern about the accuracy of highway maps specifically, but of all maps generally, generated interest in adding more layers of recreation/tourism information to the online state trail map. This will be discussed again at the next IRTI meeting.

Idaho Campground Directory (Directory)

Anne Chambers reported that business at campgrounds in Idaho last year was slightly up from the previous year. She distributed the 2012 Directories, and noted the attractive new Ward Hooper logo for RV Idaho. When questioned about the effectiveness of continuing to print hard copies of the Directory when the Directory information is available on the web, Anne explained that wireless connection still are not available throughout Idaho, and that folks want immediate access to the information as they are driving around looking for campsites. She also spoke of numerous reports of visitors walking into campground offices with the Directory in their hands.

Recreation-Tourism Databases, Websites, and Information Fulfillment

Karen Ballard reported that Tourism’s contract call center, operated by All West, is moving to Utah. So, All West will no longer provide this service for Idaho. Karen has hired a person in Idaho to answer that line, including calls for RV campgrounds, IOGA, 511, and Visit Idaho. Karen believes this will be effective and adequate, except, perhaps, when

there are major snowstorms, resulting in heavy calls to 511. Karen reported that the state bed tax (2%) was up by 6% during FY 2011 over FY 2010 and up 5% during FY 2012 to date, over FY 2011. The new Idaho Travel Guide is due out soon.

Doug Eastwood observed that the Idaho Recreation and Parks Association members, mostly representatives from municipal parks, need help in better advertising their parks and activities. Karen will send Doug instructions on how to use UpdateIdaho.com as a means to promote local recreation activities to a broader audience.

State Visitor Centers (VCs)

Karen Ballard reported that continued operation of the state's VCs located near Idaho state boundaries—Huetter, Cherry Creek, and Snake River View—is tenuous. They are funded in part by ITD (bricks and mortar maintenance) and by ID Division of Tourism (operations). Tourism doesn't have the staffing capacity, but can pay for staffing. In the past, IDPR has helped to coordinate and support these operations, but is no longer able to. Karen observed that "zero based budgeting", a new state budget initiative, may provide an opportunity to sort this out. Currently, Snake River View VC is being operated again. Cherry Creek VC is being operated by Malad Chamber of Commerce. Huetter VC is very difficult to monitor and provides a setting for criminal activity. Services provide at Huetter may be better provided at the Post Falls VC. Dubois is a new VC, but no Tourism funds are being provided there.

Amy Ferriter suggested that ISDA could help at some of the VCs, since ISDA has boat inspectors there, as part of the invasive species sticker program. Doug Eastwood offered that West Virginia has turned its VCs into tourist attractions by allowing local artists to use "sales stations" in the VCs, paying the State a percentage of their sales. Currently, federal highway regulations prevent sales in Idaho VCs.

Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism Conference (ICORT)

The 2012 ICORT will be the 30th annual Idaho Tourism conference and the 20th annual Idaho recreation and tourism conference. It will be held May 8-10 in Coeur d'Alene. Conference themes will focus on customer service and reputation management.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP)

Rick Just reported that work on the 2012-2016 SCORTP continues. A survey of 488 Idahoans (only 389 needed for statistical soundness) identified the top 15 issues and opportunities currently associated with recreation and tourism in Idaho. To be identified as a top issue, at least 67% of the respondents had to rank the issue. The top two are:

- Protect water quality
- Ensure that motorized users stay on trails.

Various education opportunities ranked very high, as well. Rick used the earlier SWOT analysis done with opinion leaders across the state as a starting point for this survey. Rick had planned to complete the SCORTP in January 2012, but he will wait for six more months until the new NPS employee who oversees SCORTPs in this part of the country is in place.

Karen Ballard offered, as a means to support the SCORTP effort, to investigate web analytics that she can access to see which websites associated with which outdoor recreation activities get hit most often. Rick agreed that that may be helpful.

NEW/OTHER BUSINESS AND UPDATES

Idaho State Parks Passports

Nancy Merrill explained that the Governor supports IDPR in proposing new legislation that would establish a dedicated funding source for IDPR through an opt-in opportunity to pay \$10 when registering a vehicle. Opting to pay the \$10 would result in an annual day use pass for that vehicle good for all Idaho State Parks. Currently, annual passes sell for \$40. A survey done indicated that 76% of surveyed folks would be willing to opt-in for this opportunity. IDPR is working on the details now. If successful, and under a best case scenario, this could be implemented in 2013. For more information and to get a copy of the Passport kit documents, go to <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/test-d.aspx>.

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation's New Website

Rick Just reported that IDPR is redoing its website. He shared the new logos for each Park, done by Ward Hooper, and he illustrated some of the architectural changes being made, including moving the campground reservation “button” to the first page of each Park’s site.

America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) Update

Nancy Merrill reported that the AGO proposal submitted to the Department of Interior for extension of the Boise River Greenbelt to the Snake River and completion of Eagle Island State Park was selected as one of two projects for Idaho. The other is the Owyhee Land Exchange project. IDPR currently is starting to look at property ownership along the Greenbelt extension route. If funded, the project likely will take 25 to 30 years to implement.

Ida Goes Hiking

Nancy Merrill reported that there will be a new book in the Lori and Butch Otter Education Series (“Ida” Series) called Ida Goes Hiking. It will focus on Idaho’s State Parks, have space for a stamp from each Idaho State Park, and include artwork by Ward Hooper.

Dates for Next IRTI Steering Group Meetings

Thursday, April 5, 1:30 pm to 5 pm, Boise

Thursday, August 16, 1:30 pm to 5 pm, Boise.

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