



IRTI STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, November 12, 9 am to noon
Summit Room, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Headquarters
5657 Warm Springs Avenue, Boise, ID

In attendance: Danelle Highfill, Deniz Aygen, Dan Buckley, Robin Fehlau, Anne Chambers, Krystal Clair, Diane Norton, Jennifer Okerlund, Rick Just

Old/New Business

New Representatives

We hope to have new US Fish and Wildlife and ITD representatives by the next meeting. Boise State University has joined IRTI. [Dr. John Freemuth](#) will represent.

National Outdoor Recreation Conference

The National Outdoor Recreation Conference will be held in Boise in 2016. The Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals, which sponsors the conference, will be partnering with the River Management Society to put on the conference which is expected to have more than 400 participants. IRTI partners will be kept apprised of opportunities to host field trips and for staff to participate in the conference.

Friends of Idaho State Parks

The Friends of Idaho State Parks will become a membership organization in January. The group is ramping up a membership recruitment campaign. There will be levels of membership, but most people will be eligible for a \$25 annual membership. The organization was created about a year ago to support and provide advocacy for Idaho's state parks.

Footo House Project

A citizen-led group is sponsoring a Footo Park Improvement Project. Arthur Footo was the engineer and inventor who designed the Treasure Valley canal system. His wife, Mary Hallock Footo, was a well-known 19th century writer and illustrator. While Arthur tried to get the canal system off the ground, he and Mary lived near the foot of what is now Lucky Peak Dam. A fictionalized version of their story was the basis of Wallace Stegner's Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *Angle of Repose*.

All that remains of the house is a crumbling foundation. The group sponsoring the project at the site is working with the US Army Corps of engineers to develop an interpretive shelter, parking lot and other improvements. An interpretive sign has already gone up across the river in the Discovery Unit of Lucky Peak State Park. [Rick Just](#) has information.

Tourism

Commerce is beginning to develop a new database system. It's a big challenge just to prepare for the switch, because all the data has to be copied and pasted by hand. Dedicated interns are in that process now. The database is a crucial to everything the agency does. It's the backbone for all travel websites, the source of information for the RV Campground Directory, and much more.

The next scenic byways brochure will be based on the standard Idaho highway map. This will provide a more useful piece and give room to tell a bit more about each byway.

Idaho had a very visible presence at the AIMexpo in Orlando, recently. It's a large, five-day tradeshow for motorsports. Commerce put together a central booth with Idaho travel information surrounded by several Idaho motor sports accessory manufacturers.

The travel market for bicycle adventures in the West seems to be under-served. Idaho is planning to take advantage of that with a focus on the many opportunities within the state.

The Idaho Conference on Outdoor Recreation and Tourism will be held in Boise May 5, 6, and 7. Contact [Diane Norton](#) if you would like to be involved in planning for the conference.

Commerce was recently able to supply the Gateway Visitor Centers with laptops for their use. Funding for the centers is an ongoing issue. They plan to look into opportunities that may be available because of recent changes in regulations. There may be an opportunity for sponsorships and limited retail sales to help support the centers.

A new Idaho Travel Guide is in the works. In order to make it more useable and cut down on repetitive text, they will be using a lot of symbols for available services.

Watchable Wildlife

[Bird By Bird](#) continues to be a model for successful student involvement in citizen science. Schools in Portland are beginning a program based on Bird By Bird. Deniz reports that they are working on a video to promote the program. Some funding has been secured, but they could use about \$2,000 more. They are looking for grants and are considering crowd funding.

Deniz and [Meggan Laxalt-Mackey](#) will be doing a national Bird By Bird Webinar next week. They would love to have participation and support from IRTI members. The flyer announcing the webinar is attached.

New signs interpreting sagebrush habitat have been developed and will soon be placed in rest areas along I-84 and I-86. The signs are inexpensive and could be useful to **state parks** and **BLM** sites where sagebrush is a key feature. Contact [Deniz Aygen](#) if you are interested.

Deniz is working on development of an Idaho wildflower guide. This may eventually be available in the form of an app.

Be Outside Idaho

UnPlug And Be Outside is going on hiatus. The program had thousands of participants the last several years, but the subcommittee thinks our resources could best be spent elsewhere. Encouraging outdoor activities is positive, but encouraging kids to leave their screens at home is counterproductive. Electronic devices are considered an indispensable part of modern life by most people, even more so by youth.

The subcommittee is working with key individuals from local high schools and BSU on a concept for a listening summit on public lands for youth. Every agency has numerous methods for getting information out to the public, but we don't do so well listening to young adults. All of our agencies need to better understand their needs and desires.

Developing the summit will be the primary focus of the subcommittee over the next few months. More details will be available at the February IRTI Steering Committee Meeting.

[Jenn Okerlund](#) reported that she is working with Cabella's, hoping to get them to let Be Outside Idaho participate in their "round up" program. Customer agree to round up their purchase to the nearest dollar. BOI would receive the extra money

Idaho RV Campground Directory

This program has been going since the inception of IRTI. It has lost none of its popularity with the public and remains one of our best examples of what this partnership is about. We printed 110,000 guides last month for the coming season, 4,000 more than last year. Anne reports that 1,500 of them went to the Pamona travel show, one of the biggest in the nation. The guides are available now for bulk distribution. Let [Anne Chambers](#) know what you need.

Partner Reports

IRPA

Happy to welcome [Amy Stahl](#) as the new IRPA rep on IRTI. Amy is the Community Relations Manager for Boise Parks and Recreation, and has long been an active Be Outside Idaho committee member.

IRPA is looking forward to increased participation from the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. IDPR Director [David Langhorst](#) has expressed an interest in encouraging participation in IRTI.

IDPR

2015 is the 50th anniversary of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. The agency is planning special events in each park.

IDPR is looking at the potential for a new state park in eastern Idaho, an area of the state that is underserved. The park would be a partnership with Idaho Fish and Game in the Market Lake area.

The agency has recently conducted an [economic impact study of OHVs](#) in Idaho that will be of interest.

Bureau of Reclamation

BOR is planning a major improvement adjacent to the Boise Greenbelt west of Diversion Dam. The agency has a staging area there along the greenbelt near the Highway 21 bridge. While retaining the utility of that, they plan to develop a small recreation area there with access to the river, possibly vault toilets, and basic recreation amenities. [Krystal Clair](#) has details.

Forest Service

Proposed new rules regarding filming permits are generating a lot of public interest. The rules would not affect filming by the public or media, but are designed to alert the agency to commercial filming proposals.

The area where the Idaho City Yurts (IDPR/USFS partnership) are located is undergoing a NEPA process for logging. Some of the cross-country ski trails in the area utilize old logging roads. Those roads may need to be reopened at some point, possibly necessitating moving the trails temporarily.

USFS is monitoring a law suit that could have major impact regarding recreation liability. An injury resulted when a dead tree fell on a young camper during a microburst. The campers were in an area that wasn't designated for camping but has some dispersed camping use. The broad question is, to what extent is the Forest Service liable for hazards in undeveloped areas?

National Park Service

NPS is one of several agencies supplying interpretive exhibits at the new Twin Falls Visitor Center. A soft opening is expected there around the first of the year, with a grand opening sometime in the spring.

They are looking into developing a mountain bike trail in along the Goodale Cutoff through Craters of the Moon.

Power lines have been buried at City of Rocks, providing much improved visuals there for users.

NPS is considering fee increases at many sites, including Craters. Comments are being taking on their [Facebook](#) page.

The agency is ramping up for the NPS Centennial in 2016.

Perhaps the biggest news from the IRTI Steering Committee meeting is that there is a grassroots movement to change the designation of Craters of the Moon from a National Monument to a National Park. The implications of this for tourism could be great. Famously, Idaho has no designated National Park (not counting that sliver of Yellowstone). [Dan Buckley](#) is a proponent of the change and will be keeping IRTI informed as things move forward. Dan says that other monuments have been redesigned before. He doesn't foresee any management changes as the result of such a change. There would be no new money in the budget for the site. It would elevate the visibility of Craters significantly, though.

Next Meeting

The next IRTI Steering Committee meeting will take place February 5 from 1 pm to 4:30. It will be held at the Summit Conference Room at IDPR HQ.