



**IRTI Steering Committee
April 19, 2011 Meeting Minutes
Boise National Forest Supervisor's Office
Boise, ID**

Participants

Karen Ballard, ID Division of Tourism
Andy Brunelle, USFS, Idaho NFs
Anne Chambers, ID RV Campgrounds Association
Liz Close, USFS, Region 4
Gary Edson, USFS, Region 1 (via video conference)
Robin Fehlau, BLM
Margaret Gorski, USFS Region 1 (via video conference)
Jon Heggen, IDFG
Danelle Highfill, USFS, Boise NF
Jake Howard, IOGLB
Keith Hyde, USACE
Kevin Johnston, University of Idaho
John Krause, ITD
Vicki Jo Lawson, IRTI
Nancy Merrill, IDPR
Doug Neighbor, NPS
Diane Norton, ID Division of Tourism
John Robison, ICL
Vicky Runnoe, IDFG
Connie Vaughn, IDPR

IRTI BUSINESS

Report IRTI Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) renewal

Vicki Lawson distributed the most current draft of the MOU. It included all of the comments received from all of the partners to date. It was noted that some of the language required by the FS results in an "unbalanced" MOU. Vicki offered to draft some separate, but parallel, clauses that address "all Parties". Vicki agreed to send out the updated version with these clauses to all partners. The Steering Committee agreed to **get comments back to Vicki by May 9**. The current MOU expires in August, so it's important that responses be prompt. The Steering Committee was enthusiastic when Keith Hyde suggested that USACE would like to review the MOU to consider becoming a part of MOU!

FY2012 IRTI Budget

Vicki Lawson distributed a draft (with lots of blanks) FY2012 IRTI Budget and Operating Plan. She asked that each IRTI Working Group Lead estimate project funding needs for FY2012. After the needs are established, she will visit with each agency representative to determine specific levels of agency contributions to fund the projects.

PROJECT UPDATES

Be Outside, Idaho!

Vicky Runnoe reported that the *Be Outside, Idaho!* (BOI) Steering Group and partners have been busy doing these things:

- Preparing for "Unplug and Be Outside" week, April 25 – 30. It will include publicity about the value of unplugging and going outside, promote outdoor activities across the Treasure Valley over the course of the entire week, encourage healthy living, and piggy-back on national "Screen-Free Week. So far, no local TV stations

have agreed to provide coverage. Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation is a primary partner organizing this. This will be piloted in the Treasure Valley this year, and, if successful, implemented across the state next year.

- Sending a BOI update to all State Legislators just before the end of the session this year. Next year, BOI plans to host another Rotunda Day, as they did in 2010.
- Recruiting a new co-chair because Jamie Heinzerling of Boise City Parks is changing jobs. Jamie is going to work as the Deputy City Clerk for Boise. She will be greatly missed on the BOI Steering Group!
- Working with the City of Boise to become one of fewer than 500 “Let’s Move” communities nationwide.

Vicky indicated that funding needs for FY2012 are still uncertain. She agreed to get the information to Vicki Lawson in May.

Free Fishing Day

Vicky Runnoe reported that Free Fishing Day is scheduled for June 11 in 2011. IDFG’s five fishing trailers will be utilized across the state. There will be fishing derbies, clinics, lessons, etc. Vicky suggested that IDFG would like to partner with IDPR in the future to sponsor a free fishing and camping day. Funding needs for this project remain the same as in FY2011, \$3,500.

Idaho Campground Directory (Directory)

Anne Chambers reported that RV camping still represents a bright spot in the local tourism economy. She reminded partners that the Directory is one of the primary information fulfillment pieces that the State sends out. In fact, it is the second most requested piece, with the Idaho Highway Map being the most requested. Anne plans on printing another 115,000 Directories for 2012, the same number as were printed in 2011. She anticipates that they will be printed and ready for distribution by mid-October, in time for the largest RV show, which is held in Pomona, CA. The price of shipping Directories likely will increase, but Anne believes that the costs can be absorbed without requesting more funding for 2012. Anne urges partners to do these things:

- Update Directory information via UpdateIdaho.com prior to the end of September deadline. 115,000 Directories were printed.
- Recycle any old Directories, and distribute only the most current ones.

Recreation-Tourism Databases, Websites, and Information Fulfillment

Karen Ballard reported that fewer tourism-related phone inquiries are being received as more web inquiries are received. Consequently, some costs are decreasing, and partners may not be charged as much next year. Division of Tourism is considering purchasing a subscription of short text codes to use for information blasts. Karen reported that an assigned code subscription is \$500/month and a custom code subscription is \$1000/month. There also is a plan that allows for \$179/additional code. This may be useful to partners. Karen offered to explore this and bring a proposal to IRTI partners as an option in the near future. The VisitIdaho.com website has been remodeled recently, with some “dead pages” still being a problem. The Division of Tourism used QR codes as part of a recent campaign in Washington State, but found that folks didn’t use them very much. QR codes will be used in upcoming magazine ads this spring, and Karen will report on their success at the next meeting.

Watchable Wildlife (WW)

Deniz Aygen was unable to attend the meeting, but provided a written update.

- Bird by Bird: The WW Committee, *Be Outside* partners, IDFG, BLM, USFWS, Golden Eagle Audubon, Wild Birds Unlimited, and Nature Conservancy began a pilot bird watching and feeding program during the 2009-2010 school year in local elementary and high schools. Equipment, books, optics, and seed were provided for the entire school year. Committee members have been visiting elementary classrooms once a month to provide informational presentations and hands-on activities. May is the final month for this school year and it has been a great success.
- MK Nature Center’s nature cam: WW helped to provide funding for this nature cam. It can be used in the water or on land. Currently, it is on a goose nesting platform (eggs due to hatch beginning April 19ish). It can be found at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/CMS/education/mknc/fishCam/>
- Events: WW provides informational material and encourages hands-on activities at its booth during festivals/events. On Bald Eagle Day (Jan 29 at the Shakespeare site), over 2,700 people participated, and children

created bald eagle masks. On International Migratory Bird Day (May 14 at MK Nature Center), children will be constructing their own binoculars.

- Windows to Wildlife: the quarterly newsletter of WW was published the first week of April. Anyone interested in writing an article (of any length) is encouraged to get in touch with Deniz. She welcomes broader diversity in topics! The current newsletter can be found at:
http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/news/newsletters/windows_wildlife/spring11.pdf.

State Visitor Centers

Three visitor centers located near Idaho state boundaries—Huetter, Cherry Creek, and Snake River View—are funded in part by ITD (bricks and mortar maintenance) and by ID Division of Tourism (operations). Karen Ballard reports that Tourism doesn't have the staffing capacity, but doesn't mind paying for staffing. IDPR has helped coordinate and support these operations in the past, but no longer is able to. Currently, the Centers are operated by volunteers recruited by local Chambers of Commerce. Right now, the Snake River View Visitor Center has no manager; SWITA doesn't want to manage it anymore; ITD is helping out for a while. There is a new visitor center near Dubois that will need staffing soon. Nancy Merrill offered that IDPR may be able to help with staffing with volunteers. She observed that many volunteers, though, are snowbirds who need a place to stay and/or park their RVs while volunteering. There likely will be a shortage of highway maps, one of the primary information pieces distributed at the visitor centers. ITD prints the maps every two years, but there are only 20,000 left at this time. John Krause offered to investigate a solution to this problem.

Scenic Byways

John Krause described the reorganization efforts underway at ITD. As the Scenic Byway coordinator, he now works for the Division of Transportation Performance, and Randy Kryias is the Division Administrator. John reported that there is a partnership being formalized with an MOU among ITD, Division of Tourism, and Idaho Public Television (IDPTV) that will result in the production of a one-hour long *Outdoor Idaho* program focused on Idaho's Scenic Byways. It will likely be completed in early 2012, in time for IDPTV's March fundraising effort. John distributed a hand-out listing the 2010 Scenic Byway project proposals submitted by ITD to compete for Federal Highway funding. Funding announcements are pending. It is anticipated that future grant criteria will emphasize "livability". Karen Ballard reported that the Division of Tourism may purchase information from EMSI to determine the "value" of Scenic Byways to local economies. John is uncertain as to how much IRTI funding will be needed next year for the Scenic Byway brochures. He agreed to let Vicki know soon.

Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism Conference (ICORT)

Diane Norton urged everyone to participate in the upcoming ICORT on May 3-5 in Lewiston. She reported that pre-promotion began in February, postcards were mailed out in March, and utilization of social media is ongoing. One hundred participants are anticipated. Three field trips will be offered, including a culinary tour, a trip to Nez Perce Historical Park, and a tour and hike in Hells Canyon. The conference agenda can be found at:
<http://commerce.idaho.gov/assets/content/docs/ICORT/ITC%20ICORT%202011%20Guide%20for%20web.pdf>
The Forest Service (Region 1) will be sponsoring one of the keynotes, Dr. Ken Cordell, who will speak about outdoor recreation trends and futures.

OHV Management

Jon Heggen reported that the Idaho Interagency OHV Coordinating Committee (IICC) monitored State legislation relevant to OHV use during this year's legislative session. Jon distributed a briefing paper on recent IICC's activities. HB 145 was passed, which clarifies the definition of off-highway vehicles. S 1001 was passed, and this requires safety training for OHV operators and defines "adult supervision". A full interim legislative committee will work this summer to address other OHV issues. Committee membership is not yet determined. It may include user group representatives. Jake Howard suggested that representatives from the outfitting and guiding community be considered, as well. He mentioned that Grant Simonds may be able to identify good candidates for this.

Andy Brunelle reported that there are 7,000 miles of FS system roads in Idaho that currently allow mixed use travel (car, truck, and OHV). The FS intends to review approximately 2,500 miles of these 7,000 miles. In some cases, additional restrictions may be determined to be necessary. The only Forest that *may* be moving forward with new restrictions soon is the Caribou Targhee NF. If determined necessary, those restrictions would be responsive to active mining roads. The FS

road review will include strategies for notifying the public. Andy added that it is difficult for the FS to know how each County is managing its roads since counties manage independently, not as a part of a statewide network. Jake Howard explained that the IOGLB is trying to coordinate with land managers in licensing outfitters and guides relative to a 5-tier road system.

Stay on Trails Public Outreach Campaign

Andy Brunelle reported that Drake-Cooper is still the contractor for this project. The primary messages for this year will include *Stay on Trails* and emphasize safety and wearing helmets. The spring campaign will begin across the State next week with radio spots, small market radio, and live read.

In addition, the Stay on Trails messages will be delivered by local and cable TV networks, social media, the state trail map website (<http://www.trails.idaho.gov/>) and the Stay on Trails website (<http://www.stayontrails.com/>). No new videos will be produced this year.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan

Connie Vaughn reported that work on the 2012-2016 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP) is underway.

- The LWCF Grant Review Committee uses SCORPT-generated criteria to prioritize applications. The Committee suggested a change to the currently-in-use criteria that eliminates the regional criteria. Last year, there was \$378,000 in LWCF funding for Idaho. Nancy Merrill suggested that IDPR is considering not accepting LWCF funding in the future because there are too many strings/requirements attached.
- Connie reported that a survey of Idaho recreationists will be conducted to support the SCORTP effort. It will be much like the survey that resulted in the 2005 “Profiles of Idaho Recreationists” which can be found at <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/assets/content/docs/Comp%20Planning/Profiles%20of%20Idaho%20Residents%20SCORTP%202006-2010.pdf>. Another way in which recreation issue information will be gathered from the general public will be via “ideascape” at www.idahorecreationfutures.org. The new SCORTP will be developed around these issues. Please go to the ideascape site to weigh in with your recreation-related ideas and concerns, and share info about the site with your colleagues, constituents, etc.

Outfitter and Guide GIS Mapping Project

Jake Howard reported that this tool is very useful in identifying outfitter and guide-related problems. It can be accessed at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb/>. Jake anticipates the same level of funding will be needed in FY2012 to keep the tool updated and functioning well.

New Projects

Nancy Merrill identified the need to develop and implement an economic impact study of outdoor recreation in Idaho. Jake Howard observed that MT and WY finished such a study, and it was useful in getting additional funding from the State Legislatures. Several partners described completed or ongoing studies that reflect information useful to such a study in Idaho, including these:

- USACE economic benefit studies relative to the zero-based budget lens (Keith Hyde has more information on these.)
- FS National Visitor Use Monitoring (Andy Brunelle sent out the specific reports.)
- LWCF Coalition website lists amount of economic impact by state (<http://lwcfc coalition.org/files/IdahoRecEconomy.pdf>)
- Economic profiles of every county in the US, based on US Census data (<http://headwaterseconomics.org/eps/>)

Vicki Lawson suggested that IDPR take the lead in developing the study, with help from Division of Tourism. She also offered her help. Funding needs, if any, will be identified.

NEW/OTHER BUSINESS AND UPDATES

National Forest Visitor Guides Available

Nell Highfill provided recently published National Forest Visitor Guides. Each National Forest is producing a multi-page, full-color guide with Forest-specific camping, hiking, safety, and “what to do” information. The attractive guides were produced with recreation user fee receipts.

Idaho Forest Partnership: An Introduction

John Robison, Public Lands Director for Idaho Conservation League made a presentation on the various collaborative efforts going on around the state focused on land use, timber harvest, fuel reduction, access/travel management, etc.. The groups are local, geographically-based, and diverse in their memberships. Last winter, there was an effort to bring all of these collaborative groups together. An issue that seems to confront all of the groups across the state is access—in terms of which roads should be maintained, eliminated, or converted to trails. Resolution of this issue and implementation of the solutions will have great impact on recreation and tourism. John invited IRTI partners to participate in the local collaborative efforts. Local to Boise, there is a meeting of the Boise Forest Partnership collaborative group on the first Friday of each month at the ICL office in Boise. John offered to send more information to share with IRTI. John also invited folks to participate in the annual ICL conference at Redfish Lake on May 20 – 22.

A Framework for Sustainable Recreation

Liz Close, Director of Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Resources, Intermountain Region, USFS, made a presentation on the FS's new recreation strategy. Liz enthusiastically described a strategy that focuses on people, not just settings, and, in this regard, is different from previous FS approaches. The Framework emphasizes renewing body and spirit and inspiring passion for the land, with partnerships as a key mechanism for being successful. The Framework is intended to guide investments, both FS and partner investments. The Framework principals include:

- Connecting people with their natural and cultural heritage.
- Promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Balancing societal, economic, and environmental needs.
- Cultivating community engagement.
- Managing national forests and grasslands as part of a larger landscape.
- Integrating recreation more deeply into the FS mission.

Focus areas of the Framework include:

- Restore and adapt recreation settings.
- Implement green operations.
- Enhance communities.
- Invest in special places.
- Forge strategic partnerships.
- Promote citizen stewardship (volunteerism). Liz noted that 2/3s of all of the applicants for the FS Passports in Time (P.I.T.) volunteer program are turned away each year because there aren't enough P.I.T. projects to engage all of the applicants.
- Know our visitors, community, stakeholders, and other recreation providers.
- Provide the right information.
- Develop a sustainable financial foundation. Liz reminded folks that recreation fee authority expires in 2014.
- Develop our workforce. Liz noted that the 325 people working in recreation in Region 4 occupy 24 different job series.

Margaret Gorski suggested that if the IRTI partners agree with the Framework, they should provide comment on the FS Draft Planning Rule. She noted that the earlier Draft Planning Rule had little emphasis on recreation. Since the Planning Rule has huge implications on how individual Forests will be required to revise their Forest Plans and then implement direction in their Plans, it would be valuable to review and comment on the Draft Planning Rule. It can be found at: <http://fs.usda.gov/planningrule>. Comments are due May 16.

REC LINK

A new, online, by-invitation, recreation management community, REC LINK, has been established. Please let Vicki Lawson or Liz Close know if you want an invitation.

Date for Next IRTI Steering Group Meeting

Wednesday, August 10, 1 pm to 5 pm; location will be announced later.

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