



**IRTI Steering Group  
December 8, 2009 Meeting Minutes  
IDPR Headquarters, Boise, ID**

Participants

Brett Adler, Boise Rec Connection  
Jeff Alexander, USFS  
Karen Ballard, ID Division of Tourism  
Anne Chambers, ID RV Campgrounds Association  
Troy Elmore, IDPR  
Robin Fehlau, BLM  
Danelle Highfill, USFS  
Jake Howard, IOGLB  
Kevin Johnston, University of Idaho  
Rick Just, IDPR  
Vicki Jo Lawson, IRTI  
Doug Neighbor, NPS  
Vicky Runnoe, IDFG  
Grant Simonds, IOGA  
Gary Young, ITD

Steering Group Membership

We welcomed two new representatives to the Steering Group: Danelle Highfill, recreation program manager on the Boise National Forest, and Kevin Johnston, recreation instructor at the University of Idaho. We regret that Jenn Wernex will no longer participate as part of the Steering Group due to a change in her duties. Jenn will stay involved as the IDCNN co-chair until her term expires in March.

**PROJECT UPDATES**

Online Trail and Recreation Mapping

Troy Elmore demonstrated a beta version of the mapping tool. It will allow a user to create a customized map and overlay it on Google Earth. The file can be downloaded to a GPS unit, printed from a desk top computer, and taken to a commercial printer to produce a high quality map. It will bear a date stamp to aid in law enforcement. Troy emphasized the need for agencies to be able to update the site quickly. Eventually, each agency will need to identify a representative who can feed information (closures, etc.) to the project's technical lead. Steering Group members inquired about additional functionality, including integration of outfitter and guide license/permit boundaries, refinement of non-motorized trail categories, and incorporation of IDFG seasonal closure information. Troy indicated that phase 2 of this project could include those elements, but not until phase 1—basic mapping of motorized and non-motorized trails—is complete. When phase 1 is complete, the [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org) site will link to the mapping site.

OHV Travel Management and Public Outreach Campaign

Troy Elmore demonstrated the updated website for the *Stay on Trails* campaign (<http://www.stayontrails.com/>). The focus of this year's campaign has been on "freshening" the website and linking to social networks. Both Utah and Nevada have established *Stay on Trails* campaigns, hoping to mimic the success of Idaho.

Watchable Wildlife (WW)

Vicki Lawson reported for WW Committee Chair, Deniz Aygen.

- The next issue of *Windows on Wildlife* will be issued the first week of January.
- Bald Eagle Days will be held January 30, from 10 am - 4:30 pm, at the Idaho Shakespeare Festival site. More information is available at <http://baldeagledays.blogspot.com>.
- WW received a grant through ITD and Idaho's Scenic Byways program to install Idaho Birding Trail signs at locations along various byways. Each site should receive their signs by the end of March.
- WW is involved in a collaborative educational project with USFWS, BLM, Golden Eagle Audubon Society, and Wild Birds Unlimited during 2009-2010 at eight Idaho schools, including 4 elementary and 4 high schools. This pilot project, "Bird by Bird," will focus on bird feeding, observation, and monitoring to encourage schoolchildren to learn about birds and participate in outdoor bird-related activities. Ultimately, this project could provide the foundation for life-long observation skills, heightened awareness, and appreciation for nature. Karen Ballard asked to receive copies of any lesson plans associated with "Bird by Bird" so that she can post them on the [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org) (teacher activities) site. Kevin Johnston noted that there is a skilled wildlife caller at U of I who may be useful to the "Bird by Bird" project.

### Recreation-Tourism Databases, Websites, and Information Fulfillment

Karen Ballard reported that she intends to include the outfitter and guide license/permit boundary information on the [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org) site, but she does not know the timeframe for doing that. Karen demonstrated a new 3-D mapping tool that she hopes to make useable at the [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org) site. It allows folks to draw on maps to show proximity between attractions, and provides an opportunity for revenue sharing with non-profits. The technology was developed for military purposes. You can check it out by going to this site <http://www.visitidaho.org/placestogo/northern.aspx> or any other part of the [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org) site that displays this icon:



Click on the icon and then download the tool and check it out. Unfortunately, it could take some time to download. Karen is working with the developers to remedy this.

### Scenic Byways

Garry Young reported that Scenic Byway funding for interpretive signing currently is being used to fund the following efforts:

- John Bertram is doing an assessment of assets along the Payette River National Scenic Byway to develop a way-finding study. The study will determine the type of signing necessary and where it should be located.
- The Stanley-Sawtooth Chamber of Commerce is developing a small visitor center in Stanley, where three Scenic Byways converge.
- Interpretive kiosks are being developed along these Byways and Backways: Western Heritage, Fort Henry, Sacajawea, Owyhee Uplands, Oregon Trail-Bear Lake, and Snake River, as well as along the Idaho Birding Trail.

Garry provided a preview of the first in the series of the Byway videos, an eight-minute video about the attractions along the Pend Oreille Scenic Byway. When completed, each of Idaho's 30 Byways will have two videos produced—one about its scenic attractions and one about the lodging, restaurants, and other services available. Each video will be six to eight minutes long. The videos will be posted on the Byway website, and

local Byway groups, chambers, etc. can use them as needed. All videos should be completed by the end of 2011. IRTI partners are providing some of the funding for these videos. Garry is hoping to get additional funding from the Idaho Travel Council. Karen Ballard offered some HD film footage from the “Adventures in Living” series that may be useful in production of the videos. However, the footage is not yet catalogued. Idaho Scenic Byways are now on Facebook!

### Free Fishing Day

Vicky Runnoe reported that Free Fishing Day is scheduled for June 12, with activities planned across the State. New this year will be the use of five, tricked out, “Take Me Fishing” trailers, which function as portable fishing clinics for families and kids. Kevin Johnston suggested that use of the trailers would be beneficial at the ice fishing derby in Moscow in February.

### Voluntourism

Karen Ballard reminded folks that volunteers can be recruited by posting needs at [www.updateidaho.com](http://www.updateidaho.com). The volunteer site is at [www.visitidaho.org/voluntours](http://www.visitidaho.org/voluntours). (Karen can help if folks don’t know how to access [www.updateidaho.com](http://www.updateidaho.com).)

### Idaho Children and Nature Network (ICNN)

Vicky Runnoe reported that the ICNN is solidifying. It now has several strong working committees (communications, legislation, arts, education, partnerships, and budgeting) and a well-functioning steering committee. The communications committee is moving into social networking to promote children in nature and making improvements in the *Be Outside* website; the media crew is still producing weekly television stories. The education committee is networking with the Idaho Environmental Education Association and teachers at various events. The budgeting committee is exploring the desirability and possibility of transitioning the ICNN to non-profit status. February 1 will be Rotunda Day with ICNN activities planned at the State Capitol. It is anticipated that the State Legislature will introduce and pass a Joint Resolution to support children’s needs to be outside. Karen Ballard reported that the Division of Tourism is working on a kid-friendly seal of approval to identify appropriate tourism activities.

### Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism Conference (ICORT)

Karen Ballard reported that planning is underway for the 2010 ICORT, scheduled for May 4-6 at the Doubletree Riverside Hotel in Boise. Scheduled in conjunction with ICORT will be a statewide Scenic Byways meeting, Travel Council grant presentations, and an Idaho National Forests’ recreation staff meeting. Vicki Lawson is chairing a group to plan the recreation track of ICORT. This group’s next meeting is January 21, 10 am at IDPR headquarters in Boise. All interested folks are invited.

### Idaho Campground Directory (Directory)

Anne Chambers reported that recreational vehicle use continues to be a bright spot in the tourism industry; RV campgrounds are consistently full. This Directory is a “flagship” of campground guides within the industry because all of Idaho’s 278 private and 350 public campgrounds are included in the new Directory. 115,000 Directories have been printed for 2010. From Jan. 1 through Dec. 7, 2009, 88,000 individual inquires regarding travel to Idaho were received by the state’s fulfillment house. Of these, 26% requested the Directory. Of those requesting Directories, 86% were from out of state. Apparently, camping opportunities bring people into Idaho! Anne is working on a downloadable version of the Directory. She will be able to track the number of electronic inquiries.

Doug Neighbor asked if other recreation providers noted a drop in Canadian visitors this year. He indicated that Canadian visitors usually come in large numbers to Craters of the Moon in the fall, when they are on their way south for the winter. Doug observed that this segment of visitation was down this year. No other Steering Group members observed that trend.

### Outfitter and Guide GIS project

Jake Howard reported that the outfitter and guide GIS project has been up and running, and is very helpful. The IOGLB's licensing database recently has been updated and will feed directly into the outfitter and guide GIS information, making it even more accurate. Efforts to clarify and get data for outfitter activities on private lands continue. Currently, the site can be found at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb/>.

### Economic Impact Study

Rick Just reported that funding for the economic impact study to support the next State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan may be available in March. The funding source will be a state RV grant or LWCF. The study will include a survey. Rick did a "mini-mega" study to determine the economic value of Idaho State Parks to Idaho. He estimates that the Parks generate \$40 million/year, excluding economic multipliers (which generate an additional \$18 million).

## **IRTI BUSINESS**

### Report from Society of American Foresters (SAF) National Conference

Vicki Lawson attended the SAF Conference in Orlando, FL in October to present *The Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative: a Case Study in Collaboration*. This year was the first time that the SAF conference agenda included recreation and tourism topics. Vicki reported that the presentation was well attended, and that participants asked questions and offered comments suggesting surprise that Idaho has been able to accomplish so much through collaboration. The presentation is available at <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/aboutus/irti.aspx> (Introduction to IRTI). Vicki offered to provide presentation notes to anyone wishing to present the program, or to present it herself.

### IRTI FY2010 Budget

Vicki distributed the signed 2010 budget (finally!). All signatory agencies should have received an original, signed budget. A copy is attached with these minutes. Partners serving as project bankers can now invoice other partners. Vicki requested that each agency provide her (ASAP) with the name of the person in each agency to whom the invoice should be directed. For Forest Service, it is Danelle Highfill; for IDPR, it is David Ricks. Steering Group members noted that even though this is a very lean year, the IRTI annual budget exceeds \$1,000,000!

### IRTI Annual Accomplishment Report

Vicki will send out the report by the end of the year.

### IRTI MOU

Vicki noted that the IRTI MOU expires in 2011. Given how long it is likely to take to generate a new MOU that all agencies can agree to, Vicki will send out the existing MOU after the first of the year so that Steering Group members can begin working with their grants and agreements specialists to update the wording.

## **NEW/OTHER BUSINESS**

### Boise Rec Fest

Brett Adler reported that the Boise Rec Fest is scheduled for June 26-27 at Anne Morrison Park in Boise. He envisions that it will be a celebration of outdoor recreation in Idaho. The primary beneficiary will be the *Be Outside* campaign and the Boise Parks and Recreation Youth Scholarship Program. He has applied for 501(c) 3 status. Brett is looking for these things to ensure a successful Rec Fest:

- Exhibitors - Agencies/businesses/individuals who want to have an exhibit at the Rec Fest will be able to sign up online in January. Exhibit fees will be charged; they will be set relative to how much additional funding can be obtained.

- Sports teams to participate in events.
- Volunteers to serve as activity or workshop leaders.
- Donated items for raffles and silent auctions, especially “packages” that are hard or otherwise impossible to get (e.g., a Middle Fork Salmon River permit).

Brett may look to IRTI for Boise Rec Fest funding in Year 2, depending upon how Year 1 goes. He reports that a lot of excitement has been generated around the Fest, but not as much money has been generated as he had hoped.

### Outfitted Turkey and Waterfowl Hunting

Jake Howard discussed the matter of outfitted turkey and waterfowl hunting in Idaho that involves Idaho’s hunting, wildlife management, and outfitting communities. Historically, Idaho has not regularly licensed outfitters and guides to provide turkey and waterfowl hunting opportunities to the public. In fact, a temporary moratorium on these activities currently is in place. Growing interest in such licensing has generated a divergence of ideas and opinions among these interested parties:

- Outfitters and guides (who wish to expand business opportunities)
- Private landowners (on whose land much of this type of hunting occurs)
- User groups (who want to protect particular species and associated hunting opportunities)

Jake acknowledged that the legal requirements that IOGLB must follow as a state agency in processing public applications for licensure have become a concern. In fact, IOGLB and IDFG Commission have been caught between the various factions, and are now moving toward resolving the debate. To do this, they have collaborated on policies that may be useful to the process, and intend to convene a working group to explore the issues and possible solutions in early 2010. To be successful, the working group will need a non-biased facilitator and, possibly, some funding assistance to support the facilitator. The Steering Group suggested utilizing a qualified federal agency staff person or retiree or working with a university to provide the facilitation skills.

Jake described the process that the IOBLB and IDFG envision:

- Identify a facilitator and 8- to 9-person working group by the end of February.
- Conduct 3-4 meetings to reach consensus on issues and draft policy.
- IOGLB and IDFG provide staff assistance to the facilitator and working group.
- Reach conclusion by September 1.

Jake requests that Steering Group members contact him with suggestions about the process and/or possible facilitators.

### **AGENCY UPDATES**

BLM – Robin Fehlau offered that the BLM State Office’s grants and agreement’s specialist, Melinda Ritacco, could offer a grants.gov tutorial workshop for interested IRTI Steering Group members and their grants and agreements specialists. Anyone interested should contact Robin or Vicki.

IDPR – Rick Just reported that Dvorshak is no longer a State Park due to lack of funding. He added that Clearwater County *may* be able to operate it at the same level as IDPR. If there are additional funding holdbacks, of 3% or more, operations will have to be suspended at additional parks (Yankee Fork and Thousand Springs are at the top of the list), and some positions at HQ will be eliminated. Because of the required cycle of strategic planning, IDPR is required to draft a new strategic plan for the agency this coming year. In the process of developing that plan, IDPR will query the public about what to do with State Parks in the current economic

environment. IDPR Director Nancy Merrill is the scheduled speaker at the Dec. 16 Idaho Environmental Forum; the topic is “Parks and Recreation Strategy: Dealing with Budget Cuts in a Time of Increasing Demand”. Interested folks can register at <http://www.idahoenvironmentalforum.org/Upcoming%20Sessions.html>.

Date for Next IRTI Steering Group Meeting

*Friday, May 7, 9 am to 12 noon*

*Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Headquarters, 5657 Warm Springs Avenue, Boise, ID*

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IRTI WEBPAGES are located at: <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/aboutus/irti.aspx>  
<http://commerce.idaho.gov/travel/irti.aspx>