



**IRTI Steering Group
May 5, 2009 Meeting Minutes
Sun Valley Inn, Sun Valley, ID**

Participants

Jeff Alexander, USFS
Bart Butterfield, IDFG
Anne Chambers, ID RV Campgrounds Association
TJ Clifford, USFS
Debbie Dane, Southern Idaho Tourism
Troy Elmore, IDPR
Robin Fehlau, BLM
Steve Frost, IDPR
Chris Gertschen, Sawtooth Science Institute
Anna Holden, Hingston Roach Group
Rick Just, IDPR
Vicki Jo Lawson, IRTI
Meggan Laxalt-Mackey, USFWS (via phone)
Brian Margolis, Patterson-Bach Communications, Inc.
Doug Neighbor, NPS
Peg Owens, IDC, Division of Tourism
Erin Pagan, Patterson-Bach Communications, Inc.
Steven Paganelli, TIG Global
Lorraine Roach, Hingston Roach Group
Grant Simonds, IOGA

Steering Group Membership

We welcomed to the Steering Group TJ Clifford, who is detailed into Jim Keller's position on the Boise National Forest, following Jim's retirement.

PROJECT UPDATES

Watchable Wildlife (WW)

Meggan Laxalt-Mackey reported for WW Committee Chair, Deniz Aygen, that the next issue of *Windows on Wildlife* will be distributed electronically only. This will save significant funds. Planning is underway for International Migratory Bird Day and Snake River Birds of Prey Festival. The National Wildlife Conference will be in Maine on Oct. 15-18, and Deniz will be attending. The next WW Committee meeting will be at 10 am on Oct. 20 at the M-K Nature Center in Boise. Please note that all IRTI agencies are encouraged to have representatives on the WW Committee, including the USFS and NPS. In FY2010, the WW project will need the same amount of funding as in FY2009--\$29,500. Funds will be used for these things: interpretive signs throughout Idaho to be developed via a "grant program" in partnership with Golden Eagle Chapter of the Audubon Society; a trout camera at M-K nature Center; support for Snake River Birds of Prey Festival; and a portion of Deniz's salary.

Idaho Children and Nature Network (IDCNN)

Meggan Laxalt-Mackey reported that the IDCNN now has over 100 partners—federal, state, and municipal agencies, and private organizations and businesses. The IDCNN continues to work toward its seven goals. The "Be Outside" website has been established, and can be found at www.beoutsideidaho.org.

The IDCNN has established the following working committees:

- Planning and oversight - Chair is Meggan Laxalt-Mackey.
- Education – Chair is Vicky Runnoe.
 - Higher Education subcommittee – Co-chairs are Meggan Laxalt-Mackey and Barbara Morgan.
- Media - Members are Sue Nass, Vicki Osborne, Mike Keckler, and print and broadcast partners across Idaho.
- Branding and Identity – Chair is Jennifer Wernex.
- Health – Currently there is no committee chair.
- Arts and History – Chair is Josh Olson.
- Funding – Co-chairs are Christina Rivas and Brenda Bielke.

Two additional committees are yet to be established, including a Technology Task Force and Speakers Bureau.

FY2010 plans include:

- Hosting additional community sessions in McCall, Sun Valley, Northern Idaho, Pocatello, and Idaho Falls; an IDCNN chapter already has been established in Twin Falls, and a community session is being planned there.
- Establishing a Governor’s Award(s) for enhancing outdoor opportunities for children.
- Establishing a scholarship(s) for students who want to study children-nature related topics.
- Implementing a full schedule of speaking engagements throughout Idaho to encourage more children-and-nature opportunities, and to garner support for the IDCNN.

In FY2010, IDCNN will need about \$25,000. This will cover costs associated with the “Be Outside” website and production of posters, business cards, prescription pads, bookmarks, decals, traveling displays, and other promotional materials. Doug Neighbor reported that he is submitting a grant request for NPS funds to help cover some of these costs. He will need to demonstrate that match funds are available. Doug will let the Steering Group know the criteria of the match. Jeff Alexander and Robin Fehlau reported that their respective agencies, FS and BLM, have initiatives that may allow them to provide some match funding.

Scenic Byways

Vicki Lawson reported for Garry Young that the Peaks to Craters Scenic Byway recently has been designated. It starts at Timmerman junction at State Highway 75 and U.S. Highway 20 west of Picabo, proceeds east on U.S. Highway 20 to Carey, then continues on U.S. Highway 93 to Arco and Mackay, and terminates at the junction of U.S. Highway 93 and State Highway 75 at Challis. This Byway will connect with the Sawtooth Scenic Byway and the Salmon Scenic Byway. Total Scenic Byway project funding needed in FY2010 will be \$45,000, instead of FY2009 funding of \$47,000. That reflects the fact that ITD will contribute only \$30,000 (not \$45,000) in FY2010, since less of Garry Young’s time will be available for Scenic Byway work. In addition, \$8,000 will be needed from other partners to cover costs associated with getting video footage of Idaho’s Scenic Byways for web-based promotion. Anne Chambers and Robin Fehlau expressed interest in helping fund the videos.

Free Fishing Day

Vicki Lawson reported for Vicky Runnoe that Free Fishing Day is scheduled for June 13, with activities planned across the State. Total funding needed for this project in FY2010 will be the same as in FY2009--\$3,500.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP)

Rick Just reported that a new approach to developing the plan is being considered. The plan is required to be developed by each state every five years in order to be eligible for Land and Water Conservation Fund Act funding. Rick noted that since the life of this program, \$65 million of such funding has gone into projects in Idaho. Through his involvement with the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners (he is the President of NARRP), Rick has been working on an approach that would result in a national SCORP, rather than a state-by-state SCORP. Rick cited that a national SCORP would have more impact politically, and would save money, since each plan costs at least \$100,000 to develop. Rick said that NARRP is developing a white paper on this topic to submit to the NPS for consideration. Such a national effort may use ongoing Forest Service recreation research and trend data, rather than requiring each state to develop their own data. There was concern that a national SCORP effort may leave out the “T” (for Tourism) element that Idaho has included, although not required, in its Plan for the past 20 years or so.

The current Idaho SCORPT can be found at

http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/datacenter/statewide_planning.aspx. Click on “Complete SCORPT” for the entire document.

Rick reported that IDPR is working to conduct an economic impact study with NPS grant funds (available Jan. – Feb. 2010) to establish the value of a recreationist who uses Idaho State Parks. Rick noted that such a study could be broadened to include others’ needs for specific recreation/tourism research. Currently, Rick is working with BSU and U of I to design and implement the study. Rick explained that he will need matching funds in order to secure the \$100,000 grant from the NPS. Rick encouraged IRTI partners with specific research needs to contact him. Anne Chambers expressed interest in including RV use in the study, as well as other specific outdoor activities.

OHV Travel Management

Troy Elmore reported on the impacts of recently passed Idaho legislation.

- SB 1061 limits types of vehicles allowed on groomed snowmobile trails. No full-sized vehicles are allowed on groomed snowmobile trails. ATVs are allowed only if the county in which they are operating is OK with it. In such cases, ATVs must bear snowmobile registration stickers.
- SB 1098 attempted to resolve some of the administrative difficulties resulting from last year’s HB602. The ID Recreation Council led the effort to pass SB 1098 which no longer requires a restricted vehicle license plate to operate off-highway. The plate is still available for people who choose to operate on local jurisdiction roads (county, city and highway districts). Another provision allows children less than 16 years old, while supervised, to operate on non-local jurisdiction roads without a driver’s license. As of January 2010, OHV registration fees will increase by \$2, which will go to county sheriffs (\$1/registration to be used for OHV-related law enforcement activities) and ID Dept of Lands (\$1/registration to be used for managing OHV recreation. IDPR will work with OHV enthusiasts and law enforcement to develop a formula to determine how the county sheriff funds will be distributed. IDPR developed a new brochure to address the legislative changes. IDPR is direct mailing the brochure to each registered OHV user. The brochure can be found at: http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/assets/content/docs/OHV/IDAHO_OHV_2009.pdf.

Troy reported that the USFS is concerned about liability issues regarding the new language that allows children under 16 years of age, while supervised, being able to operate on USFS roads. In order to resolve some of the problems, he said that the Idaho Interagency Off-highway Coordinating Committee (including representatives from IDFG, IDL, IDPR, BLM, and USFS Regions 1 and 4) is trying to define OHVs/ATVs similarly across partner agencies. He noted that this is difficult given the agency vehicle definition dimensions are different. The Committee’s MOU has expired and currently is being updated.

Robin Fehlau reported that the recently passed omnibus lands act (P.L.111-11) requires the BLM to develop a travel plan for the entire Owyhee County within the next three years.

OHV Public Outreach Campaign

Troy reported that the spring campaign will be run in May and June, and will include the still-relevant “Stay on Trails” message, with some “freshening up”. Rider safety and responsible use continue to be primary objectives. The spring campaign will utilize radio spots and live reads, printed materials, and social media. Troy will provide IRTI budget information after meeting with Vicki Lawson.

Recreation-Tourism Databases, Websites, and Information Fulfillment

Peg Owens reported that updates for the visitidaho.org site are needed to be made now. This includes all information updates for recreation facilities, lodging, events, volunteer needs, etc. Division of Tourism will be sending a reminder post card to each contact. The card will include a web address for the how-to-update instructions. Tourism is updating the lodging database with information from the Idaho Tax Commission.

The Idaho Travel Guide is now a digital document. Tourism is working with Bart Butterfield, IOGLB, and IOGA to incorporate a new whitewater trail guide on the visitidaho.org site. The visitidaho.org site also is set up to recruit volunteers now.

Division of Tourism is launching a new promotional effort "Adventures in Living Getaways". It will include a bit of "reality TV" and will feature a family vacationing in Idaho. It will include video footage of many of Idaho's natural and cultural attractions, and will be made available as podcasts. Filming is scheduled for the end of June. Horizon Air has stepped forward as sponsor; additional sponsors are being sought.

Fewer Idaho Travel Guides have been needed in 2009, and no new State Highway Maps have been produced because adequate inventory remains. Overall, tourism inquiries are down. State lodging tax for January 2009 was down by 20%. There is 15% less Travel Council Grant funding available in FY2010 than there was in FY2009. However, the FY2010 level is the same as the FY2006 level. Forest Service campground reservations, National Park Service visitation, and RV travel increased in 2009 over 2008. Idaho State Parks campground reservations are up this year over last year to date. The convention business appears to be down in 2009, and outfitter and guide bookings for this coming summer appear to be down 35%-40%.

Idaho Campground Directory

Anne Chambers reported that there was a 35% increase in RV camping inquiries in 2009. She noted that RV sales are down, but RV rentals are up.

Anne urged all partners to review and update their Idaho Campground Directory information at UpdateIdaho.org. Vicki suggested that a "Be Outside" message be included in the next directory. Anne reported that she will print 110,000 directories in 2010, which are 10,000 fewer than in 2009. Fewer are needed as a result of increased efficiency of distribution.

Outfitter and Guide GIS project

Bart Butterfield reported that almost all of the licensed outfitting and guiding areas in the State have been digitized. Problems remain with mapping some private lands. Bart noted that the website has received very good feedback from outfitters and guides. Currently, the site can be found at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb/>. The site is almost ready to be integrated into IDFG's Hunt Planner website.

The Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board maintains a separate database for use data. This use data eventually will be incorporated with licensing data to enable production of use reports.

Bart anticipates that the Outfitter and Guide GIS project will require \$5,000-\$6,000 in FY2010 to continue maintenance.

Statewide Online Trail and Recreation Mapping Project

Steve Frost observed that the mapping project is "more like a marathon than a sprint". He is now in negotiation with two different contractors to develop the application element of the mapping project. He expects to make a selection and have the funds obligated soon. A partnership has been established with the Idaho Department of Administration to provide the data needed for the map. Jeff Cook will lead the GIS framework committee, which will be charged with integrating, in a meaningful way, the various agencies' GIS data. Google Maps will provide the general background for the map. Eventually, the site will include links to ITD, NOAA, SNOTEL, and other data useful to trail users. Steve is hopeful that the map site can demo this summer, using data from a single, specific geographic area. Steve anticipates that once the site is developed, it will cost about \$50,000 per year for maintenance, which, at this time, is included in IDPR's out-year budget.

TJ Clifford inquired about the inclusion of blogs or a blog-like element on the website that could allow trail user conversations about current trail conditions. Steve indicated that such an element is possible in terms of development of the application.

IRTI BUSINESS

IRTI Coordinator

Vicki Lawson reported that at the end of FY2009, there should be a balance of about \$1,500 in the IRTI Coordinator project budget. Steering Group members agreed to fund the Coordinator project at the \$12,000 level in FY2010, the same as in FY2009.

IRTI FY2010 Annual Operating Plan and Budget

Vicki Lawson said that she will be sending out a draft budget and project summary for each Steering Group member to confirm/edit and return, based on Steering Group discussions and working group leaders' expressed needs for FY2010.

Society of American Foresters (SAF) Annual Conference

Vicki Lawson reported that Jack Lavin alerted her to the opportunity to make a presentation about IRTI at the annual SAF conference in Orlando, FL on Sept. 30-Oct. 4. For the first time ever, the SAF agenda will include recreation and tourism topics. Based on the response of the Steering Group earlier this year, Vicki submitted a presentation abstract as a placeholder. The abstract was accepted, and the presentation is scheduled for Oct. 1. Vicki inquired (again) if there are IRTI Steering Group members or partner agency managers who may be planning to attend the conference and could deliver the presentation, which Vicki could develop. There were no volunteers. The Steering Group agreed that Vicki should attend and make the presentation. Vicki agreed to submit the paperwork to request the out of state travel. Such requests must be approved by the agency director and the Governor's office.

AGENCY UPDATES

IOGA

Grant Simonds reported that IOGA has been working to try to raise the social value and diminish the highway mortality of bighorn sheep near Salmon. To this end, IOGA worked in partnership to develop a bighorn sheep viewing and interpretive site. Grant noted that sheep highway fatalities are down a bit since the site's grand opening last year. With help from a BLM effort to get an IDPR grant, Grant hopes that IOGA may be able to build another viewing site east of Land of the Yankee Fork. Grant reported that IOGA is involved in discussions regarding designation of a Bighorn Sheep Scenic Byway that would extend from Arco to Salmon to Corn Creek.

Grant stated that Senators Baucus and Crapo have introduced legislation that would greatly limit charging and recreation fees at federal sites, especially at Forest Service and BLM sites, and that Congressman Minnick intends to introduce a companion bill in the House. Grant observed that this legislation is gaining some traction, and IOGA is concerned about it.

NEW BUSINESS

Collaboration for Conservation Education

Chris Gertschen began by saying, "I have a dream". Chris shared a whitepaper and discussed her proposal to create a collaboration to expand conservation education programs Idaho-wide. Building on the good work that the Sawtooth Science Institute has done in past, Chris proposes a partnership that would offer natural history workshops, master naturalist and junior master naturalist training (complementary to the BE OUTSIDE effort), NatureMapping programs, Idaho Rural Outreach Science Education workshops for teachers, and a web-based course on the natural history of Idaho. Chris emphasized that all of these efforts would help to build a constituency for public lands. She reported that BSU has been approached about serving as a host for the program.

Debbie Dane of Southern Idaho Tourism reported that Rural Community Development organizations are interested in this concept because of its application to disseminating "fire wise" messages and cultivating communities that understand the natural and political struggles in dealing with large wildland fires. She also observed that geo-tourists would be very interested in the master naturalist program aspect in that it would give tourists a means to "make a contribution" to the area they are visiting.

While this collaboration is not included in IRTI's FY2010 budget, the Steering Group voiced considerable support for the concept.

Top 10 Scenic Drives in the Northern Rockies

Lorraine Roach introduced her staff and the contractors working with her to promote the Top 10 Scenic Byways of the Northern Rockies. Lorraine explained that several Scenic Byways in 5 states and 2 Canadian provinces will be developed and marketed as a single, Top 10 product. The marketing and communications firms involved, TIG Global and Patterson-Bach Communications, are developing a geo-tourism initiative with a supplier agreement that will require participating businesses in communities along the Byways to do several things:

- 1. Agree to implement sustainability principles.
- 2. Guarantee customer satisfaction.
- 3. Report visitation based on the Top 10 marketing effort.

Marketing for the Top 10 will be done primarily on-line, and will be responsive to research findings on how people make decisions on-line about spending their travel dollars. The marketing campaign is scheduled to be launched in late May, and will focus on trying to extend shoulder season tourism. Based on the success of this effort, the Top 10 (raise the bar of quality, not price) approach may be expanded to activities/attractions other than Scenic Byways.

Funds for this effort came from a \$428,000 Scenic Byway grant.

Date for Next IRTI Steering Group Meeting

Tuesday, August 11, 9 am to 1 pm

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Headquarters, 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>