

Introduction

This Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP) is produced by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation in order to provide an overarching document that identifies the issues and opportunities in outdoor recreation and tourism in Idaho for the next five years. The acronym, SCORTP, may be confusing for those used to plans produced in fulfillment of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program requirements where the acronym is typically SCORP. Many years ago Idaho added Tourism to the plan and T to the acronym to reflect the importance of that industry in the state and to recognize that recreation and tourism in Idaho are often indistinguishable.

Idaho's SCORTP, with its unique T, still serves as the process and document meant to fulfill LWCF requirements. Those requirements include:

- An evaluation of recreation supply
- An evaluation of recreation demand
- An opportunity for public participation
- State strategies, priorities and actions for the obligation of its LWCF apportionment
- An implementation plan
- A wetlands priority plan

Recreation Supply

To meet the evaluation of recreation supply requirement for the plan, Idaho has most often provided a printed listing of major public and private outdoor recreation facilities in the state, county by county. While of some value a static list is not as useful as the regularly updated GIS-based application that planners anywhere can now access:

<http://www.gis.idaho.gov/adm/recreation/>. A map of Idaho will appear. On the MORE dropdown menu select Recreation Maps. Zoom to the part of Idaho you want to explore. This site, updated as new data are collected, serves as the supply requirement of the plan.

Recreation Demand

The University of Georgia conducts the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) for the USDA Forest Service. Begun in 1960 by the congressionally created Outdoor Recreation Resources Commission (ORRRC), the four-season survey has been conducted seven times, most recently 2005-2009. The well-respected survey asks people nationwide about how and how often they recreate. For this plan we are using regional data from Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming as well as Idaho, recognizing that many recreationists in Idaho are visiting from other states, particularly those immediately adjacent.

Public Participation

To assure the public had a chance to participate in the development of this plan we used a multi-pronged approach. First, we invited opinion leaders from each of Idaho's seven regions to participate in an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of outdoor recreation and tourism in Idaho. Participants included

Legislators, county commissioners, mayors, members of the Idaho Travel Council, the Idaho Park and Recreation Board, the Idaho Recreation and Parks Association, the Idaho RV Advisory Committee, the LWCF Advisory Committee, the Waterways Improvement Fund Committee, the Motorbike Committee and the Recreation Trails Program Committee. Results of those opinion leader sessions are in Appendix A.

The top issues and opportunities developed in that process were then placed on an interactive website called IdeaScale which allowed the public to vote up or down on each as well as develop ideas of their own for their peers to vote on. The availability of the opportunity to participate was made known through news releases and direct emails to outdoor recreation interest groups. This effort was patterned after a similar tool offered during the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) public input phase. Participation was relatively low. The results of the IdeaScale effort are in Appendix B.

The combined issues and opportunities from the regional SWOT analysis and the IdeaScale web tool went into the development of a survey of randomly selected households conducted in the fall of 2011. Four hundred eighty-eight Idahoans 18 and over responded to the electronic survey, enough to give us a 95 percent confidence level in the results with a confidence interval of plus or minus five percent. The survey questionnaire and results are in Appendix C.

Finally, the draft of the plan was placed on the IDPR website for 60 days during which the public was encouraged to comment.

The Distribution of LWCF Funds

The National Park Service requires a public review process for establishing criteria for LWCF grants. That process is called the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP). It is meant to assure that **statewide** priorities identified in SCORTP are the priority focus when awarding LWCF grants. Priorities at every level change over time, so it is important that states go through the OPSP process on a regular basis in conjunction with SCORTP so that outdoor recreation grant criteria are in alignment with actual needs. A description of the process begins on page 294.

Wetlands Priority Plan

For the wetland conservation component of Idaho's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan, the Idaho Conservation Data Center at the Idaho Department of Fish and Game developed a prioritized list of wetland sites in need of acquisition for long-term conservation and management. The Idaho Wetland Conservation Prioritization Plan considered three broad types of criteria in the evaluation of 202 candidate wetland sites: 1) wetland types; 2) wetland functions and values; and 3) wetland threats and impairments. For each site, a variety of data was analyzed using Geographic Information Systems to evaluate criteria and rank sites. The top 20 wetland sites are summarized in this report.

To preserve the numbering of this stand alone plan, it is included as Appendix E in this document.