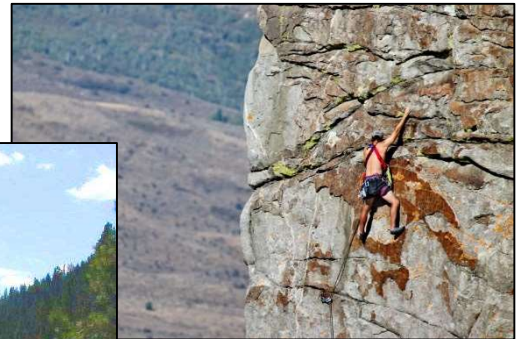


2023

# Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan



Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation  
August 2022

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Purpose

This Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is produced by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) to guide outdoor recreation in Idaho for the next five years. The Idaho SCORP provides a comprehensive assessment of the outdoor recreation system in Idaho by understanding the overall demand and needs, while identifying issues impacting outdoor recreation throughout the State. However, it is not considered a site-specific plan, nor does it attempt to solve or address every issue facing Idaho's recreation areas. While the plan helps identify statewide and regional trends and issues, IDPR strongly encourages local and regional planning, research and interagency cooperation in order to meet and understand local demands and needs.

IDPR is given the legal authority to develop the SCORP through Idaho Code 67-4223 (8). The powers of the Idaho Park and Recreation Board include to "prepare, maintain and keep up-to-date, a comprehensive plan for the development of the outdoor recreation resources of the state." Additionally, under Section (9) of the Code, the Board is empowered to "apply to any appropriate agency or officer of the United States for participation by the department or a political subdivision of the state or the receipt of aid from any federal program respecting outdoor recreation." With the passage of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-578; 78 Stat. 897) funds were made available to the states for the "planning, acquisition and development of needed land and water areas and facilities."

This law requires each state to prepare an acceptable comprehensive outdoor plan before acquisition and development projects are considered.

The Governor of Idaho has designated the current director of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, who is secretary to and an ex officio member to the Idaho Park and Recreation Board, as the State Liaison Officer (SLO) for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program in Idaho. As officer to the board, the director guides the development and implementation of the statewide plan in accordance with Idaho Code.

### Planning Process and Methodology

Idaho's SCORP serves as the process and document meant to fulfill LWCF requirements, which include an evaluation of recreation supply and demand, an implementation plan, a selection process for evaluating and distributing the state's LWCF apportionment, and an opportunity for public participation.

In preparation for the plan update, IDPR partnered with the Idaho Policy Institute at Boise State University in January 2022 to survey 1,000 Idaho adults about outdoor recreation and its importance to their lives. A majority (52.8 percent) said they recreate outdoors daily or weekly, and another 38 percent



said they play outside at least monthly. Accordingly, nine out of 10 respondents said they found outdoor recreation to be important – for themselves and for the state and local economy.

Maintaining and upgrading facilities proved the highest priority for survey respondents. Respondents said they desired more trails, campgrounds, paved pathways, fishing docks, and trailhead parking.

More respondents said they engaged in outdoor recreation than played sports outdoors in the past year. Walking and hiking proved the most popular activities with photography, watching wildlife, boating, playing sports, paddling (paddleboard, kayak or canoe), and horseback riding also proving popular.

IDPR posted a draft of the plan on the department’s website for 30 days during which time the public was encouraged to comment. The opportunity to comment was also highlighted on the website and on social media via boosted advertisements. The full results of the surveys and other public input can be found in the appendices, B and C.

## Wetlands Component

LWCF requires the SCORP to contain a wetlands priority component consistent with Section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. This requirement is satisfied by two documents produced by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game: the [Idaho Wetland Conservation Prioritization Plan](#) and [Idaho’s Wetland Program Plan](#).



Bear Lake State Park packed on a busy summer day.



## **Chapter 2: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Supply**

### **Providers of Outdoor Recreation in Idaho, and Their Roles**

Outdoor recreation in Idaho is provided by a system of federal, state and local governments, private organizations and businesses, and other non-governmental entities. These providers work together to fund, manage and support opportunities for outdoor recreation across the state. Each plays a different role in the spectrum of opportunities, from community parks and ballfields to backcountry river adventures and trails. Across Idaho, this collaboration and coordination leads to a state defined by its natural beauty and outdoor opportunities, attracting millions of visitors and contributing to residents' quality of life.

### **Non-Government Programs**

Idaho's outfitters, guides, clubs and other non-government programs play an important role in meeting the needs of the state's residents and visitors. Private programs in Idaho include campgrounds, marinas, country clubs and hunting clubs, which along with non-profit conservation organizations and industries with large land holdings (*i.e.*, timber) play a part in the overall provision of outdoor recreation. Often, these businesses and organizations can more fluidly react and adapt to changes in consumer demands, as well as purchase or acquire additional lands.

### **Commercial Providers and Outfitters**

Commercial providers, outfitters and guides are an important component of Idaho's economy and outdoor recreation access. Whether through hunting outfitters, guest ranches, developed hot springs, jet boat rides, or many other opportunities, commercially offered facilities and services help provide outdoor experiences to residents and tourists across the state.

### **Clubs**

This category of recreational suppliers includes hunting clubs, country clubs, tennis clubs, private marinas, and others. These facilities and services are open only to members and are not considered part of the public recreation supply. However, they do provide a service in offering quality facilities and resources for specific uses.

### **Private Organizations**

Private and semi-public organizations such as 4-H, scouting organizations, YMCA, and conservation organizations like The Nature Conservancy and The Conservation Fund help preserve and protect Idaho's lands, in part for the benefit of the recreating public. Additionally, organizations with hydroelectric projects such as Idaho Power provide recreational access to their sites, with amenities including boat ramps, campgrounds and day-use areas. Owners of large private landholdings may make their lands or portions of thereof open to the public.

## Local Government Programs

While local government programs typically do not own large quantities of public lands compared to federal and state agencies, they are essential in providing close-to-home recreational opportunities while meeting community needs for recreation, open space, and environmental preservation. These



types of opportunities are also the core purpose of the LWCF program. Local governments often fill the recreational needs gap by providing outdoor facilities and programs not typically provided by other governmental agencies, such as fields and courts for organized sports, swimming pools, paved pathways, and neighborhood and community parks. They also provide youth and adult programs to facilitate participation in sports and other outdoor ventures.

Through

partnerships with other governmental agencies, many local governments help provide and manage recreational opportunities on state and federal lands.

## County

Idaho comprises 44 counties, ranging in size from Clark County with a population of 839 to Ada County with a population 511,931 (2020 U.S. Census). County roles in the provision of outdoor recreation vary, as the recreational needs and the funding and ability to provide opportunities differs in each county. Many counties with smaller populations do not have recreation departments, and some fund recreation opportunities through established recreation districts.

## Municipal

Idaho's 200 municipalities differ greatly in both size and recreational services and opportunities available. Municipalities in Idaho face the challenge of providing residents with a variety of recreational needs. These opportunities include facilities such as ball fields, courts, swimming pools, non-motorized trails, playgrounds, swimming beaches, picnic shelters and non-motorized boating access. Idaho's municipalities play



A splashpad in Middleton, ID built with a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant.



This pool in Hailey, ID was built and subsequently renovated with LWCF grants.

an important role in providing convenient and nearby recreation access and opportunities to the residents they serve.

### Recreation Districts

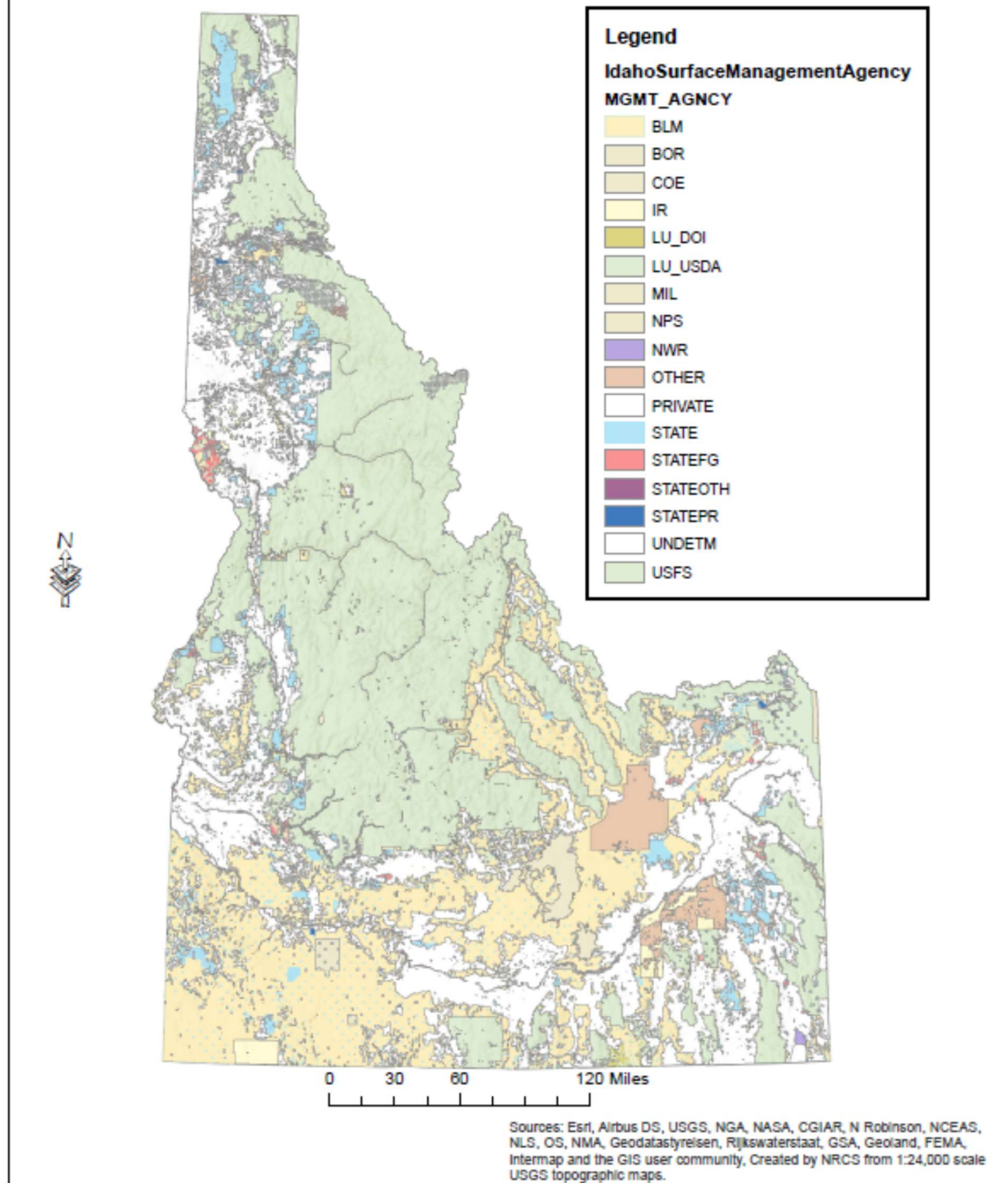
Idaho has 34 recreation districts throughout the state. The districts typically encompass all or parts of a county with the purpose of providing recreational opportunities within the specified jurisdiction of the district. Funding for recreation districts is provided by a tax levied on the assessed value of properties within that district.



“Pickleball is ready for prime time,” declared a February 18, 2022 headline in the New York Times (story photo above). The USA Pickleball Association estimates that more than 4.8 million Americans played pickleball in 2021, the story notes. Local governments have taken the lead in providing courts.



# Idaho Surface Management



*Idaho's large availability of public lands is a primary component of outdoor recreation in the state.*



## STATE PROGRAMS

While state-owned land only for only 5.1 percent of the total land mass, state agencies play a critical role in providing, managing and funding outdoor recreation in Idaho.

### IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The mission of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) is to improve the quality of life in Idaho through outdoor recreation and resource stewardship. IDPR manages 30 state parks throughout Idaho and manages motorized and non-motorized trail programs essential to maintaining Idaho's trails. IDPR also manages the registration of all boats, snowmobiles, recreational vehicles/campers, and off-highway vehicles. These registration fees go back to the users to develop and maintain trails, facilities, and education programs.

#### Idaho State Park system

IDPR owns and/or manages 30 state parks across the state, encompassing approximately 60,000 acres. These parks vary in their significance to Idaho, some demonstrating and protecting Idaho's natural and geological resources, while others are dedicated to interpreting Idaho's historical sites and cultural heritage. Outdoor recreation is critical to the mission of IDPR, with parks providing opportunities for camping, hiking, horseback riding, boating, swimming, education and interpretation.



Billingsley Creek Campground under construction at Thousand Springs State Park, partially funded by a LWCF grant.

#### Recreation Bureau

The department's Recreation Bureau, through partnerships with federal land managers and Idaho counties, helps to fund and maintain Idaho's motorized and non-motorized trails. IDPR trail crews annually perform more than 2,000 miles of trail work, primarily on U.S. Forest Service and federal Bureau of Land Management lands, to help keep motorized trails accessible and open. In the winter, IDPR administers a Park 'N' Ski program, with revenues from the sale of permits going toward trail improvements, parking lot plowing, and grooming trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoe use. The Recreation Bureau also provides safety and education programs for snowmobilers, boaters and off-highway vehicle operators.

## Grants

### *Waterways Improvement Fund*

The purpose of the Waterways Improvement Fund (WIF) is for the protection and promotion of safety, waterways improvement, enhancement of parking areas for boating, building and improving boat ramps and moorings, marking of waterways, and support of search-and-rescue. The WIF is funded annually with a portion of the total state gas tax revenues, providing approximately \$1.2 million in annual funding. Governmental entities and Native American Tribes are eligible for these grants.

### *Recreational Vehicle Fund*

The purpose of the Recreational Vehicle (RV) Fund is for the acquisition, lease, development, improvement, and the operation and maintenance of facilities and services designed to promote the health, safety and enjoyment of recreational vehicle users. This program is funded annually from RV registration fees paid, with approximately \$4 million annually available in grants for local, state or federal recreation providers.



A newly developed skatepark in Mountain Home was built with a LWCF grant.

### *Recreational Trails Program*

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is administered by IDPR and provided through the Federal Highways Administration. Permissible uses of the funds are maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails; development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages for recreational trails; purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment; and construction of new recreational trails. The RTP funding goes towards both motorized and non-motorized trail projects, with typically \$1.5 million available annually.

### *Off-Road Motor Vehicle Fund*

The Off-Road Motor Vehicle (ORMV) Fund can be used to acquire, purchased, improve, repair, maintain, furnish, and equip off-road motor vehicle facilities and sites or areas used by off-road riders on public or private land. The fund can also assist with enforcement of laws and regulations governing the use of off-road vehicles in the State of Idaho. The ORMV is funded annually with a portion of the state gas tax revenues, with typical funding levels of approximately \$500,000 made available for grants and \$800,000 annually for purchase of trail dozers, groomers, and other trail maintenance equipment that is distributed for use across the state.



### *Motorbike Fund*

These funds are primarily used to provide education, maintenance, and mapping options for OHV enthusiasts across Idaho. Just over 1,100 students complete IDPR's **Responsible Rider** course annually. Additionally, IDPR Trail Ranger/Trail Cat crews complete approximately 1,800 miles of brushing, tread-work, and log clearing on state and federal lands open to off-highway vehicle use. Finally, IDPR maintains a complete repository of Motor Vehicle Use Maps for trail users across all of the U.S. Forest Service lands in Idaho which can be found at [trails.idaho.gov](https://trails.idaho.gov).

### *Road & Bridge Fund*

The purpose of the Road and Bridge (R&B) Fund is to develop, construct, maintain and repair roads, bridges and parking areas within and leading to parks and recreation areas of the state. The R&B is funded from a portion of the state gas tax revenues, with approximately \$250,000 awarded annually.

### *Cutthroat Plate Fund*

The Cutthroat Plate Fund was created as part of the Idaho wildlife specialty plates legislation. A portion of the registration fee for each specialty plate is deposited in a fund to be used for the construction and maintenance of non-motorized boating access facilities for anglers. IDPR is responsible for the administration of this account, which can range from \$15,000 to \$45,000 annually.



Angler at Harriman State Park

### *Mountain Bike Plate Fund*

The Mountain Bike Plate fund was created in 2001 and is funded from a portion of the registration fee for each specialty plate. The intent of the fund is exclusively for the preservation, maintenance and expansion of recreational trails on which mountain biking is permitted. IDPR is responsible for the administration of this account, which can range from \$15,000 to \$45,000 annually.

### *Land and Water Conservation Fund*

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a National Park Service program. IDPR administers the money allocated to the states from the fund for the acquisition, development or maintenance of outstanding property into perpetuity for outdoor recreation purposes. LWCF was included in part of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1964, which also included a provision that each state must develop an acceptable comprehensive outdoor recreation plan before acquisition and development projects are considered. Available funding varies year-to-year, with approximately \$2 to \$2.5 million available in recent years.

### *Clean Vessel Act Fund*

The Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Fund is funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and administered in Idaho by IDPR. The purpose of this fund is for projects such as boat pump-out stations and educational

programs relating to environmental and water pollution control pertaining to vessel operation. Public agencies and private businesses are eligible, provided access to the project funded by the CVA is given to the public.

### *Boating Infrastructure Grant*

The Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) is funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and administered in Idaho by IDPR. The BIG provides funding for projects which construct, maintain or renovate tie-up facilities for transient boaters in vessels 26 feet or more in length, and to produce and distribute information and educational materials about the program.



## **IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**

The mission of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) is found within the State of Idaho Wildlife Policy, which reads in part that “all wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds and fish, within the state of Idaho shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed . . . and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.”

IDFG works with hunters, anglers, trappers and other Idahoans to protect and preserve the fish and game of the state, in order to enable Idahoans rights to hunt, fish, and trap – an essential component of Idaho’s outdoor heritage and recreation opportunities.

The IDFG Strategic Plan (2022-2025) includes four goals:

1. Sustain Idaho’s fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend.
2. Meet the demand for hunting, fishing, trapping and other wildlife recreation.
3. Improve public understanding of and involvement in fish and wildlife management.
4. Enhance the capability of Fish and Game to manage fish and wildlife and serve the public.

IDFG also manages the hunting and fishing license program.

## **IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS**

The mission of the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) is to professionally and prudently manage Idaho’s endowment assets to maximize long-term financial returns to public schools and other trust beneficiaries and to provide professional assistance to the citizens of Idaho to use, protect, and sustain their natural resources.

Upon achieving statehood in 1890, Congress granted millions of acres of land to the State of Idaho for the sole purpose of funding specified beneficiaries, most notably the state’s public schools. Today, these state endowment lands and funds, overseen by the Idaho State Board of Land Commissioners, continue to provide funding for Idaho’s public schools and other beneficiaries.



Currently, IDL manages more than 2.4 million acres of state endowment lands. Along with generating revenues for schools, these lands are becoming increasingly popular for their recreational opportunities, including off-highway vehicle riding and sportsman access. IDL and IDPR are currently pursuing recreation opportunities on IDL lands.

### IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The mission of the Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS) is to preserve and promote Idaho's cultural heritage; with a vision to inspire, enrich, and engage all Idahoans by leading the state in preserving and sharing our dynamic cultural heritage.

ISHS maintains a few historic sites across the state, including the Old Idaho Penitentiary, and the Rock Creek Station and Stricker Homesite. ISHS also includes the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which manages Idaho's National Register of Historic Places program and provides a local voice for Idaho's history in federal project planning. SHPO also works closely with state agencies, local governments, tribal governments, citizen groups, and property owners to help preserve Idaho's cultural heritage.



Coeur d'Alene's Old Mission State Park

## FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Accounting for more than 34.4 million acres, nearly 65 percent of land in Idaho is federally owned, making the federal government an essential provider of outdoor recreation. Often, the federal lands offer opportunities and experiences that are not provided by local or state governments and host some of Idaho's most iconic rivers, mountains and landscapes. Across Idaho, federal agencies manage the forests, deserts, dams and reservoirs, waterways and wildlife refuges that are critical to the state's outdoor recreation supply.

### US DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

#### *National Park Service*

The mission of the National Park Service (NPS) is to “preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.” In Idaho, the NPS properties include the following: City of Rocks National Reserve, Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, Minidoka Internment National Monument, Nez Perce National Historic Park and a small part of Yellowstone National Park. The NPS also provides funding for recreation and conservation related projects through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (administered in Idaho by the Department of Parks and Recreation) and offers technical assistance to state and local governments and private organizations on conservation and recreation related planning efforts through the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program.

#### *National Trail System*

The NPS works with federal, state and local governments to designate and protect components of the National Trail System, a network of scenic, historic, and recreational trails of national significance. The Oregon, Nez Perce, California and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trails are examples of long distance trails that pass through Idaho. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail follows the crest of the Rockies along Idaho's border with Montana.

#### *National Natural Landmarks and National Historic Landmarks*

The NPS identifies National Natural Landmarks and National Historic Landmarks, distinguishing areas of national geologic, ecologic or historical/cultural significance. Some of Idaho's natural landmarks include Niagara Springs, a unit of Thousand Springs State Park in Gooding County, and North Menan Butte in Jefferson and Madison counties. National Historic Landmarks include the Cataldo Mission, located in Coeur d'Alene's Old Mission State Park in Kootenai County, and Fort Hall in Bannock County.

#### *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is to work with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

In Idaho, the USFWS manages six National Wildlife Refuges: Bear Lake, Camas, Deer Flat, Grays Lake, Kootenai and Minidoka. These refuges are managed to conserve and restore the fish, wildlife and plant

resources and their habitats within the refuge. Recreational opportunities are limited at the refuges, and typically involve bird watching, wildlife viewing, fishing, education/interpretation and in some cases hunting.

Additionally, USFWS manages three national fish hatcheries – Dworshak, Hagerman and Kooskia. These hatcheries are part of the National Fish Hatchery System, which is comprised of a network of field stations located across the nation that work with tribal, local, state and federal agencies to conserve fisheries.

### *Bureau of Land Management*

The mission of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The BLM manages 12 million acres of public lands in Idaho, nearly one quarter of the state’s land mass.

Additionally, the BLM manages 1,100 river miles in Idaho, including 325 Wild & Scenic River miles. Wild and Scenic Rivers are designated as such because they possess outstanding natural, cultural, and/or recreational values in a free-flowing condition. The lands and waters managed by the BLM host many unique and special outdoor recreation opportunities where visitors can enjoy scenic landscapes in Idaho and learn more about the state’s history.

Opportunities include the wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers of the Owyhee Canyonlands, camping along the Salmon River, and raptor viewing at the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. The BLM also provides opportunities to learn more about Idaho’s history by hosting large portions of National Scenic and Historic Trails in Idaho, including the Lewis and Clark, Nez Perce, Oregon, California and Continental Divide Trails.

In 2020, the BLM saw 6.4 million visitors in Idaho, many participating in outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, off-highway vehicle riding, fishing, boating, mountain biking, horseback riding, fishing and hunting.

### *Bureau of Reclamation*

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public. The BOR was established to help sustain the economy and improve quality of life in the Western United States by developing reservoirs to establish reliable sources of water, primarily to provide irrigation water to Idaho’s thousands of acres of farmland. In Idaho, 20



Sailboats at Lake Cascade State Park

recreation areas have been created by BOR, with most being managed by local, state or federal partners. BOR projects in Idaho include Cascade, American Falls, Soldiers Meadow, and Black Canyon, among many others.

Recreation at BOR projects is often water-based, with projects offering motorized and non-motorized boating opportunities, swimming beaches and fishing along with camping, picnicking and hiking along the shores of the reservoir. Unlike other federal land managers, BOR has limited authority to develop recreation areas, and relies on partnerships to manage and develop these opportunities. Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation manages BOR properties as state parks at Lake Cascade and Lake Walcott.

## US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### *U.S. Forest Service*

The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. In Idaho, nearly 40 percent of the land mass, or 20.3 million acres, is occupied by National Forests, making the Forest Service an essential provider of outdoor recreation opportunities across the state.

The Forest Service manages nine national forests in Idaho, including: the Boise, Salmon-Challis, Sawtooth, Caribou-Targhee, Nez Perce-Clearwater, Idaho Panhandle, Payette, and portions of the Bitterroot and Wallowa-Whitman. The Forest Service also manages the Curlew National Grasslands.



Popular recreational activities in the national forests include camping (in developed areas and dispersed areas), fishing, hunting and boating. Trail uses including hiking, mountain biking, horseback, as well as motorcycle, ATV, UTV and jeep riding. The national forests also provide access to Idaho's rivers, providing exceptional rafting, kayaking and canoeing opportunities.

In the winter, many forest roads become snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snowshoe trails with the help of partners who do the grooming. Idaho's popular ski resorts and lodges are operated under a special use permit with the Forest Service, providing excellent skiing and snowboarding opportunities.



There are two national recreation areas (NRA) in Idaho; the Sawtooth NRA managed by the Sawtooth National Forest and the Hells Canyon NRA managed by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. An NRA is designated by Congress for its outstanding plant and animal communities, geologic features, scenic qualities, or other special features. These areas are managed to emphasize their recreational values.

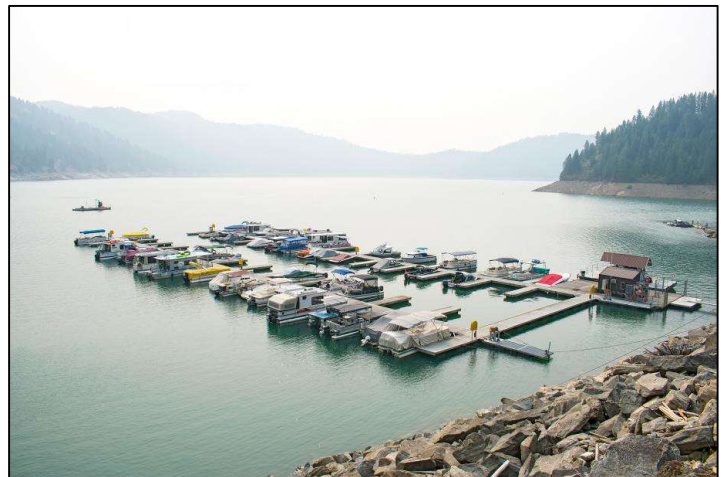


Idaho's national forests also have eight congressionally designated wilderness areas: the Frank Church River of No Return, Gospel Hump, Hells Canyon, Sawtooth, Selway-Bitterroot, Jim McClure-Jerry Peak, White Clouds, and Hemingway-Boulders. The BLM and Forest Service jointly manage the Jim McClure-Jerry Peak and White Clouds wilderness areas. The prevailing characteristics of wilderness areas are their lack of noticeable human presence, relatively untrammelled natural setting and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

## US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

### *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*

The mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is to deliver public and military engineering services; partnering in peace and war to strengthen our nation's security, energize the economy and reduce risk from disasters. The primary vision of USACE is to engineer solutions to our Nation's toughest challenges, including the development of dam, lock and levee systems across the nation. In Idaho, USACE projects are part of the Walla Walla District, including Lucky Peak and Dworshak project areas, as well as part of the Lower Granite project in Lewiston. Like the BOR, the USACE often works with public and private partners to manage and preserve resources and provide recreational opportunities such as camping, fishing, boating, swimming, bird watching and hunting. Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation manages USACE properties as state parks at Dworshak and Hells Gate.



Big Eddy Marina at Dworshak State Park

## US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Through the Federal Highway Administration, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) provides grant funding to state and local governments for recreational trails, and also manages the scenic byway

program. The Recreational Trails Program provides funding for motorized and non-motorized trails and related projects. Idaho typically receives around \$1.5 million annually from this fund.

Idaho has six scenic byways stretching hundreds of miles, including the Northwest Passage Scenic Byway, the Pioneer Historic Byway, and the Payette River Scenic Byway. These routes offer scenic drives that introduce visitors to the natural and historical resources of the area.



Trail work funded by a Recreational Trails Program grant.

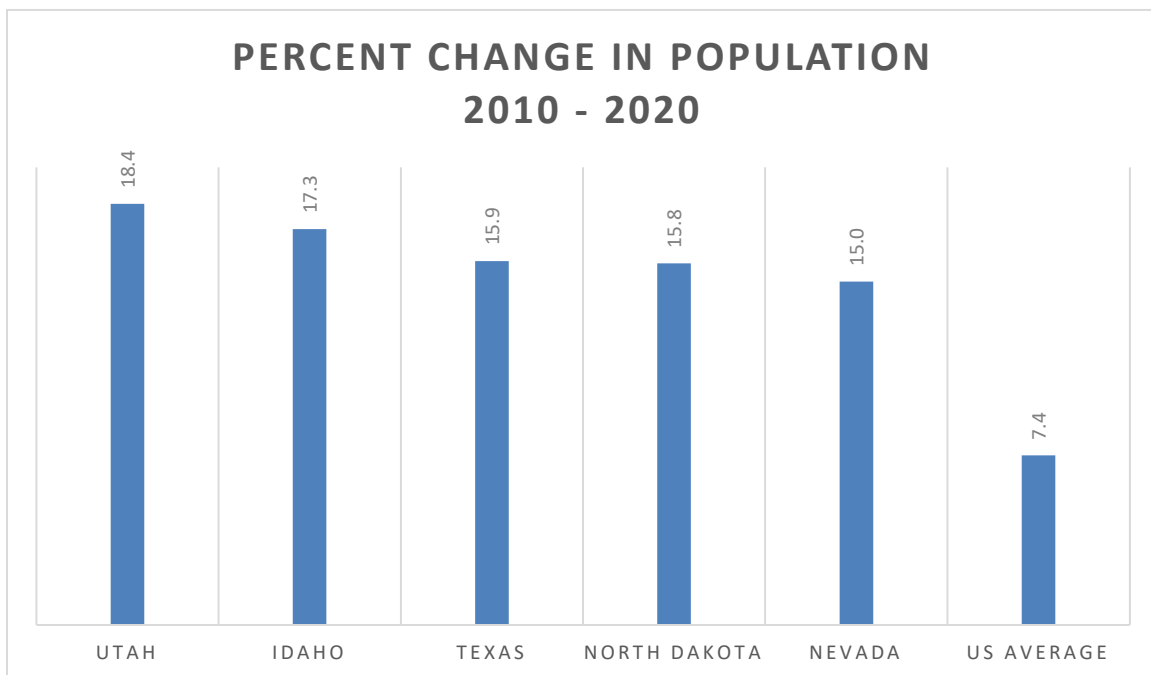
## Chapter 3: Outdoor Recreation Demand

### Outdoor Recreation Demand

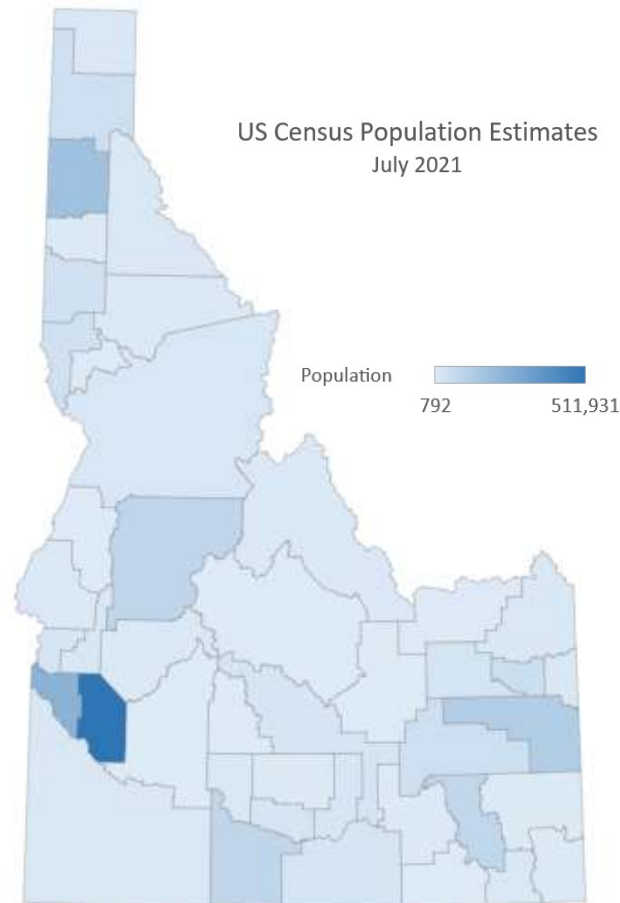
Demand for outdoor recreation opportunities can be attributed to many factors, including population and demographics, tourism, trends in activities and availability of resources. Most recently, the demand for recreation from 2020 to 2022 exploded, likely due to COVID-19. The surge in interest in the outdoors resulted in historic visitation to Idaho State Parks (a record 7.7 million visitors in 2020) and shortages in recreational equipment, including bicycles, boats, RVs, and other gear. Time will tell if the uptick in interest results in a lasting increase in outdoor recreation. Also, as Idaho's population grows and becomes more diverse, it is important to determine how this growth and the changes in demographics may impact demand for recreational opportunities. Additionally, determining where the growth is occurring and understanding how that impacts the surrounding area will help land managers and recreation providers better plan for the future. But focusing solely on Idaho's population discounts the considerable influx of visitors to the state who participate in recreation. Tourism is a critical piece to understanding the overall demand for outdoor recreation.

### Population Changes and the Impacts on Demand

The growth of the state's overall population, as well as demographic changes within that overall growth, impacts the demand for outdoor recreation. Idaho's population increased by 17.3 percent (271,524 people) from 2010 to 2020, far surpassing the national growth rate of 7.4 percent and ranking second behind Utah.



At the end of the 2020 Census period, Idaho's total population was 1,839,106. Since April 2020, Idaho has experienced growth of 3.4 percent and continues to rank among the states with the fastest annual and cumulative growth rates.



While growth was seen in all but seven Idaho Counties, growth was concentrated in predominantly urban areas including Ada, Canyon, Kootenai, and Bonneville Counties (*US Census Bureau*). With the continued trend towards moving away from larger metropolitan areas in neighboring states, Idaho is expected to experience continued steady growth – an annual rate of 1.1 percent through 2029 and reaching an estimated population of 1,990,232 (*Idaho Department of Labor*).

As Idaho's urban areas continue to grow, the demand for urban outdoor recreation opportunities will increase, and much of that burden will fall on local governments to provide the appropriate facilities and programs within these areas. Additionally, public lands and open space adjacent to these urban areas will continue to see increased pressure on the existing facilities and resources, challenging land managers to balance opportunities with the preservation of the natural resources. Inversely, the rural areas seeing a decline in population will be faced with the challenge of maintaining and providing parks and other recreational facilities for their residents as their tax base is reduced.



Impacts on recreational use and demand from large population centers proximate to Idaho's borders must also be considered. Recreational facilities in the northern region of Idaho see considerable use from the Spokane/Spokane Valley Metropolitan Statistical Area (599,185), while demands and participation in the southeast and eastern regions of the state are impacted by use from the Salt Lake City-Provo-Orem, Utah Combined Statistical Area (population 2,701,129) (US Census Bureau). Much of this use occurs on Idaho's campgrounds, waterways, and motorized and non-motorized trails.

## Changing Demographics, Changing Needs

Changing demographic landscapes have a significant role in shaping outdoor recreation trends. Different groups of people may use and value public lands in different ways, and it is important that public land managers understand the demographic makeup of their community to ensure appropriate opportunities. This section will help highlight Idaho's demographic trends.

### Baby Boomers

Idaho's growing population is seeing notable change in the age distribution of its population. Retiring Baby Boomers will significantly impact recreation demand. In Idaho, the 65-plus age group represents 16 percent of the population. The 40-64 age group, the latter of which are included in the Baby Boomer generation, currently accounts for 30 percent of Idaho's population (*Idaho Department of Labor; U.S. Census Bureau*). As this generation enters retirement age, their mobility, spending patterns, and consumer demands (e.g., health care and housing) can affect how communities develop economically. An aging population can also affect changing demands on land use (e.g., recreation) as their active leisure time greatly increases.

### Youth

While Idaho is certainly getting older, the state's median age is still below the national average – 36.9 years for Idaho compared to 38.2 years for the nation. The 18-and-under age group represents 25 percent of Idaho's growing population and continues to be an integral demographic regarding the relevancy of public lands (*Idaho Department of Labor*).

A national study conducted by the Outdoor Foundation, focused on outdoor recreational activity participation in 2020, showed that the top activities amongst this demographic are biking (road, mountain, BMX), camping (backyard, car, backpacking, RV), fishing (freshwater, fly), running (jogging, trail running), and hiking.

This study did not include activities such as unstructured outdoor play or team sports, which continue to be popular youth activities.



Campers at Lake Cascade State Park

The study also concluded that, on average, youth aged 6-17 participate in 77 outdoor recreational activities per year. Even accounting for an increase in these activities due to the effects of COVID-19, this number has been decreasing. In 2012 this number was 91 and in 2015 they saw an average of 82. This shows that youth engagement in outdoor recreational activities is on the decline.

Technology can help connect recreation providers with the younger audiences. Accessible technology has continued to advance and can now play a critical role in guiding visitors to and through parks and public lands. Public land managers should continue embracing this technology, as smartphones and tablets become an essential part of our culture, particularly with youth. Technology can not only provide information regarding access to outdoor recreation but can also facilitate the actual experience through interactive interpretation. At the same time, this technology can offer a stronger sense of safety with global positioning system (GPS) locating capabilities available on most smartphones.

### *Hispanics*

Hispanics are one of Idaho's fastest growing demographic groups with an increase of 36.1 percent from 2010 to 2020. Recent estimates from the U.S. Census show Hispanic's represent 13 percent of Idaho's population. Idaho counties with the largest percentage of Hispanic population are Jerome, Minidoka, Clark, Power, Lincoln, Gooding, and Cassia and Canyon – mostly in the southern portion of the state (*Idaho Department of Labor; U.S. Census Bureau*).

### *Travel and Tourism*

While not solely focused on outdoor recreation tourism, the results of the study emphasized the importance of outdoor recreation to Idaho's tourism. The study found that the one of the most prevalent marketable trip types (excludes trips for business or visiting family/friends) is outdoor recreation, with hiking/backpacking, visiting a landmark/historic site, visiting a national/state park and camping included in the top five activities for overnight trips (see figure below). The study additionally found that travelers on overnight trips are more likely to use a camper/RV as a transportation mode when compared to the national average, and that a majority of marketable trips in Idaho originate in Idaho, Washington, California, Utah and Oregon.

## **Participation**

Idaho offers a variety of outdoor opportunities with its abundance of public lands and distinct seasonal opportunities. A study released by the Outdoor Industry Association in 2017 found that at least 79 percent of Idaho residents participate in outdoor recreation, ranking the state third behind Alaska and Montana. Alongside Montana, three additional states bordering Idaho (Washington, Utah, Wyoming) are included in the top states for overall participation. The federal Bureau of Economic Analysis estimates outdoor recreation contributes \$2.2 billion to Idaho's economy.

### **Analysis of Registration and License Sales**

For select activities, registration or licenses are required to participate. Reviewing this information gives an idea of trends in participation and shows perspective in terms of relative growth or decline. In Idaho, registration is required for recreational vehicles/campers, off-highway vehicles, snowmobiles and

motorized boats. Licenses are required for fishing and hunting. These fees go back into the respective activities for facility/trail maintenance and development, resource management and education.

Hunting and fishing license sales are managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. In general, resident hunting license sales have seen a slight reduction, while resident fishing and combo (hunting and fishing) licenses have seen an increase. The most significant growth in sales have come from resident fishing licenses. Non-resident license sales show overall growth, with the most popular being the one-day fishing license.

Idaho recreational vehicle (RV) registrations have shown a steady growth since 2020. Public and private campgrounds are located throughout the state, many of which provide a combination of power, water and sewer hookup services to accommodate RV users.

Additionally, there are abundant opportunities for

undeveloped/dispersed camping on US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands. Demand for developed campgrounds fluctuates seasonally, but campgrounds in popular summer areas are often full, with many booking-up months in advance. IDPR, through its state parks, is the primary provider of publicly managed campgrounds with full hookups (water, sewer and electric).



Idaho Fish and Game “Fishing Fiesta” outreach effort in May 2022 at Eagle Island State Park

## Summarizing Outdoor Recreation Demand

To better understand outdoor recreation needs, IDPR worked with recreation providers, public land managers and the general public. The best way for communities to understand their needs is working directly with the population they serve. The needs reflected in this section represent ongoing needs and recent trends that should be addressed over the next five years.

## Outdoor Needs and Trends as Identified by Providers

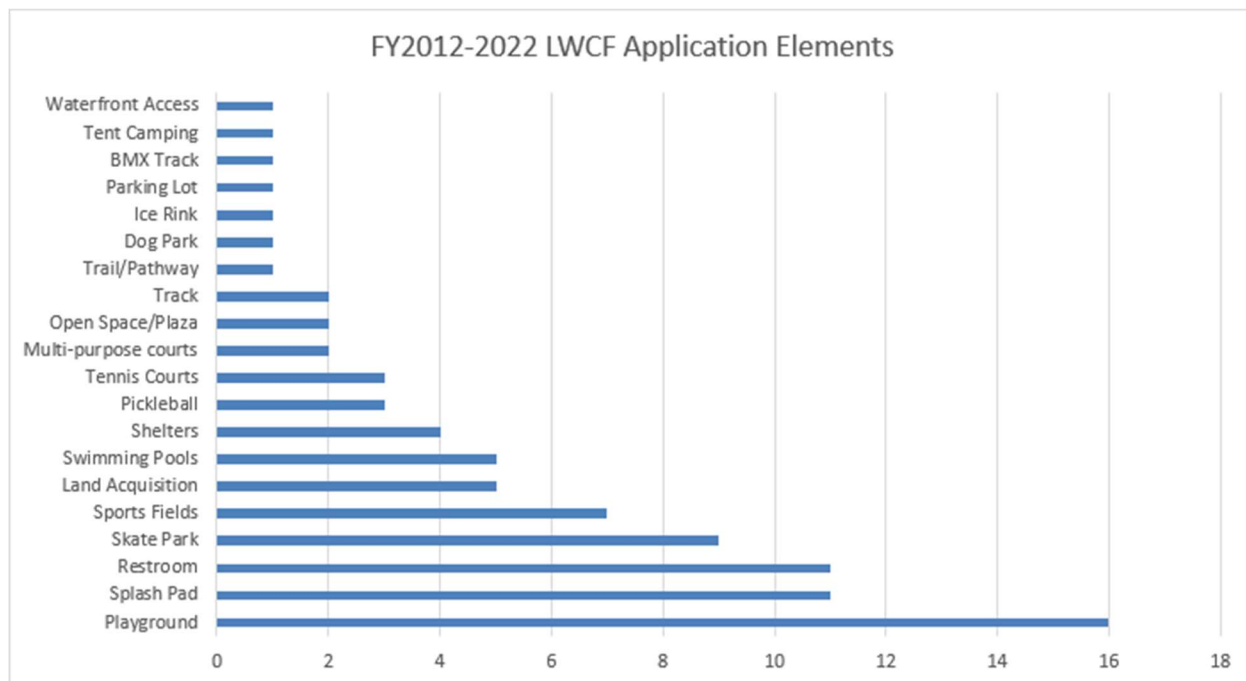
As mentioned earlier, IDPR partnered with Boise State University (BSU) and the Idaho Policy Institute (IPI) to conduct an online survey in January 2022. As part of the survey, residents and visitors to Idaho were given a list of outdoor recreation facilities and asked to compare the supply (existing facilities) to the demand (use of facilities) in their region. The full survey results are included as Appendix A.

## Land and Water Conservation Fund Projects

The Land and Water Conservation Fund, managed in Idaho by IDPR, is made available to local government entities every other year. The project applications received from these entities reflects the needs of the communities they serve and provide insight into the demands and needs at a local level.



A review of all applications from 2012 to 2022 determined some trends in recreational facilities.



## Emerging Activities and Trends

One of the more difficult challenges for recreation providers and suppliers is keeping up with trends in activities and predicting the emergence of new activities. Various discussions and survey indicated a relative consensus on some of the emerging activities in Idaho, and a follow-up survey of recreation providers offered the following results on popularity.

### *Animal-friendly Facilities*

According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), dog parks are currently the fastest growing type of park. The increased demand for dog parks, particularly in urban areas, is a great

opportunity to bring the community together. A study by the Trust for Public Land organization shows Boise, Idaho has the largest number of dog parks per 100,000 residents in the nation.



Riders on a Focus Thron2 e-bike

Credit: Focus

### *Bikes/Bikes/Bikes*

**E-bikes** continue to be a popular trend in Idaho with 17 percent of the respondents to the IDPR/BSU survey saying they owned one. The pandemic bike boom boosted all cycle sales. Most e-bikes fall into three categories with varying degrees of pedal assist. Idaho is fairly inclusive with laws regarding usage of e-bikes allowing them on bike paths and trails. However, local and county rules



determine whether or not they are allowed on particular trails. Currently, federal rules prohibit e-bikes on non-motorized trails.

A fat-tire bike is an alternative bicycle subset that utilizes 'fat' tires, which are usually between 3.5-5" wide, providing increased traction compared to your average bicycle. The primary benefit of a fat bike is that they're able to travel over diverse terrain, from snow to sand, better than regular bicycles. The wide tires provide you with extra grip and traction, and combined with a low tire pressure, you'll find that you're able to pedal over terrain that'd make conventional tires sink.

A gravel bike is a drop-bar bike designed to let you ride over many different surfaces. The drop handlebar and sporty geometry means you can make good progress on the road – but, with wider tires, lower gearing and stable handling, you can also head off-road with confidence. Road bikes will typically have a short wheelbase and steeper angles for nimble ride quality and lively handling. Gravel bikes have a longer wheelbase and slacker head angle to add stability and slow down the handling for negotiating technical obstacles and loose descents.



People enjoying Spikeball

Credit Spikeball Inc.

Rail-Trails are popular bicycle routes over former railroad tracks, giving riders long routes through exceptional landscapes.

The Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes, the Coeur d'Alenes Parkway, the Ashton-to-Tetonia Trail are popular routes under IDPR's jurisdiction. Interest in long-distance cycling is reported to have increased, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Spikeball*

Roundnet (also commonly known as spikeball) is a net sport. The game is played between two teams, usually with two players each. Players initially line up around a small trampoline-like net at the start of a point. The game starts with a serve from one team to another, and teams alternate hitting the ball back to the net, and ends when the ball falls to the ground or an infraction occurs. According to Google Trends, spike ball is gaining popularity in Idaho.

### *Wake Surfing*

Wakesurfing is a water sport in which a rider trails behind a boat, riding the boat's wake without being directly pulled by the boat. After getting up on the wake, typically by use of a tow rope, the wakesurfers will drop the rope, and ride the steep face below the wave's peak in a fashion reminiscent of surfing.



### *Paddleboarding*

This activity continues to grow in Idaho. Paddleboarding is a sport in which a person rides on the surface of the water, in a prone or kneeling position on a surfboard-like board (prone paddleboarding or kneeling paddleboarding) or standing and using an oar for propulsion (stand-up paddleboarding or SUP).

### *Rock Climbing*

Although not a new sport, according to Google Trends, rock climbing is a popular activity in Idaho. Rock climbing is a sport in which participants climb up, across, or down natural rock formations or artificial rock walls. The goal is to reach the summit of a formation or the endpoint of a usually pre-defined route without falling. Because of the wide range and variety of rock formations around the world, rock climbing has been separated into several different styles and sub-disciplines, such as scrambling, bouldering, sport climbing, and traditional climbing another activity involving the scaling of hills and similar formations, differentiated by the rock climber's sustained use of hands to support their body weight as well as to provide balance.



Climber at City of Rocks State Park

## Chapter 4: Outdoor Recreation Issues and Recommendations

This chapter outlines goals and objectives to help providers adapt to emerging trends and to address issues impacting outdoor recreation. IDPR determined the recommendations in this chapter through input received from outdoor recreation providers, research of statewide trends and issues, online surveys and various in person discussions.

While Idaho has an abundance of public lands, the management of these lands requires a balance between offering outdoor recreation opportunities and sustaining the state's natural, cultural and historical resources. This requires a coordinated system of delivery, ensuring that a broad range of recreation facilities, programs and resources are made available to all of Idaho's citizens and visitors for generations to come.

### Common Themes

Throughout the process of developing this plan, the following common themes emerged as current and potential areas of concern over the next five years:

- Balancing population growth, increased participation and natural resource protection
- Providing safe, quality experiences in parks
- Updated technology such as WiFi service, car charging stations and accessible exhibits
- Loss of public lands, including federal land transfers
- Loss of motorized trail access due to administrative closures, and non-motorized trail access due to lack of funding for maintenance
- Engaging youth in outdoor recreation
- Maintaining existing facilities and infrastructure
- Improving communication between providers and the public
- Funding for programming and interpretation
- Improving education and stewardship/respect for natural resources
- Building new and unique partnerships
- Adapting to changes in activities and emerging activities; staying relevant
- Blending technology with outdoor recreation
- Connecting with new users, including minority and underserved populations
- Improving access for people with disabilities

These themes are addressed in this section as part of three overarching issue areas: access, experience, and stewardship.

This section meets the LWCF requirements for an implementation plan. Additionally, LWCF applications will be rated partially by their ties to these themes and issues through the Open Project Selection Process (see Appendix B).

## SCORP Focus Areas 2023-2028

### 1. Access

In regard to this plan, “access” refers to the overall availability of a recreational opportunity. Idaho must continue to provide access to opportunities for its citizens and visitors, ensuring that public lands and parks remain open to a variety of recreational uses throughout the state. There are many challenges in meeting this task, including funding for maintaining and developing facilities, adapting to trends and changes in activities, and balancing access with conservation of resources.

#### Goals

- A. Public agencies and non-profit entities should pursue the acquisition, preservation and development of open space, parks, trails and corridors.
- B. Public land managers in and adjacent to communities should develop connecting trails between communities and recreation opportunities.
- C. Community leaders and stakeholders should encourage goals that help create close-to-home, everyday recreation opportunities.
- D. IDPR should continue to partner with other State and Federal land managers in maintaining and improving areas of natural resource damage and camping mitigation.
- E. IDPR and Federal land managers, and other stakeholders should continue efforts to identify dedicated funding sources for development, maintenance and management of all trails on public lands.
- F. Public agencies and community leaders should keep public lands open and accessible, and work with large private land holders to allow or retain recreational access.
- G. Public land managers should recognize that there are limits on the number of recreationists and types of recreation our finite public lands can accommodate and still offer a quality experience.
- H. Land management agencies should consider the role of recreation in landscape vegetation and natural resource plans, ensuring the plans document the balance between recreation, restoration and resource preservation.
- I. Collectively, public agencies and non-profit groups should educate the public about the need to balance recreation and access with the need to protect and enhance fish and wildlife resources.



IDPR Trail Rangers clear more than 2,000 miles of trail each year, mostly on federal land, keeping areas safe and accessible to the public.

### 2. Experience

Beyond the provision of facilities and management of land, recreation providers also facilitate participation for Idaho’s citizens and visitors. By offering programs, classes and educational



opportunities, providers can better connect people to parks and public lands and instill life-long skills to allow for continued participation.

### Goals

- A. Public agencies should seek partnerships with local school districts and non-profits to provide and fund environmental education opportunities outside of the classroom.
- B. All recreation providers should support the Idaho Environmental Literacy Plan by working with stakeholders to incorporate environmental education into school practices based on Idaho education standards.
- C. Recreation providers should aim to provide environmental etiquette education such as “pack in, pack out” to prevent resource damage and encourage respect for recreation facilities.
- D. Public agencies and private recreation providers should partner to provide education to first-time outdoor recreators.
- E. Public agencies should seek to identify, understand and provide programs and opportunities for underserved populations, particularly senior citizens and ethnic minorities.
- F. Public agencies should seek partnerships with outfitters and retailers in providing first-time experience programs to encourage new participants.
- G. Recreation providers should continue to improve and provide facilities and programs accessible to all people.
- H. Recreation providers should enhance access and improve experiences by providing appropriate signing, maps, websites and other information dissemination methods in keeping with advancing technologies.
- I. Public recreation providers should communicate and partner with businesses in the outdoor recreation industry to understand and adapt to trends and changes in activities.
- J. IDPR should continue to maintain the *Trails Idaho* internet tool and seek ways to enhance it with the inclusion of additional information on outdoor recreation of all types.

## 3. Stewardship

In order to ensure the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities, those entrusted with maintaining Idaho’s public lands must continue to care for these important resources. At the same time, it is important that current and future generations understand the value and benefits of the state’s natural, cultural and historic resources.

### Goals

- A. Recreation providers should ensure the rehabilitation and renovation of existing outdoor facilities and related infrastructure.
- B. Public, private and non-profit entities should work with community leaders and stakeholders to provide community service projects for high schoolers with an environmental focus.
- C. Public agencies should foster and grow partnerships with user-groups and other non-profits to maintain and preserve opportunities and resources.
- D. Federal land managers should partner with outfitters and guides to assist in maintaining motorized and non-motorized trails.

- E. Public agencies should determine and promote the economic impact of the outdoor recreation opportunities they provide.
- F. Recreation providers should seek new ways to recruit, train and retain the next generation of outdoor recreation leaders.
- G. Public agencies should seek new funding opportunities through partnerships and sponsorships to improve funding for programs and facilities.
- H. Recreation providers should seek opportunities to partner with state and county health departments and health-based companies to promote the physical and mental benefits of outdoor recreation.
- I. Public land managers should work with service organizations that employ young adults and teenagers to maintain and improve outdoor recreation facilities and resources.
- J. Public agencies should use interpretation including both personal presentations and non-personal media to inspire stewardship of our natural, cultural and historic resources.
- K. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is the primary state partner for stewardship of the Idaho's fish and wildlife, including the protection of sensitive habitats, such as winter rangers and migration corridors. IDPR will work with IDFG to protect habitat and balance impacts of outdoor recreation on wildlife.
- L. IDPR will work with the IDFG, the Idaho Department of Lands, and state and local law enforcement to train officers to better enforce trespassing and other undesirable use of Idaho's backcountry, particularly with regard to private property. Helping users to understand responsible use and aiding law enforcement in curbing irresponsible behavior will benefit Idahoans.

## Chapter 5: Moving Forward

Outdoor recreation in Idaho is rapidly evolving as trends in participation, increase in tourism, new technology, and changes in demographics impact the demand for facilities and resources. Recreation providers and land managers are challenged with balancing access while protecting resources and ensuring that opportunities are available for present and future generations.

In order to achieve this, cooperation between public, private and non-profit entities must take place to ensure a collaborative and connected system of lands and opportunities are made available to the people of Idaho and its visitors.



Kayaking at Ritter Island, Thousand Springs State Park

IDPR, as the developer of this plan, should serve as a leader in facilitating the implementation of the goals outlined in it. By reaching out and working with partners such as public and private organizations, leaders of minority or underserved populations, school districts, land management agencies and recreation and environmental advocates, IDPR can help improve outdoor recreation access, experience and stewardship across the state.

*This plan was open for public review from June 17, 2022 through July 18, 2022. At the conclusion of the review, a final draft was prepared and submitted to the National Park Service via the Office of the Governor for final approval.*

## **Appendix A: Boise State University Survey**



# IDAHO OUTDOOR RECREATION

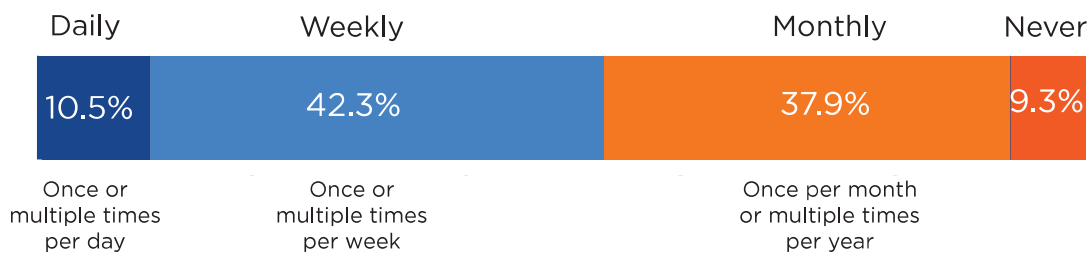
## 2022 SURVEY OF IDAHOANS

Idaho State Parks and Recreation Department (IDPR) selected Idaho Policy Institute (IPI) to conduct a public opinion survey of 1000 Idaho adults to inform the Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). With the goal of learning more about Idahoans' current and potential recreation habits, the public opinion survey asked Idahoans about their current outdoor recreation habits, their plans for recreation in the future, their barriers to participation, and their recreation needs.

### How often people recreate

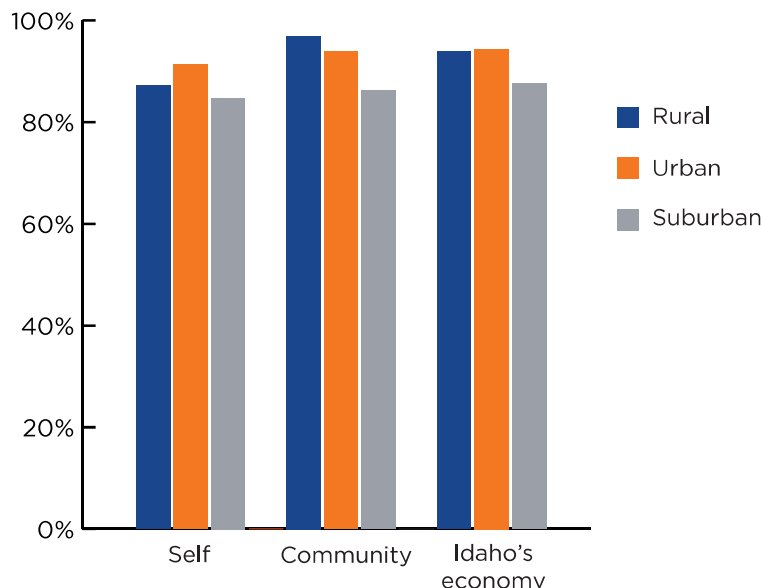
Survey respondents were asked how often they recreated in the past 12 months.

**10.5%** recreate either daily or multiple times per day. **42.3%** recreate either one a week or multiple times per week. **37.9%** recreate either multiple times per year or once per month. And **9.3%** never recreated or were unsure.



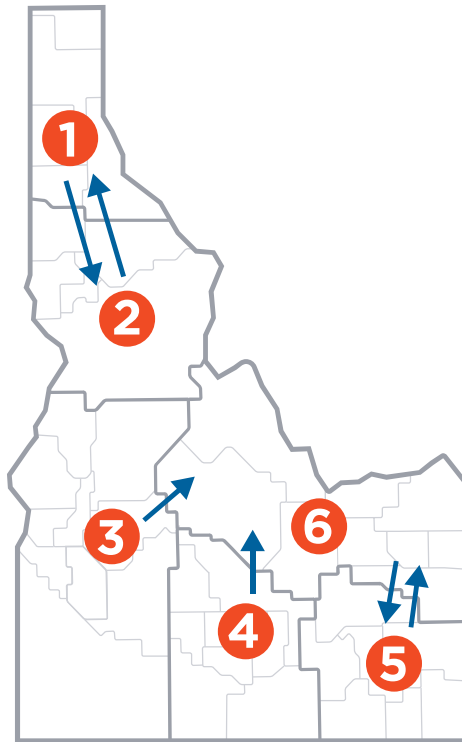
### Importance of recreation

The survey asked respondents how important recreation was to themselves, their communities, and to Idaho's economy. Respondents from urban areas were almost **10%** less likely to find recreation important than their suburban and rural counterparts in all three areas.



## Where people recreate

REGION MAP



Respondents were asked what regions they recreate in. While most respondents tend to recreate in their own regions, some travel to nearby regions.

<b>Region 1:</b>	<b>95%</b> recreate in Region 1 <b>11.6%</b> recreate in Region 2
<b>Region 2:</b>	<b>67.8%</b> recreate in Region 2 <b>28.8%</b> recreate in Region 1
<b>Region 3:</b>	<b>81.8%</b> recreate in Region 3 <b>22.6%</b> recreate in Region 4
<b>Region 4:</b>	<b>91.3%</b> recreate in Region 4 <b>34%</b> recreate in Region 7
<b>Region 5:</b>	<b>79.6%</b> recreate in Region 5 <b>58.3%</b> recreate in Region 6
<b>Region 6:</b>	<b>95.5%</b> recreate in Region 6 <b>43.6%</b> recreate in Region 5

## Types of recreation

Almost all types of recreation are correlated with income, in that the higher an income someone has, the more likely they are to participate in recreation. However, fishing was a notable exception, with similar participant rates across all incomes. While hunting and camping are a bit more evenly distributed across income levels, hiking, snowsports, and using off-road vehicles are least likely to be used by respondents from lower income groups compared to their higher income counterparts.

	Hiking	Hunting	Snow Sports	Fishing	Camping	Off-road Vehicles
Less than \$25,000	55.4%	23.9%	31.1%	47.8%	57.7%	17.6%
Over \$75,000	77.8%	20.9%	54.7%	50.2%	67.6%	36.0%





# IDAHO PARKS AND RECREATION **SURVEY OF IDAHOANS 2022**



**BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY**  
IDAHO POLICY INSTITUTE



# IDAHO PARKS AND RECREATION SURVEY OF IDAHOANS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), Idaho Policy Institute (IPI) surveyed 1,000 Idaho adults to learn more about current and potential recreation habits of the public. Some of the key findings from this survey include:

- Over 90% of respondents find recreation important to the economies of both their community and the state of Idaho
- Most people recreate within their own region, sometimes traveling to recreate in nearby regions but usually not much farther
- Those with higher incomes are more likely to participate in most recreation activities
- Upgrading and maintaining facilities is the highest recommended priority for IDPR across regions





# INTRODUCTION

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) commissioned Idaho Policy Institute (IPI) to conduct a public opinion survey to inform the Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The public opinion survey asked Idahoans about their current outdoor recreation habits, plans for future recreation, barriers to participation, and recreation needs.

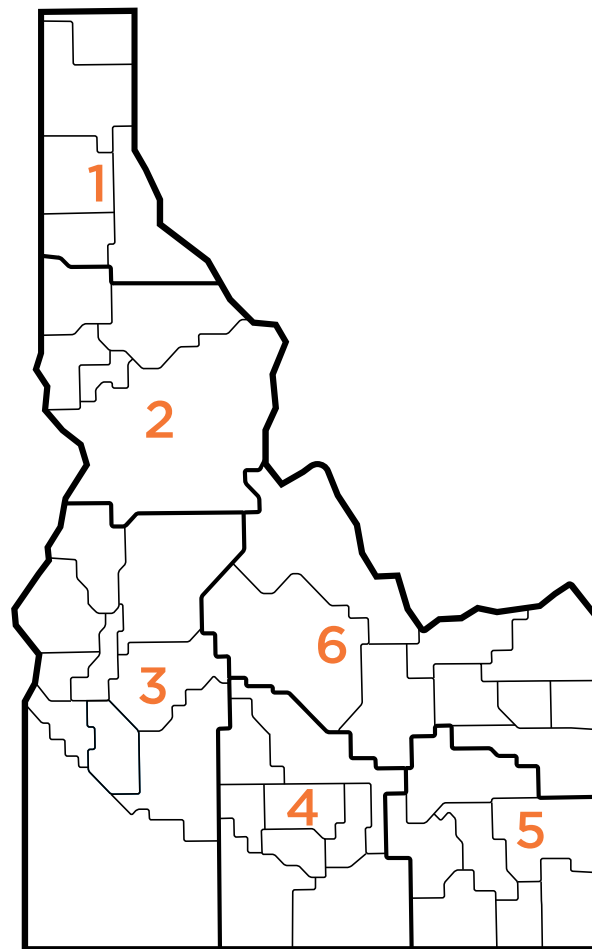
## METHODOLOGY

IPI collaborated with GS Strategy Group (GSS) to field the public opinion survey on behalf of IDPR. The three entities jointly developed a series of survey questions which GSS fielded using a combination of text and online methods. The survey was fielded from January 3 through January 12, 2022 to 1,000 Idaho adults. GSS surveyed a geographic and demographic representative sample of adults. While sample representativeness was determined at the county and metropolitan area level, analysis focuses on the IDPR region level<sup>1</sup> (Figure 1). Nearly half of all respondents (46.1%) live in Region 3, which contains the Treasure Valley metropolitan area. This is consistent with the state's overall population, as over 40% of Idahoans reside in the region.

The overall regional make up of respondents is:

- Region 1: 12.1%
- Region 2: 8.7%
- Region 3: 46.1%
- Region 4: 10.8%
- Region 5: 10.8%
- Region 6: 11.5%

**FIGURE 1: REGION MAP**



Most respondents (39.0%) described their area as rural. Nearly the same number (37.7%) live in suburban areas and 20.2% live in urban areas. The other 3.1% were either unsure or preferred not to say.

The most common income range among respondents is \$25,001 to \$50,000 (29.8%), followed closely by those earning between \$50,001 to \$75,000 (22.6%), and those under \$25,000 (22.2%). Less frequent responses include incomes over \$100,000 (11.8%) and the \$75,001 to \$100,000 range (10.7%) while 2.9% were either unsure or preferred not to say.

<sup>1</sup> Region 1: Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah, and Shoshone Counties

Region 2: Latah, Clearwater, Nez Perce, Lewis, and Idaho Counties

Region 3: Adams, Valley, Washington, Payette, Gem, Boise, Canyon, Ada, and Cassia Counties

Region 4: Camas, Blaine, Gooding, Lincoln, Jerome, Minidoka, Twin Falls, and Cassia Counties

Region 5: Bingham, Power, Bannock, Caribou, Oneida, Franklin, and Bear Lake Counties

Region 6: Lemhi, Custer, Clark, Fremont, Butte, Jefferson, Madison, Teton, and Bonneville Counties

# ANALYSIS

Survey respondents were asked about their recreation habits in the past twelve months (Current Conditions), as well as their anticipated recreation use in the next twelve months (Future Needs).

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

### PLACES TO RECREATE

**TABLE 1: WHERE PEOPLE LIVE AND RECREATE**

Where they live	Where they recreate					
	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6
Region 1	95.0%	11.6%	1.7%	6.1%	9.9%	6.6%
Region 2	28.8%	67.8%	20.7%	17.2%	10.3%	27.6%
Region 3	9.5%	11.1%	81.8%	22.6%	9.1%	25.8%
Region 4	13.9%	8.3%	25.9%	89.8%	18.5%	39.8%
Region 5	14.8%	2.8%	18.5%	45.4%	79.6%	60.2%
Region 6	1.7%	1.7%	10.4%	17.4%	41.7%	95.7%

**Note:** Respondents were able to select all that apply, as such, row totals do not add to 100%

Respondents were asked what regions they recreate in (Table 1). While most respondents tend to recreate in their own regions, some travel to nearby regions. Respondents in the panhandle regions (1 & 2) are most likely to recreate in the panhandle. Region 2 respondents were less likely to recreate in their own region overall (67.8%). Region 5 respondents are most likely to travel to other regions, usually to Region 4 (45.4%) and Region 6 (60.2%). Region 6 participants are likely to travel to Region 5 (41.7%) Region 4 respondents tend to travel to Region 6 (39.8%) and Region 3 (25.9%).

When asked about the number of facilities in their area, most respondents believe there are either about the right amount or not enough (Table 2).

**TABLE 2: PERCEPTION OF AMOUNT OF RECREATION FACILITIES BY REGION**

Region	Not enough	About the right amount	Too many	Not sure	Total
Region 1	39.7%	49.6%	4.1%	6.6%	100%
Region 2	46.0%	46.0%	8.1%	0.0%	100%
Region 3	58.4%	30.4%	1.1%	10.2%	100%
Region 4	69.4%	22.2%	2.9%	5.6%	100%
Region 5	58.3%	37.0%	0.0%	4.6%	100%
Region 6	58.3%	35.7%	0.9%	5.2%	100%

Region 4 respondents are most likely (69.4%) to report there not being enough facilities. Over half of respondents in Regions 3, 5, and 6 also feel there are not enough recreation facilities in their area (58.4%, 58.3%, and 58.3% respectively) while Region 1 most commonly report having about the right amount (49.6%) and Region 2 respondents were split between not enough facilities (46.0%) and about the right number of facilities (46.0%).

Respondents were also asked about the types of places they recreated (Table 3).

**TABLE 3: WHERE PEOPLE RECREATE BASED ON THEIR INCOME**

Income	State park	City park	Public water	Federal lands	Schools	Private clubs
Under \$25,000	53.6%	63.5%	39.2%	32.4%	9.5%	11.3%
\$25,001 - \$50,000	64.8%	67.8%	57.4%	37.3%	13.8%	12.1%
\$50,001 - \$75,000	67.7%	68.6%	59.3%	27.0%	14.2%	23.0%
\$75,001 - \$100,000	72.9%	76.6%	60.8%	44.9%	11.2%	30.8%
Over \$100,000	84.8%	69.5%	73.7%	48.3%	21.2%	38.1%

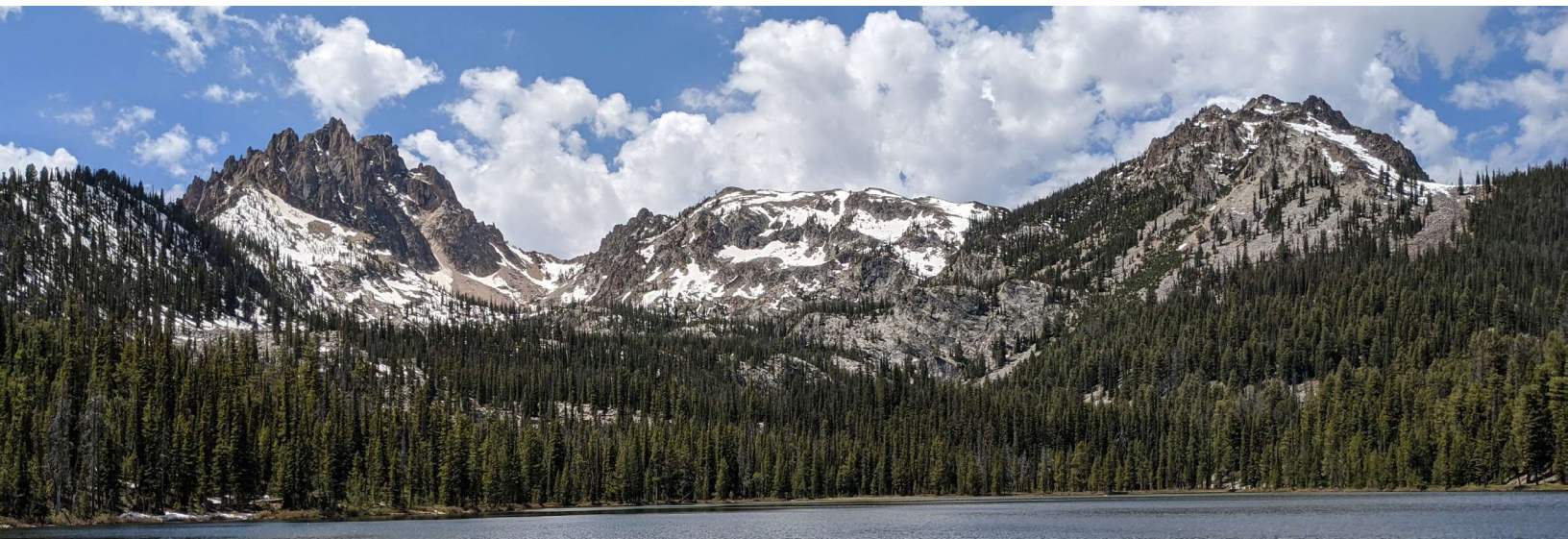
**Note:** Respondents were able to select all that apply, as such, row totals do not add to 100%

People with higher incomes are more likely to recreate in each type of destination, with the exception of city parks. Those earning under \$25,000 in income are least likely to recreate in state parks (53.6%), public waters (39.2%), and private clubs (11.3%) while those earning over \$100,000 are most likely to recreate in those places (84.8%, 73.7%, and 38.1%). City parks, federal lands, and schools didn't see as much of a trend related to income. This could be due to the fact that these areas do not charge fees, allowing people to recreate there as long as these areas are conveniently located.

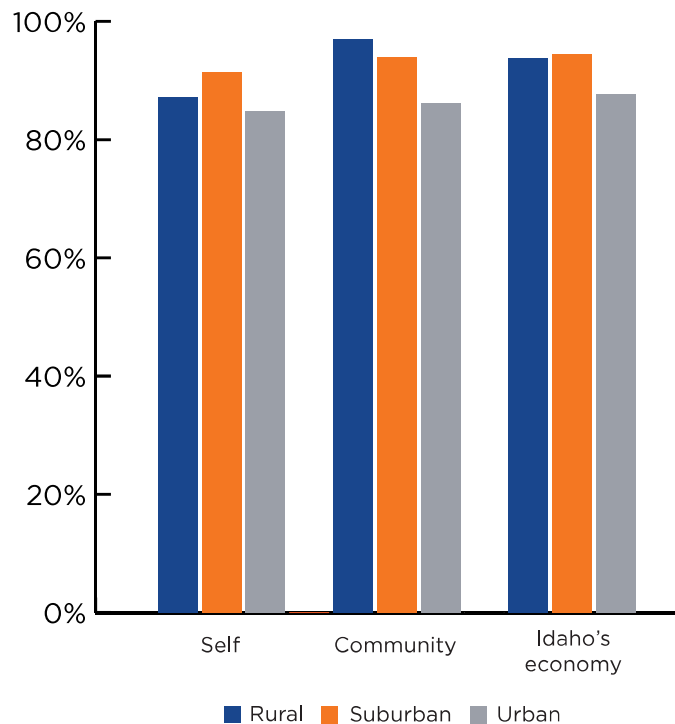
## RECREATION IMPORTANCE

Respondents were asked how important outdoor recreation is to them personally, their community's economy, and Idaho's economy. Overall, respondents feel outdoor recreation is important or very important. Respondents across the state are most likely to find recreation important to their community's economy (93.1%), Idaho's economy (92.2%), and, to a slightly lesser degree, themselves (88.4%).

When looking at rurality, urban respondents are slightly less likely to find recreation important compared to suburban and rural respondents; however, over 80% of urban respondents identified each category as important. Rural respondents are more likely to find outdoor recreation important to their community (96.9%) compared to suburban (93.9%) and urban (86.1%) respondents (Figure 2).

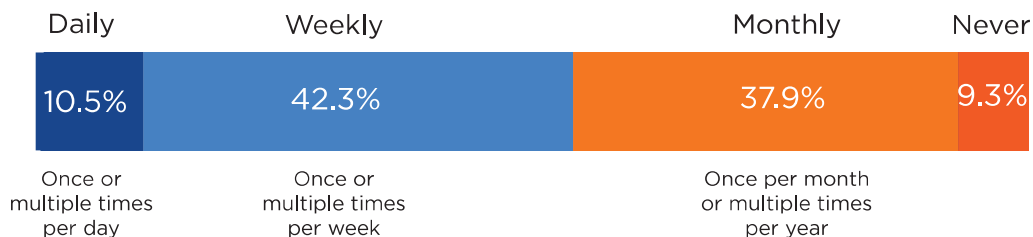


**FIGURE 2: IMPORTANCE OF RECREATION TO SELF, COMMUNITY, AND STATE BY RURALITY**



When asked about frequency of outdoor recreation participation, almost all respondents (90.7%) participated in outdoor recreation at least once in the past twelve months (Figure 3). Few respondents (10.5%) recreate outdoors daily. However, 42.3% recreate outdoors at least once or multiple times per week.

**FIGURE 3: HOW OFTEN RESPONDENTS RECREATE**



All respondents were asked why they were unlikely to participate in outdoor recreation. The options given were: not enough time, too far away, too expensive, mobility or accessibility issues (ADA), don't feel safe being alone/without communication channels, can't get access to public lands/parks, and don't know how to access information or training. The most common response was not having enough time (39.9%). When broken down regionally, some reasons are more prevalent than others (Table 4).



**TABLE 4: BARRIERS TO RECREATION BY REGION**

Region	Don't know how to access information or training	Poor public lands access	Don't feel safe	Mobility issues	Too expensive	Not enough time	Too far away
Region 1	8.3%	6.6%	12.4%	15.7%	21.5%	39.7%	14.1%
Region 2	10.3%	19.5%	9.2%	16.1%	16.1%	39.9%	31.0%
Region 3	8.2%	10.9%	12.4%	11.5%	17.8%	41.0%	26.3%
Region 4	11.1%	18.5%	16.7%	28.7%	27.8%	34.3%	18.5%
Region 5	1.9%	13.0%	19.4%	17.6%	26.9%	42.6%	15.7%
Region 6	8.7%	7.8%	10.4%	10.4%	25.2%	40.0%	22.6%

**Note:** Respondents were able to select all that apply, as such, row totals do not add to 100%

While Regions 2 and 4 are most likely to identify poor access to public lands as a barrier to recreation, it was indicated by only 19% of respondents in those regions. Region 5 respondents are most likely to not participate because they don't feel safe (19.4%). Respondents from Region 4 are most likely to not participate because of mobility issues (28.7%). Cost was cited as a barrier to participation in recreation by more than 20% of respondents in Region 1 (21.5%), Region 4 (27.8%), Region 5 (26.9%), and Region 6 (25.2%).

While reasons to not participate are similar by gender, a few response categories had noticeable differences between males and females. (Table 5).

**TABLE 5: BARRIERS TO RECREATION BY GENDER**

Gender	Don't know how to access information or training	Poor public lands access	Don't feel safe	Mobility issues	Too expensive	Not enough time	Too far away
Female	10.1%	9.9%	16.5%	13.5%	19.9%	38.8%	24.6%
Male	5.6%	13.9%	8.7%	15.9%	21.5%	40.6%	20.7%

**Note:** Respondents were able to select all that apply, as such, row totals do not add to 100%

Female respondents are more likely to not participate in outdoor recreation because they don't feel safe (16.5%) or because they don't know how to access information or training (10.1%), twice the rate reported by their male counterparts (8.7% and 5.6% respectively).

## TYPES OF RECREATION USED

The survey asked respondents about their participation in many different types of outdoor recreation. This included outdoor fitness recreation activities (e.g., walking, hiking, biking, etc.), winter recreation activities (e.g., skiing, snowboarding, sledding, etc.), skilled recreation activities (e.g., hunting, rock climbing, fishing, etc.), and miscellaneous activities (e.g., photography, boating, sports, etc.). A selection of common activities from those lists are used in this analysis (Table 6).

**TABLE 6: RECREATION ACTIVITIES BY REGION**

Region	Hiking	Hunting	Snow sports	Fishing	Camping	Off-road vehicles
Region 1	55.4%	24.8%	47.1%	44.6%	48.8%	21.5%
Region 2	70.1%	23.0%	56.3%	50.6%	65.5%	20.7%
Region 3	62.0%	15.2%	42.5%	47.1%	57.7%	29.7%
Region 4	57.4%	18.5%	40.7%	64.8%	66.7%	31.5%
Region 5	60.2%	24.1%	38.0%	44.4%	75.9%	35.2%
Region 6	79.1%	19.1%	49.6%	60.0%	67.8%	40.0%

**Note:** Respondents were able to select all that apply, as such, row totals do not add to 100%

Across respondents, hiking and camping are the most popular. Hiking is more likely to be an activity for Region 6 respondents (79.1%) and least likely for Region 1 (55.4%). Camping is preferred most by Region 5 respondents (75.9%) and least common in Region 1 (48.8%). Fishing is also a popular activity and is most common in Region 4 (64.8%). Off-road vehicle riding and hunting are less popular, with only 15-40% of respondents in each region participating. Off-road vehicle riding is most common in Region 6 (40%) and hunting is most common in Region 1 (24.8%) and Region 5 (24.1%).

**TABLE 7: RECREATION ACTIVITIES BY INCOME**

Income	Hiking	Hunting	Snow sports	Fishing	Camping	Off-road vehicles
Less than \$25,000	55.4%	23.9%	31.1%	47.8%	57.7%	17.6%
\$25,001 - \$50,000	58.1%	13.4%	39.9%	54.7%	62.4%	32.6%
\$50,001 - \$75,000	64.2%	18.1%	54.4%	47.8%	57.1%	32.3%
\$75,001 - \$100,000	70.1%	31.8%	41.1%	49.5%	62.6%	29.0%
Over \$100,000	84.8%	11.0%	67.0%	50.9%	72.0%	42.4%

**Note:** Respondents were able to select all that apply, as such, row totals do not add to 100%

Almost all types of recreation are correlated with income except for fishing, which has similar participant rates across all income levels (Table 7). Hiking, snow sports, and using off-road vehicles are least likely to be used by respondents from lower income groups compared to their higher income counterparts.

## FUTURE NEEDS

### PLANS FOR FUTURE RECREATION

Most respondents (over 90% in all regions) foresee themselves participating in outdoor recreation in the next year about the same or more than the previous year. Respondents were asked which activities they would participate in more if there were increased accessibility or facilities. Analysis focuses on the same activities found in the previous section.



**TABLE 8: RECREATION ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE IF MORE ACCESSIBLE BY REGION**

Region	Hiking	Hunting	Snow sports	Fishing	Camping	Off-road vehicles
Region 1	47.1%	25.6%	39.7%	39.7%	52.1%	20.7%
Region 2	63.2%	21.8%	70.1%	43.7%	54.0%	21.8%
Region 3	60.1%	21.9%	47.3%	47.5%	64.4%	29.5%
Region 4	35.2%	27.8%	44.4%	48.2%	64.8%	40.7%
Region 5	41.7%	37.0%	61.1%	42.6%	74.1%	44.4%
Region 6	65.2%	23.5%	58.3%	47.0%	60.9%	31.3%

**Note:** Respondents were able to select all that apply, as such, row totals do not add to 100%

Most respondents across regions would camp and hike more (Table 8). However, in Regions 2 and 5, over 60% of respondents indicated they would increase participation in snow sports if more facilities are made available or more accessible (70.1% and 61.1%).

## FACILITY NEEDS

The survey asked respondents which types of outdoor recreation facilities they would like to see provided in their area. The most common responses were hiking/walking trails (67.0%), campgrounds (51.4%), and paved pathways (49.0%). Table 9 demonstrates the desired facilities by region and quartile. For each type of facility, the percentage of people indicating a need in each region ranges from 4.1-73.8%. Each cell in the table is organized into four groups with the same number of cells. Quartile 1 (white) represents the 36 cells with the lowest percentage of respondents indicating a need for the given facility. Quartile 2 (gray) and Quartile 3 (orange) represents the two middle groups of responses. Quartile 4 (blue) represents the 36 cells with the highest percentage of respondents indicating need for the given facility.





**TABLE 9: DESIRED RECREATION FACILITIES BY REGION**

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6
Archery ranges	33.1%	37.9%	26.9%	31.5%	25.9%	28.7%
Baseball fields	10.7%	17.2%	16.1%	10.2%	17.6%	8.7%
Basketball courts	9.1%	21.8%	18.4%	18.5%	13.9%	14.8%
Boat ramps	30.6%	32.2%	19.7%	17.6%	22.2%	11.3%
Campgrounds	42.2%	50.6%	54.7%	57.4%	54.7%	35.7%
Community parks	38.8%	45.9%	47.9%	33.3%	41.7%	37.4%
Disc golf courses	14.9%	18.4%	21.0%	22.2%	17.6%	34.8%
Equestrian trails	27.3%	32.2%	13.7%	13.9%	19.4%	18.3%
Fishing docks	28.1%	31.0%	42.9%	57.4%	43.5%	36.5%
Hiking and walking trails	57.9%	67.8%	62.7%	70.4%	62.0%	74.8%
Hunting areas	28.1%	18.4%	24.3%	31.5%	38.9%	27.0%
Mountain bike trails	23.9%	35.6%	30.2%	25.0%	29.6%	31.3%
Off-leash dog areas	28.9%	35.6%	34.7%	37.0%	32.4%	25.2%
Off-road vehicle trails	28.1%	18.4%	26.7%	30.6%	32.4%	29.6%
Paved pathways	33.9%	29.9%	49.2%	52.8%	47.2%	50.4%
Pickleball courts	9.9%	16.1%	15.8%	8.3%	13.9%	16.5%
Playground equipment	23.9%	44.8%	34.5%	34.3%	27.8%	23.5%
Shoreline fishing	31.4%	24.1%	29.5%	29.6%	39.8%	39.1%
Skate parks	16.5%	25.4%	21.9%	25.9%	22.2%	17.4%
Soccer/football fields	7.4%	16.1%	11.3%	15.7%	17.6%	18.3%
Splash pads	20.7%	24.1%	31.9%	27.8%	25.9%	27.0%
Swimming pools	30.6%	40.2%	46.2%	47.2%	44.4%	27.8%
Tennis courts	4.1%	14.9%	14.5%	6.5%	12.9%	33.0%
Trailhead parking	35.5%	25.3%	38.4%	37.0%	51.9%	34.8%

**Note:** Quartile 1 = white | Quartile 2 = gray | Quartile 3 = orange | Quartile 4 = blue

Respondents were able to select all that apply, as such, column totals do not add to 100%

More than half of residents in all regions are interested in having more hiking and walking trails in their area. More than half of respondents in Regions 2, 3, 4, and 5 are interested in increasing the number of campgrounds in their area. Region 4 is also interested in increasing the number of local paved pathways and fishing docks. A little over half of Region 5 respondents (51.9%) report wanting more trailhead parking. Between 40-50% of respondents in Regions 2, 3, 4, and 5 expressed interest in having more local swimming pools.

## IDPR PRIORITIES

The survey asked respondents to rate the importance of the recreation department prioritizing certain recreational needs (Table 10). Each option was seen as important by at least 70% of respondents from each region. In only two instances did the indication of importance drop below 80%, for additional facilities in Region 1 (74.4%) and improving access to recreation also in Region 1 (78.5%).



**TABLE 10: DESIRED IDPR PRIORITIES BY REGION**

Region	Additional facilities	Upgrade and maintain facilities	Improve access	Connect young people	Protect resources	Provide adequate funds
Region 1	74.4%	90.9%	78.5%	84.3%	85.9%	81.8%
Region 2	85.1%	88.5%	83.9%	93.1%	90.8%	87.4%
Region 3	92.8%	96.3%	91.1%	91.5%	93.9%	92.4%
Region 4	92.6%	95.4%	94.4%	84.3%	95.4%	92.8%
Region 5	86.1%	97.2%	90.7%	95.4%	100.0%	88.9%
Region 6	87.8%	94.8%	90.4%	94.8%	89.6%	90.4%

**Note:** Respondents were able to select all that apply, as such, row totals do not add to 100%

Upgrading and maintaining facilities is the highest recommended priority for IDPR across regions, followed by connecting young people to recreation and protecting resources.

## CONCLUSION

Across Idaho regions, the majority of Idahoans think recreation is important to themselves, their community's economy, and Idaho's economy. Most people tend to recreate in or near the region where they live. Additionally, most respondents say they plan to maintain or increase their levels of participation in outdoor recreation in the future. Respondents with higher incomes are most likely to participate in most recreation activities in Idaho. However, people across income groups participate at high rates in a few outdoor recreation activities such as fishing, hiking, and camping.

Broadly, Idahoans find the work IDPR does to provide access to outdoor recreation important. Many want more opportunities for, increased investment in, and better access to recreation. Across responses, the highest recommended priority for IDPR is upgrading and maintaining outdoor recreation facilities.

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This report was prepared by Idaho Policy Institute at Boise State University  
and commissioned by the Idaho Department of Park and Recreation.

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**[boisestate.edu/sps-ipi/](https://boisestate.edu/sps-ipi/)**

**REPORT AUTHORS**

MCALLISTER HALL, Research Associate  
EMILY PAPE, Research Assistant  
VANESSA FRY, Interim Director



## **Appendix B: Open Project Selection Process**

# **IDAHO'S OPEN PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS**

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 priorities identified in Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP) are included in the LWCF grant process. OPSP also recognizes local priorities. Priorities change over time, so it is important that states go through the OPSP process on a regular basis in conjunction with SCORP so that outdoor recreation grant criteria are in alignment with actual needs.

Review of proposed changes by the LWCF Advisory Committee, SCORP Steering Committee and State and Federal Aid Program staff is a part of that process.

### **Matching Ranking Criteria with Public Need**

The draft criteria for ranking Idaho's LWCF projects were created using a combination of public input and the expertise of a cross-section of outdoor recreation professionals. Our public input started with an opinion leader SWOT analysis to identify outdoor recreation issues and opportunities in Idaho. A facilitator conducted a focus group in six cities across Idaho with recreation professionals to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of outdoor recreation in Idaho.

IDPR then conducted a follow up survey with recreation providers to further understand the issues identified during the focus group sessions. In addition to these exercises, staff also conducted an informal survey of Idaho outdoor recreation participants. This online survey yielded more than 1900 responses and helped inform the development of this plan.

### **Administering the Program Fairly**

In order to better serve the public and assure that grant money is administered more efficiently, State and Federal Aid Program staff at the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation recommended two changes in the Open Project Selection Process. The changes are:

- 1). Entities with unresolved Land and Water Conservation Fund conversion issues will not be considered for grants until those issues are resolved, unless the National Park Service negotiates a special condition on the original project agreement.
- 2). Projects will only be considered if they are primarily for use by the general public. Property must be readily accessible and open to the public during reasonable hours and times of the year.

# LWCF EVALUATION COMMITTEE PROJECT EVALUATION FORM

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please evaluate the project on the basis of the following criteria:

7-8 = Excellent or Extensive

5-6 = Good or Considerable

3-4 = Fair or Moderate

1-2 = Poor or Little

0 = None or Missing

A. Degree to which the project aligns with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, particularly Chapters 3 and 4.	
B. Degree to which the project benefits the general public, and the facility is open and usable for outdoor recreation during reasonable hours.	
C. Degree to which the costs are reasonable, accurate and relate to an acceptable cost-to-benefit ratio.	
D. Degree to which the property and/or design is well planned and suited for the intended uses.	
E. Degree to which the facility will encourage universal accessibility beyond minimum requirements.	
F. Degree to which the applicant has demonstrated a financial commitment for the ongoing operation and maintenance of the site. (Is there a maintenance budget and/or impact statement for 3-5 years of commitment?)	
G. Degree to which the applicant understands environmental issues and will take action to mitigate any concerns for potential resource damage or health and safety matters.	
H. Degree to which the project creates new or improved recreational opportunities supported by the community.	
I. Degree to which project is reflected as a user need in a current agency plan (this could include a city master plan, local parks and recreation master plan, or county comprehensive plan.)	
J. Degree to which the project brings outdoor recreation activities closer to users and/or underserved demographics.	
K. Degree to which the applicant demonstrates public outreach to sufficiently identify community needs. (Excellent or extensive scores should be reserved for projects that include either statistically valid surveys or public meetings specific to the project.)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

Do you feel that this project meets the criteria and general quality necessary to merit approval by the Idaho Park and Recreation Board? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:



## **Appendix C: Public Comments and Responses**

**From:** [Craig Quintana](#)  
**To:** [Chelsea Chambers](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Draft SCORP Online for Comment and Review  
**Date:** Thursday, June 30, 2022 10:14:26 AM  
**Attachments:** [image006.png](#)  
[image011.png](#)

Please add this to our SCORP feedback. Thanks.

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**From:** Kathy Muir <[Kathy.Muir@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:Kathy.Muir@idpr.idaho.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 30, 2022 9:38 AM  
**To:** Craig Quintana <[Craig.Quintana@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:Craig.Quintana@idpr.idaho.gov)>; Adam Zaragoza <[Adam.Zaragoza@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:Adam.Zaragoza@idpr.idaho.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Draft SCORP Online for Comment and Review

Comments from the Rails to Trails folks . . .

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**From:** Kevin Belanger <[kevinb@railstotrails.org](mailto:kevinb@railstotrails.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 30, 2022 9:34 AM  
**To:** Kathy Muir <[Kathy.Muir@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:Kathy.Muir@idpr.idaho.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Draft SCORP Online for Comment and Review

Thanks so much for sharing this, Kathy. I have 2 suggestions on where to put references to the Great American Rail-Trail in the SCORP. Please let me know if there's another way I should be submitting this feedback.

1. Emerging Activities and Trends (page 23)
  - a. Under "Bikes/Bikes/Bikes," I'd suggest adding this paragraph to the end of this section:
    - i. "The cross-country Great American Rail-Trail, a project of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), travels through the northern panhandle of Idaho for about 90 miles. The NorPac Trail and the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes, which are both host trails to the Great American Rail-Trail, are in RTC's Hall of Fame for their exceptional views of the rugged Idaho landscape. Interest in long-distance cycling has increased, especially during and since the covid-19 pandemic. A route like the Great American Rail-Trail is a boon for outdoor recreation and local tourism economies."
2. Chapter 4: Outdoor Recreation Issues and Recommendations (page 26)
  - a. If you are open to the idea of putting in a recommendation on completing the Great American Rail-Trail route in Idaho, I'd suggest adding the following point as a Goal under #2. Experience:
    - i. "IDPR should support the completion of the final remaining gap in the Great American Rail-Trail, which extends for about 10 miles between Plummer and the Idaho-Washington state line."

Thank you,

Kevin Belanger  
Project Manager, Great American Rail-Trail  
[Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#)  
2121 Ward Ct NW, 5th Floor  
Washington, DC 20037  
[kevinb@railstotrails.org](mailto:kevinb@railstotrails.org)  
202-974-5117  
(he/him)

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**From:** Kathy Muir <[Kathy.Muir@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:Kathy.Muir@idpr.idaho.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 21, 2022 11:32 AM  
**To:** Kevin Belanger <[kevinb@railstotrails.org](mailto:kevinb@railstotrails.org)>  
**Subject:** FW: Draft SCORP Online for Comment and Review

Kevin,  
Here's the draft SCORP if you want to take a look at it.



"Leaders in outdoor recreation since 1965."

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**From:** Craig Quintana <[Craig.Quintana@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:Craig.Quintana@idpr.idaho.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 17, 2022 10:10 AM  
**To:** Adam Zaragoza <[Adam.Zaragoza@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:Adam.Zaragoza@idpr.idaho.gov)>; Kathy Muir <[Kathy.Muir@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:Kathy.Muir@idpr.idaho.gov)>; Rebecca Honsinger <[Rebecca.Honsinger@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Honsinger@idpr.idaho.gov)>  
**Subject:** Draft SCORP Online for Comment and Review

Team,

The draft has been posted to our homepage, and we'll highlight the comment opportunity on social media in the coming week. We've included a comment box for people to express themselves, which generates an email that we can document to become a part of the final report.

Good job, folks.

<https://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/draft-2023-2028-scorp/>



"Leaders in outdoor recreation since 1965"

**Response to Kevin Belanger:**

Mr. Belanger,

Thank you for your comments on rail-trails and the 2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). We share your enthusiasm for rail-trails and have incorporated some of your suggested language into the draft plan. We will not, however, incorporate completion of the Plummer-to-state line section of the Great American Rail-Trail in the SCORP because the plan is a high-level guidance document and not a specific list of individual projects, even if they are extremely attractive.

Again, thank you for your support of rail-trails and outdoor recreation.

**From:** [ashly.eickmeier@egov.com](mailto:ashly.eickmeier@egov.com)  
**To:** [Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** New submission from Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Comments  
**Date:** Friday, July 1, 2022 9:03:42 AM

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**Name (Optional)**

Sue Collins

**Enter SCORP comments in the box below.**

In addition, the overwhelming amount of apartments being built is leaving thousands of residents without yards. This is resulting in increased park usage and overcrowding park spaces on weekends and evenings. Another item is the crowded walking trail parking spaces. Many of the trailheads spaces are full, especially on weekends. More parking is needed. Examples are Lucky Peak road , Boise foothills, and Bogus Basin roads.



**Response to Sue Collins:**

Ms. Collins,

The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) thanks you for submitting comments on the draft 2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Our public opinion survey, done in partnership with Boise State University's Idaho Policy Institute, showed strong interest from the respondents for more trailhead parking, aligning well with your suggestion. The survey also found the public is interested in maintaining and upgrading facilities, along with a desire for more trails, campgrounds, paved pathways, and fishing docks.

Accordingly, we find your comments are in general support of the SCORP's focus to enhance outdoor access and to increase recreation facilities across the state, whether that be in the form of in-town playgrounds or for more trailhead parking and other recreational infrastructure.

IDPR thanks you for your comments and for your interest in outdoor recreation.

**Name (Optional)**

Kevin English

**Enter SCORP comments in the box below.**

I just read through the plan in detail. I see that the plan calls out gravel cycling as a recreational activity but that none of the grant opportunities allow for the development of gravel routes or gravel route guides. Let me explain further.

Before that though, let me explain who I am. I am the Director of Routes & Technologies for Dirty Freehub, a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to creating a community of gravel cyclists that care about where they ride. We publish route guides (free to all and online), with a focus on great routes and safe riding but also with a strong focus on culture, history, people, places and lands. In our guides, we discuss things like wildlife impact and farming road etiquette. I have been documenting routes for 10 years and have been working with travel organizations and visitor bureaus for 4 years.

A couple of things about gravel cycling and gravel riders:

- gravel cycling is the fastest-growing segment of cycling just behind e-bikes
- in mountain biking meccas like Bend, Oregon gravel bikes are outselling mountain bikes or are selling at the same pace
- gravel cycling does not require route infrastructure and maintenance like mountain biking. It uses existing gravel roads, forest service roads, bike paths and paved roads.
- in the West, gravel cycling can be, and is typically more remote than mountain biking
- the number one thing gravel cyclists are looking for is safe routes. Safety takes into consideration terrain, remoteness, and navigation difficulty.
- social platforms like Strava and RideWithGPS do not account for safety, wildlife impact, social impact, closures, private property rights, etc. Thus, a reliable source of curated route information is key to gravel cyclists having a great experience.

Thus, I would encourage you to revisit your plan and incorporate ways in which grants can be made available to organizations that document and market safe and fantastic riding routes with scenic payback. Grant funding should include funds for route development, marketing and technology infrastructure.

I would be happy to discuss this further if need be.

Kevin English

kevinbenglish@gmail.com

541-279-6576

**Response to Kevin English:**

Mr. English,

Thank you for submitting your comments on the 2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) to the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR). We appreciate your love of gravel biking, which is certainly an increasingly popular activity in Idaho.

The department would like you to know that the Recreational Trails Program accepts grant applications for gravel biking projects and has awarded money for a number of proposals in years past. Please see <https://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/grants-and-funding/the-recreational-trails-program/> for more information on the program and application requirements.

Again, thank you for your interest in the future of outdoor recreation in Idaho.

## Craig Quintana

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**From:** Inquiry  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 21, 2022 10:25 AM  
**To:** Craig Quintana  
**Subject:** FW: New submission from Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Comments

SCORP Feedback.



**Chelsea Chambers**  
**Public Information Specialist**  
5657 Warm Springs Avenue | Boise, ID 83716  
office (208) 514-2430

[website](#) | [map](#) | [passport](#)



"Leaders in outdoor recreation since 1965."

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**From:** ashly.eickmeier@egov.com <ashly.eickmeier@egov.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2022 9:00 AM  
**To:** Inquiry <inquiry@idpr.idaho.gov>  
**Subject:** New submission from Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Comments

### Name (Optional)

Idaho Cattle Association

### Enter SCORP comments in the box below.

The Idaho Cattle Association submits the following comments regarding the Statewide. Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Idaho's cattle ranching families have a direct stake in the management of recreation within the state. They frequently bear the brunt of poorly managed recreation use across the landscape. For this reason, we are engaging in this commenting process to offer the following thoughts.

In general, we commend the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) for the way in which they have opened and promoted recreation opportunities across the state. However, as our state's population has exploded and the demand for outdoor recreational activities has expanded, a comparative increase in management and enforcement of the increased use has not occurred. While this responsibility does not fall solely on IDPR, as the recreation occurs across various ownership types, it is important for the SCORP plan to recognize the need for a more concerted and coordinated effort by federal and state land managers to update travel and recreation management plans and provide the recreating public with greater information about recreation restrictions, along with the opportunities, and to provide pathways to greater enforcement measures. We believe IDPR is ideally situated to assist in coordinating these efforts.

The inaction on enforcement related to recreation infractions only serves to create more problems as new people move into the state and mimic the behavior of recreators before them, often ignorant of their violations. Some of this lack of policing is due to limited staff and funding. Some of it is due to incomplete or unenforceable recreation-related guidelines. The differing signage and rules across the various jurisdictions upon which recreators cross further adds to the problem.

Our members are greatly impacted by the increased recreation. For example, recreators often errantly assume that if the location is remote and undeveloped, it must be public when in fact they are on livestock producers private land. This, in and of itself, does not necessarily create problems but when gates are left open, drainages are mud bogged and scarred, infrastructure damaged, ATVs go off trail, and other irresponsible recreational use, the landscape and its users all suffer and ranchers are left to foot the repair and reconstruction bills.

One other issue that we would like to address is land acquisition. The SCORP frequently refers to land acquisition and mentions seeking opportunities to acquire more land for recreation. The Idaho Cattle Association has clear policy opposed to any increase



in public land. The land available for recreation is not currently being adequately managed for that use. Adding more acres to that roll is not an appropriate move. We acknowledge that that Land and Water Conservation Fund has designated land acquisition as a use of those funds, but we urge the state to limit acquisition actions. Rather, available funding should be prioritized to be used for improving existing recreation opportunities and increasing recreator awareness of rules and regulations.

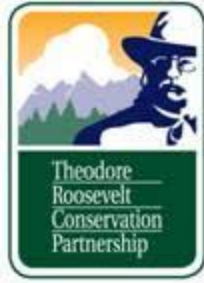
Idaho's population only continues to grow which further underscores the need for a serious upgrade on recreation management and oversight in our state. We appreciate the good work of Idaho Parks and Recreation in the past in creating positive recreational opportunities for all Idahoans. Because of their proven track record, we would like to see additional funding used to bolster their ability to improve recreation management across the state.

**Response to the Idaho Cattle Association:**

Thank you for your comments regarding the 2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The comments are a good follow up to our recent discussions about the association's concerns about ignorant and/or irresponsible behavior by a portion of the recreating public. As you know, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) has no control over enforcement regarding trespassing or other improper usage, which comes under the purview of state and local law enforcement. IDPR plans to work with our partners at Idaho Fish and Game and the Idaho Department of Lands to initiate training for law enforcement to better address the issues raised in your note. We are hopeful the success of the marine deputy training the department conducts can provide a blueprint for a successful partnership with law enforcement on this issue. Language has been added to our draft plan (p. 29, goal "L") to make this partnership and outreach a goal. We appreciate your support for this effort.

Regarding your concerns about land acquisition with Land and Water Conservation Funding (LWCF), IDPR has not engaged in acquisitions. Generally, the few requests we've had have come from municipalities. Since 2006, there have been a total of five acquisition requests, and only two were completed. It may be that your concern involves the federal LWCF program, something our plan has no power to shape.

Again, thank you for your comments and support for responsible and balanced outdoor recreation.



July 18, 2022

Susan E. Buxton  
Director, Idaho Department of Parks, and Recreation  
657 Warm Springs Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83716

Re: 2023-2028 Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) draft

Dear Ms. Buxton,

Our five sporting organizations, representing thousands of hunters and anglers in Idaho, write to convey our appreciation for the opportunity to share our thoughts on the draft 2023-2028 Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) is a national conservation organization working to guarantee all Americans quality places to hunt and fish. In addition to our 60 formal partner groups, the TRCP represents more than 116,000 individual members across the United States and 3,500 specifically in Idaho.

Trout Unlimited (TU) is a national non-profit organization with 300,000 members and supporters dedicated to conserving, protecting, and restoring North America's cold-water fisheries and their watersheds.

Idaho Wildlife Federation (IWF) is Idaho's oldest statewide conservation organization, founded by sportsmen and women in 1936. Today, IWF represents a nonpartisan voice of 28 affiliate organizations and 45,000 affiliate members and supporters in Idaho.

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA) is a non-profit conservation group with 40,000 members in chapters across 48 states, two Canadian provinces and one territory. The Idaho chapter has more than 2,000 dedicated public landowners as members.

Idaho Chukar Foundation (ICF) is non-profit organization working to the conservation, preservation, and sustainability of the region's upland game birds and their wildlife habitat.

First and foremost, our groups appreciate the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation's grasp of the issues facing Idaho. The draft is a thorough synopsis of Idaho's recreation landscape; from small town swimming pools to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's responsibilities to provide wildlife-related recreation to the importance of the state's vast public lands to hunting and fishing.

Our groups also believe IDPR thoroughly captured the ever-increasing demand for outdoor recreation opportunities, ranging from hunting to pickleball. Idaho's population increased by 17.3 percent between 2010 and 2020, making the Gem State the second-fastest growing state in the nation. The effects of the ever-growing population base are augmented by a considerable influx of tourism in Idaho annually. Outdoor recreation generates \$6.3 billion annually in Idaho, which supports more than 77,000 jobs, according to the Outdoor Industry Association.

It is through the lens of the public's growing demand for outdoor recreation that our groups ask IDPR leadership to strengthen the document's language about the impacts of outdoor recreation on the natural resources that support a cornucopia of recreational pursuits. Specifically, we recommend that the document provide more specificity about current and needed efforts to protect the state's finite natural resources, such as the wildlife and aquatic populations that sustain a vast community of hunters and anglers. Examples of how to address our request are found throughout Chapter 4 of the document. They start on page 26.

The second paragraph states: "While Idaho has an abundance of public lands, the management of these lands requires a balance between offering outdoor recreation opportunities and sustaining the state's natural, cultural, and historical resources. This requires a coordinated system of delivery, ensuring that a broad range of recreation facilities, programs and resources are made available to all of Idaho's citizens and visitors for generations to come."

Our groups believe this statement should be enhanced by a more detailed explanation of the fragile nature of the state's natural resources in the face of ever-increasing recreation demand, and we believe that the IDPR's long-term goals would be better suited by adding a recommendation to foster awareness of recreationalists of all kinds that builds an ethic of responsibility to care for the state's natural and cultural resources.

Throughout Idaho there are examples of one recreation group impacting another negatively. An example is the expansion of mountain biking opportunities in central and eastern Idaho that pinch both summer and winter habitats for deer and elk. Another example is snowmobilers encroaching on mountain goat habitat in northern and eastern Idaho. Yet another example is off-road vehicles driving up and down the headwaters of the Pahsimeroi River. Those headwaters are home to remnant bull trout populations that are considered a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

Our groups believe IDPR would be well served by acknowledging and addressing head on the inherent tensions between user groups as participation in outdoor recreation continues to surge. We recommend the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan set a proactive tone for this work. Currently the document identifies the issues that come with increasing demand, and we believe the effectiveness of the document would be enhanced by also including recommendations/strategies to address the goals listed in the access, experience, and stewardship sections as described in Chapter Four.

Specifically in the access, experience, and stewardship sections, our groups encourage IDPR to considering the following edits and additions.

Within the section of the document about goals for addressing access issues, we suggest IDPR:

- Add a goal about educating the public on the need to balance recreation with the state's finite fish and wildlife resources.



- Encourage public land managers to not only **recognize** that there are limits to the number of recreationalists and types of recreation our finite public lands can accommodate, but they should also **manage** for that reality.
- Add a goal to specifically increase hunting and fishing access sites across the state.

In the section about experience of outdoor recreation, we suggest IDPR:

- Add a goal to the list of goals to create outdoor recreation experiences that lead people to advocate for the protection of the state's resources. Specifically, the goal could read, "public agencies, school districts and private recreation providers should partner to provide education to first-time outdoor recreationalists." Covid brought a wave of newcomers to Idaho's rangelands and forests, and that caused some negative encounters between recreationalists and other public land users, such as ranchers and loggers.

In the stewardship section, we encourage IDPR to:

- Identify the IDFG as the primary partner in the stewardship of the state's fish and wildlife and work with the agency to identify sensitive habitats, such as winter ranges and migration corridors.
- Outline that public land agencies manage many of the valuable habitats that fish and wildlife populations thrive, and clearly state that federal land agencies have a duty to protect important areas, such as winter ranges and migration corridors for the state's elk, deer, and pronghorn.
- Add the goal that recreationalists should be mobilized to pursue money to preserve recreation opportunities in general. In 1937, the Pittman-Robertson Act created an excises tax on hunting and shooting gear to fund the preservation of hunting and fishing resources. Other user-pay models exist across the country to fund the conservation of non-game species.
- Add the goal to proactively manage visitors and maintain infrastructure to provide positive outdoor recreation experiences while limiting resource impacts. Utilize best practices when developing new trails or other outdoor infrastructure.
- Advocate in partnership with IDFG to conduct more research on the impacts of recreation on wildlife.

As written, the draft SCORP does an excellent job laying out the importance of outdoor recreation to Idahoans and the state's economic health, and it accurately portrays the current recreation landscape. We believe, however, that the report could be improved by adding more context to the issues facing the disparate recreation communities.

We also believe IDPR would benefit by outlining strategies to address the issues that come with more people moving to Idaho and/or a process to identify future strategies and solutions. Our organizations would gladly support and participate in such a process.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the draft 2023-2028 Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Sincerely,



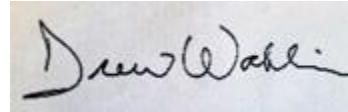
Rob Thornberry  
Idaho Field Representative  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership



Ace Hess  
Idaho Chapter Coordinator  
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers



Brian Brooks  
Executive Director  
Idaho Wildlife Federation



Drew Wahlin  
Executive Director  
Idaho Chukar Foundation



Michael Gibson  
Idaho Field Representative  
Trout Unlimited

Cc: Adam Zaragoza, IDPR management Services Administrator

**Response to the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Trout Unlimited, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, the Idaho Wildlife Federation and the Idaho Chukar Foundation:**

Gentlemen,

The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) thanks you for the detailed comments you submitted in the letter about the 2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). After review, we find merit in several of your suggestions and have incorporated changes within the draft plan for the Idaho Park and Recreation Board to consider in its August meeting for adoption. (Please see “I” on Page 27, “D” on Page 28, and “K” on Page 29.)

As you note in your letter, it is the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) that has the primary responsibility to oversee and maintain wildlife-based recreation on Idaho’s vast public lands. Accordingly, IDFG would be the entity with the specific goal of increasing hunting and fishing access across the state, not IDPR through the SCORP. Our department certainly will work with IDFG to best achieve a balance between general outdoor recreation and the specific needs of anglers and hunters, a partnership message that runs throughout the document.

Perhaps some of your species-conservation suggestions would be an even better fit in IDFG’s Strategic Plan or within the document’s annual Direction updates: <https://idfg.idaho.gov/about/direction-documents>.

Thank you again for your feedback and suggestions. While the SCORP is primarily focused on recreational opportunities and providing adequate infrastructure, the conservation suggestions you have made are well taken. Apart from the additions mentioned above, we will share this information with our partners at the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Name (Optional)**

Liz West

**Enter SCORP comments in the box below.**

I'm sorry that the Legislature has dramatically raised the rates for non-residents to use some of the Idaho State Parks. I brought my kids to Farragut to camp for a weekend every year from the time they were small. Now as a retired woman, I have camped at Farragut with a group of other senior women for a few days every summer. Sadly I can't afford to do that anymore. I'm assuming that is your intention, but I'm hopeful you won't extend those rates to other parks.



**Response to Liz West:**

Ms. West,

Thank you for your feedback about the cost of camping at Idaho State Parks for non-residents, which we will provide to the Idaho Legislature when asked about the short- and mid-term impact of House Bill 93 from the 2021 Legislative Session. The fee increases stemmed from a bill during that session. Lawmakers have expressed interest in the impact of the law, and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation expects to report back to them during the 2023 legislative session, if not earlier.

IDPR thanks you for your comments and for your interest in outdoor recreation.

**From:** Lawson, Matthew A <[matthew\\_lawson@nps.gov](mailto:matthew_lawson@nps.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2022 2:56 PM  
**To:** Kathy Muir <[Kathy.Muir@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:Kathy.Muir@idpr.idaho.gov)>; Bedlan, Neal J <[Neal\\_Bedlan@nps.gov](mailto:Neal_Bedlan@nps.gov)>  
**Cc:** Adam Zaragoza <[Adam.Zaragoza@idpr.idaho.gov](mailto:Adam.Zaragoza@idpr.idaho.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] FW: Draft SCORP Online for Comment and Review

Hello Kathy,

I have reviewed your SCORP Draft and I believe it meets our requirements. Thank you for sending this to us.

For your OPSP, I did have a couple questions. Will state park projects compete against local projects? Are there in funding limits that will be imposed? Will a percent of annual allotment go to local projects vs state projects?

When the SCORP is finalized, we will need a certification letter by the Governor attesting that ample opportunity for public participation has taken place in plan development. This letter should be addressed to Charles F. Sams III the Director of the National Park Service.

Please also mail three (3) copies of your SCORP to our office in Omaha, Nebraska. Please address the package to Neal Bedlan - Land and Water Conservation Fund Program Manager as follows:

Mr. Neal Bedlan  
National Park Service  
State & Local Assistance Programs  
601 Riverfront Drive, Omaha NE 68102

Let me know if you have any additional questions

Thank you again for all your efforts in developing this plan so far.

Matthew Lawson  
Outdoor Recreation Planner  
State & Local Assistance Programs  
601 Riverfront Drive, Omaha NE 68102  
[matthew\\_lawson@nps.gov](mailto:matthew_lawson@nps.gov)  
Office: (402) 661-3016