

# **IRTI Steering Committee Meeting**

October 4, 2021, 12 PM MST via ZOOM

Present: Katherine Kirk (Idaho Heritage Foundation), Chelsea Chambers, Shannon Basissta, Everado Santillian, Deniz Aygen, Skyalr Jett, Victoria Runoe, Craig Quintana, Susan Kain, Susan Saad, Tom Helmer, Mindy Peper

## **Welcome/Introductions**

Group introductions and welcome.

## **EAD Grant- Economic Development**

Chambers reports that there is about \$700 million to give out to state agencies and other competitive grant opportunities. Chambers gives some background information. Jett asks if Brunelle had any ideas about what to apply for. Aygen says that she is considering putting in for the grant to build a new wildlife viewing structure along Payette River. Chambers says there are a lot of resources. Aygen asks what projects in the past have been done. Chambers sends a link to IRTI with some past projects, not necessarily Idaho projects.

## **Thomas Helmer, Idaho Parks and Recreation**

Helps with collaboration of non-motorized trails (NMT) and some oversight of the trails. He is within the motorized trails division.

### ***Idaho Trail Sticker***

Idaho Trail Sticker support program: This started last June. The idea came out of an IRTI discussion. There is a very robust funding for motorized trails (BLM and FS) but there is not an equivalent for NMT in Idaho, though many attempts to secure funding in last 30 years. So in effort to raise awareness and some funds, the sticker program was started. In last year and half, sold about 3500 stickers at about \$10 each. Program going well. Some slow down recently. The 2021 sticker came out a few months ago. Mainly sell them at REI, some bike shops, at state parks, etc. Selling 20-30 per week. Just now getting funding authority. It is a moderate amount of money so working with non-profits and clubs that use volunteers to maintain trails. Working to get signage for Centennial Trail as well as working on wheelchair mountain bike trails. Also working on maintenance around upper Priest Lake NMT.

### ***Idaho Centennial Trail***

Helmer is also coordinator of the ICT. In 1989, the ICT was dedicated. BLM, FS, various land management groups, and Idaho Trail Commission put together an MOU that designated this trail from NV border to Canada border as the ICT. There is an option to do motorized or non-motorized. The trail goes through some very remote areas that see very few people and there are sections that are basically impassable. So, this past spring the legislature designated about

\$250,000 to help with the ICT. Over the summer, a plan was put together to identify sections that need most attention over the next 2 years. The FS also received funding through GAO grant and so Heler is coordinating various agencies to help fund the ICT to make it more passable than it is now. One of the problems in the last year has been a lack of people to work on the trails. Felenau asks if there is a map that shows the ICT BLM portion. Helmer says yes, and for most part the BLM trail is in good shape.

Kirk mentions that the Idaho-Oregon Chapter of Historic Trails says they would like to have a project that focuses on the historic trails, and she would like to connect with Helmer about the trails.

Helmer will send Peper link to the map and she will share with IRTI.

### ***Trail Summit***

This will be held November 16<sup>th</sup> and will probably be online—if not, then at the Idaho Shakespeare Festival. Agenda items will include Idaho NMT Ambassador program. These would be volunteers who use the trails and help educate people about using trails and how to help take care of the trails, trail etiquette, leave no trace, etc... Helmer envisions a statewide program with same curriculum across the state. Other agenda items will include Outfitters Guide stewardship program, trail stickers, Great American Outdoors Act. Hoping to have 40-50 people at the summit. This year, trying to keep it to the trail people who are doing the work on the ground, specific to NMT. Helmer also is hoping that from this NMT conference a more consistent conference once or twice a year will develop. Probably be about a half day event.

### **Agency Updates**

Aygen reports that the viewing guide is still under works. Waiting for approval to start printing. She is working on the next set of series, based on bats. She also continues to put in grants to build additional wildlife viewing platforms

Jett says they have been working on a clean up day, for Oct 9<sup>th</sup>, and will send pdf to Peper to share with IRTI.

Runoe says they had 20 Be Outdoors grants come in asking for about \$86,000 in assistance. Only \$12,000 is available. Some will not get any, some will get a partial funding, some will get fully funded. Decision will be made next week. Requests came from all over the state, non-profits, schools, libraries, land endowments, and so on. There was a wide variety of applicants and projects.

Kirk reports that the Idaho Heritage Trust just closed their grant program, Idaho Heritage received 35 applications for around \$400,000-500,000. They have about \$160,000 to 200,000 to give out. Most of the money goes to rural Idaho. Kirk says they are recently applied for large grant from NPS for \$700,000. Didn't get it this year. Going to keep applying until they get it.

Next application is due in November. Need some letters of support and has asked IRTI if they might help with this.

Saad reports that Bogus Basin just finished their summer operations and will begin to focus on winter operations. Also trying to figure out how to get as many students as possible up to the mountain this winter because many schools are doing less field trips. Saad will send Peper info to share with IRTI. Chambers mentions that one of the Be Outdoor grants was from Future Charter School is looking for funding to find gear for winter sports as well as how to get the kids up there. Aygen mentions that maybe there is a way to work together to help with this grant request

Kain says that they have just been invited to submit an urban investment plan to compete with other urban wildlife programs. Looking at focusing on the LatinX community or other groups who have been systemically excluded from conservation efforts. If anyone is looking at this as well, please get in touch with her. Visitor center is still closed due to COVID.

Everardo says still working on GOA projects for 2023. Also working on winter travel maps. This is updated every 5 years. Should be made available in about a month. The Payette River annual pass will soon be available online.

Felaua says lots of GAO recreation projects waiting for congress to approve funding. Also have distributed many Spanish language recreation guides. Also doing another print on English recreation guides and river boating guides. Bassista reports that it has been a challenge with maintaining recreating sites and thankful for the RRI campaign, hope it made a difference. BLM state leader was confirmed by senate so may see some changes. Also reports has another of recreation sites that will be increasing fees and that has been approved by advisory council and now waiting for the unofficial pause on raising fees to be lifted.

Chambers reminds everyone that an email is out there for the National Park Trust grant and the deadline is Monday. IDPR is officially in construction season- repaving in many parks for this coming season. IDPR did get their 2021-2022 guides printed and plan a major overhaul next year. Lots of yurts are available for fall. The Thousand Springs campground just broke ground. The visitor center will hopefully have grand opening in April. Just finished a big project at Bear Creek, bridge installation, 70 volunteers and 500 hours in 2 days. First riders used it Sunday. Trying to keep up with water closures, and fire closures. Sept 1 was start of snow mobile and park and ski passes. Reservation window on recreation.gov is open for 9 months. Sailing program for disabled and differently abled kids was very popular.

Quintana gives a legislative update. Last year tried to double state park pass fees from \$10 to \$20 but was told had to wait to do that until they doubled the fees in the five most popular parks first, which see many out of state visitors. Those fee increases went through so they will now pursue the increase in rate to the passport program.

## **Planning**

Next meeting will be in early December. Possible topics or guests: Idaho Recreation Council, Sandra Mitchell; Tom Helmer back to talk about the November summit; RRI update; Be Outside grant update.

## **New Business**

No new business

## **Adjourn**

### **ACTION ITEMS for IRTI:**

- Peper- share project links with IRTI as they come in from partners
- IRTI- consider topics and speakers you would like for subsequent meetings