

Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative  
Annual Accomplishment Report  
2009

**IDAHO RECREATION AND TOURISM INITIATIVE**

The Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative (IRTI), created in 1988, is a coalition of state and federal agencies and others dedicated to providing Idaho citizens and visitors with expanded recreation opportunities. IRTI's primary objective is to develop partnerships and cooperate with any and all interested agencies, organizations, groups, and individuals in order to improve public information and services associated with recreation and tourism opportunities in Idaho.

Idaho has a multitude of land management agencies and recreation providers whose roles can be confusing to the public. Recreationists and tourists don't care who manages a campsite – they just want to camp. They are not especially interested in which agency manages a wildlife area – they just want to see wildlife. To accommodate needs such as these, IRTI has facilitated a number of efforts over the years, including these: a statewide campground directory, a statewide scenic byway system, a statewide wildlife viewing guide, and an annual statewide conference on recreation and tourism. Simply, the coalition strives to make it easy for people to come outside and play. By working together, the coalition is able to more effectively provide information and services.

IRTI partners include these entities:

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Idaho Department of Commerce (IDC)
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG)
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR)
- Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (IOGA)
- Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board (IOGLB)
- Idaho RV Campgrounds Association (IRVCA)
- Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- University of Idaho (U of I)
- Other public and private entities participate in various IRTI projects.

A Steering Group composed of one representative from each partner agency governs IRTI. The Steering Group meets three to four times each year, approves statewide work projects, charters working groups/committees to implement the projects, and approves the annual budget. The annual IRTI budget is funded by contributions from various partner agencies. An IRTI Coordinator, funded jointly by the partner agencies, provides staff support to the Steering Group.

More information about IRTI can be found at these websites:

<http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/aboutus/irti.aspx>

<http://commerce.idaho.gov/travel/irti.aspx>

This report includes a brief description of each of IRTI's 2009 projects and accomplishments and a glimpse 2010 priorities.

### **FREE FISHING DAY**

Free Fishing Day has been an annual event in Idaho for almost twenty years, focusing public attention on fishing activities, resources, and ethics through sponsored events across the State. Many events focus on teaching children how to fish and providing them the opportunity. State license requirements are waived for everyone on this day. Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor for IDFG, is the project lead.

### **2009 Accomplishments**

Free Fishing Day events were held across Idaho on Saturday, June 6. Fishing derbies, clinics, workshops, and fishing opportunities were available for children and families. IDFG sponsored events across the state and provided staff to help new anglers learn the ropes and to give pointers to parents interested in teaching their children about fishing. Members of angling clubs also helped, bringing their enthusiasm and expertise.

### **2010 Priorities**

Free Fishing Day is now an institutionalized part of Idaho's outdoor culture. It will be hosted throughout the state again in 2010 on June 5, the first Saturday in June.

### **ON-LINE TRAIL AND RECREATION MAPPING**

This project has evolved from a study conducted by Drake Cooper in 2007 to determine the feasibility of providing Idaho-wide outdoor recreation and trail maps online. The study revealed that such a project would be feasible, and was funded by the State Legislature in 2008. As designed, the project now is intended to provide all trail users with accurate, online, on-demand maps of Idaho trails, across management and jurisdictional boundaries, including search functions by appropriate use and other factors. Troy Elmore, Off-Highway Recreation Coordinator for IDPR, is the project lead.

### **2009 Accomplishments**

IDPR contracted with a consulting firm to develop the web application for the mapping project. IDPR recreation staff has been testing a beta version of the application, and will provide recommendations for improvement to the consulting firm. Thus far, the site layout and application functionality meet expectations.

### **2010 Priorities**

IDPR is seeking a server at the Department of Administration to house the GIS data and mapping application. Once the application is completed and the hardware obtained, the goal will be to launch the application for public use. Prior to launching, IDPR will invite the land management partners to ensure that their GIS trail information displayed in the application is accurate. Even though there still will be gaps in the GIS trail data due to the fact that the agencies are in varying stages of travel management planning, the project will launch with the most accurate existing data. Additional data will be added as it becomes available.

### **IDAHO CAMPGROUND DIRECTORY**

The Idaho Campground Directory is an annually-updated guide containing almost all campgrounds in Idaho. It is unique in the nation in that it is not a membership directory, but is “consumer-friendly”, including both public and private campgrounds. Anne Chambers, Executive Director of the Idaho RV Campgrounds Association (IRVCA), is the project lead.

RVing is the fastest growing segment of the traveling public. RVers have extremely desirable demographics and spending patterns with a considerable amount of discretionary income which they choose to spend on their RV lifestyle. A conservative estimate of RV annual spending in Idaho would be in excess of \$200 million. Idaho’s approximately 600 public campgrounds and private RV parks all share in the benefits of promoting RV tourism and bringing new campers to Idaho.

## **2009 Accomplishments**

- *Idaho Campground Directory* – IRVCA updated the database information and published 130,000 copies of the 2009 edition of the annual statewide campground directory which includes comprehensive information on all private RV parks, public campgrounds, and dump stations in Idaho. It is the third most requested travel publication in Idaho. (The Idaho Travel Guide and map receive more requests.) The directory is distributed free-of-charge to thousands of RVers and reaches more Idaho campers and those traveling to Idaho than any other publication.
- *Fulfillment* – Getting the Idaho Campground Directory into the hands of RVers who will use it as their guide while traveling in Idaho is critical. IRVCA bulk-shipped approximately 100,000 copies throughout Idaho and the surrounding states to hundreds of locations that offer tourist information, including:
  - Idaho’s three gateway visitor centers;
  - more than 100 chambers of commerce and city/community visitor centers statewide;
  - private RV parks throughout Idaho;
  - public campgrounds and offices statewide;
  - RV dealerships and RV businesses;
  - Idaho attractions and local area events;
  - visitor centers in OR, MT, NV, UT, WY, and WA;
  - major RV shows, travel shows, and RV rallies in ID, AZ, UT, WA, and CA; and
  - nationwide, from the Idaho Tourism Development office to more than 25,000 campers requesting information on camping in Idaho.
- *Website* – IRVCA, with help from campground managers across the state, updated the database information and upgraded the information content. The website received thousands of hits and is located at [www.rvidaho.org](http://www.rvidaho.org).

## **2010 Priorities**

In 2010, the Directory will be available to be downloaded directly from [www.rvidaho.org](http://www.rvidaho.org) and from [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org).

## **IDAHO CHILDREN AND NATURE NETWORK**

The Idaho Children and Nature Network (ICNN) project, previously called “Kids and Nature Initiative”, is designed to connect children with nature in Idaho.

The ICNN’s mission is to connect children with nature in Idaho, from backyards to mountaintops. Its vision is to collaborate with private and public partners to empower all Idahoans to lead healthy lives by developing a sense of place in Idaho's outdoors. The ICNN's goals are to do these things:

- leverage collective resources to increase community awareness;
- provide access to information;
- increase participation in outdoor activities and foster respect and appreciation for Idaho’s outdoor heritage;
- improve integration of environmental education;
- create private-public partnerships; and
- work to improve the physical, mental and emotional health of Idaho’s children.

Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Specialist at IDFG, and Jennifer Wernex, Public Affairs Specialist for IDPR, co-chair the ICNN.

### **2009 Accomplishments**

During 2009, the ICNN working group grew the statewide network and developed the “Be Outside, Idaho!” campaign through some well-planned steps.

- ICNN officially and formally launched Idaho’s statewide initiative in January. First Lady Lori Otter spoke on behalf of the ICNN, and presented Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter’s Proclamation for the initiative proclaiming 2009 as the *Idaho Children in Nature Year*.
- U.S. Senator Mike Crapo wrote and distributed a Guest Opinion in support of “Be Outside” to all Idaho newspapers.
- The ICNN’s website, [www.beoutsideidaho.org](http://www.beoutsideidaho.org) was launched. The website was developed by Boise creative firm Drake Cooper and Idaho Department of Tourism. The site features “101 Things to Do”, activities and events searchable by state travel region, tools, resources, information on safety in the outdoors, web and logo use policy, print materials for download, and opportunities for partner logo and event posting.
- Statewide media partners, under the direction of IDFG’s media team, began filming and running weekly spots, including stories on the problem of Nature Deficit Disorder, challenges of living in the electronic world, health issues, arts and nature, outdoor skills instructions, and event/activity features. The stories will run well into 2010.
- Boise State Radio broadcast an interview by host Bob Kustra with Ricard Louv on the topic of Nature Deficit Disorder.
- Idaho Public Television’s “Dialogue” program hosted ICNN leaders Meggan Laxalt-Mackey, Dick Jordan, and two Timberline High School students to discuss the issue of growing up in the electronic age and the benefits of connections to nature.

- The ICNN won the Idaho Environmental Forum’s *Outstanding Achievement Award* for “making a difference in Idaho” and the Governor’s *Take Pride in Idaho Award*.
- The ICNN grew to 140 partners.

**2010 Priorities**

The priorities for 2010 will be to develop a strategic plan for the organization, grow the number of partners, and make the website more effective.

**OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE MANAGEMENT**

The Idaho Interagency Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinating Committee (IICC) is made up of state and federal resource management agencies that are responsible for some aspect of off-highway vehicle recreation or access. Representatives from IDPR, IDFG, USFS, BLM, and IDL meet quarterly to review current issues and discuss any areas where collaboration can effectively address problem areas. Troy Elmore of the IDPR is the committee chair.



Common goals of the group are to provide quality OHV recreation opportunities, promote user safety and responsibility, and protect natural, social and economic resources. An example of an ongoing project is the *Stay on Trails* OHV media campaign. Four years ago, the IICC initiated this project to promote responsible OHV recreation that utilized radio, billboards, news media and a website to communicate the message *use your power responsibly* to mutual customers.

Agencies analyze impacts that federal and state decisions and policies and OHV industry trends have on the sport. It is critically important for all the agencies to work collaboratively wherever possible and to strive to be consistent in communications with the public. The Committee addresses issues including these: proposed legislative changes, travel management planning and implementation, potential grant opportunities, effects of OHV recreation on resources, education opportunities, enforcement endeavors, use trends, and enthusiast needs.

**2009 Accomplishments**

The campaign’s web page has been completely redesigned and brought up to date. The new website was structured as a one stop shop for enthusiasts to find places to ride, access registration information, find links to partnering agencies, and learn about safe and responsible riding practices. Videos can now be posted and housed on the website and viewed by anyone with access to the internet. The new website can be found at [www.stayontrails.com](http://www.stayontrails.com).

**2010 Priorities**

An assessment will be conducted in 2010 to measure the success of the most recent OHV Public Outreach campaign efforts.

## **OUTFITTER AND GUIDE GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION SYSTEM MAPPING**

This project has produced digital maps of outfitter and guide-permitted/licensed areas throughout the State. This has made it easier for all agencies to understand exactly which areas are permitted/licensed, and who holds the permits/licenses for which activities. Bart Butterfield, IDFG Acting Chief, Natural Resources Policy Bureau, is the project lead.

### **2009 Accomplishments**

IDFG worked with IOGLB and their contract programmer to transfer the new outfitter areas database back to IOGLB so that IOGLB could incorporate it into their newly designed database and take full control of it. IDFG provided consultation and training to IOGLB in the use of ArcGIS to develop maps from the outfitter database. IDFG can now create an initial ArcGIS map project and turn it over to IOGLB to complete and print for their management needs.

IDFG continued to make custom maps for presentations and meetings. A highlight was a series of maps of all USFS Region 4 Forests that displayed all deer and elk outfitter areas and river segments. These were used by IOGLB and the USFS Region 4 to create a new MOU. These also highlighted a number of areas of outfitter area overlap, prompting both parties to begin to rectify.

IDFG and IOGLB worked together to identify and finish a number of outfitter areas not yet mapped. Sixty-seven new areas were mapped and added to the spatial data layer in the past year. This brings the total mapped outfitter areas to 1,011. Twenty-four of these mapped areas still have lingering questions to be resolved. All hunting areas are mapped. Thirty-nine areas remain unmapped with 15 of those in progress. Several areas were remapped based on input by IDFG, a permit administrator, or an outfitter.

IDFG developed a computer program that runs every night that takes the raw GIS database and converts it into a simplified form for the website. It loops through each license area and creates an individual file for each area. This file is then associated with the license area database in SQL Server to simplify both web and ArcGIS application.

The link for this site is <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb/>.

### **2010 Priorities**

In the future, IOGLB will ultimately host the public-facing website that IDFG currently hosts. IDFG will host just the spatial data and deliver it via an Internet-enabled map server and several web services. IOGLB also will host a web service for use by IDFG's Idaho Hunt Planner. This will provide the ability to provide outfitter information on the Idaho Hunt Planner website. This project primarily will be in a maintenance mode in 2010, with funds going toward completing mapping of "non-consumptive" operating areas, keeping information updated, and developing links to other sites, including [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org).

## **SCENIC BYWAYS**

The Scenic Byway project provides coordination for what, at one time, were various scenic routes through Idaho. The project has created a statewide Scenic Byway system that now has national standing for funding and enhanced marketing opportunities. Garry Young, Senior Transportation Planner for ITD, is the project lead and provides staff support to the Idaho Scenic Byway Advisory Committee.



## 2009 Accomplishments

- *Grant funding* – Seven Scenic Byway projects were submitted from Idaho to the Federal Highway Administration for grant funding. The projects, totaling \$1,099,122 included these:
  - Statewide Scenic Byway video production;
  - Western Heritage Historic Byway interpretive information;
  - International Selkirk Loop corridor management plan implementation;
  - Peaks to Craters Scenic Byway corridor management plan development;
  - Thousand Springs Scenic Byway wildlife viewing area development;
  - Oneida Stake Academy Pioneer Historic Byway Center restoration/development; and
  - Pioneer Historic Byway marketing implementation.The first four projects were funded, for a total of \$237,712.
- *Scenic Byway brochures* – A first printing of 60,000 copies of the *Taking the Scenic Route* brochure was completed in April. This reprint included an updated to include two new Byways—Peaks to Craters Scenic Byway and Main Oregon Trail Backcountry Byway.
- *Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* – A corridor management plan was completed for the Fort Henry Historic Byway, and a draft corridor management plan was completed for the Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway.

## 2010 Priorities

Priorities in 2010 remain the same as 2009.

## TOURISM AND RECREATION INFORMATION DATABASES, WEBSITES, AND FULFILLMENT

This project includes the [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org) and [www.update.idaho.com](http://www.update.idaho.com) websites and databases that support them. Work on these sites/databases is contracted by the Idaho Division of Tourism to ensure that the visitidaho.org website continues to be exciting, accurate, and useful as one-stop information for visitors and recreationists. The updateidaho site is the online interface for Idaho's tourism industry to post and edit information about lodging properties, campgrounds, events, attractions, vacation packages, and contact information. The updateidaho site delivers data to these sites: [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org) [www.idahogolftrail.com](http://www.idahogolftrail.com) [www.idahowinter.org](http://www.idahowinter.org) [www.lewisandclarkidaho.com](http://www.lewisandclarkidaho.com) [www.touridaho.org](http://www.touridaho.org) [www.idahowhitewatertrail.com](http://www.idahowhitewatertrail.com) [www.idahoparks.org](http://www.idahoparks.org) [www.rvidaho.org](http://www.rvidaho.org) [www.swita.org](http://www.swita.org) [www.twinfallschamber.com](http://www.twinfallschamber.com) [www.visitsouthidaho.com](http://www.visitsouthidaho.com) and the official Idaho travel guide.

This project also includes 1-800 call center operations contracted by the Division of Tourism to provide recreation-tourism related information for Idaho visitors. Ongoing services include reader service, online inquiry processing, customer online inquiry reports, and support of live chat customer service on [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org). Karen Ballard, Director of the Division of Tourism for the Idaho Department of Commerce, is the project lead.

## 2009 Accomplishments

Accomplishments are reflected by numbers of recreation/tourism-related inquiries. Inquiries are measured in two ways: those that are received by mail or phone by the fulfillment contractor, All West Communications, and those that “hit” one of the websites (unique visitors). As reflected in the table below, web inquiries far exceed phone and mail inquiries.

<b>Inquiry Source</b>	<b>Period of Inquiries</b>	<b>Number of Inquires</b>	<b>% Change</b>
All West (toll-free calls, mail)	2007/2008	105,483	
All West (toll-free calls, mail)	2008/2009	79,447	-7.5
Web (unique visitors to all sites)	2007/2008	788,397	
Web (unique visitors to all sites)	2008/2009	1,042,864	+7.6

In collaboration with IRTI partners, two new web projects were launched: the Idaho Children and Nature Network site ([www.beoutsideidaho.org](http://www.beoutsideidaho.org)) and an ongoing educational campaign to inform OHV drivers ([www.stayontrails.com](http://www.stayontrails.com)).

### **2010 Priorities**

Additions for 2010 to [www.updateidaho.com](http://www.updateidaho.com) include database category options for National Parks, Lewis and Clark, and Children and Nature Network. The lodging database will retool the seasonal issue category and update labels for ease of migration to Idaho’s Official Travel Guide.

### **WATCHABLE WILDLIFE**

The Watchable Wildlife Committee works with IDFG’s Nongame Program to sustain Idaho's fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend, with an emphasis on threatened, endangered, and at-risk species. Projects focus on promoting appreciation for wildlife and their habitats, wildlife-based tourism, and responsible wildlife observation ethics. In addition to the IRTI partners, this working group includes representatives from Golden Eagle Audubon, Idaho Fish and Game Foundation, and Idaho Power. Deniz Aygen of IDFG currently chairs the Committee.

### **2009 Accomplishments**

- *Windows to Wildlife* These newsletters were issued quarterly, and included these topics: osprey reintroduction, the “Be Outside” initiative, Pacific lamprey, Lewis’ woodpecker, Boise’s urban peregrine falcons, unclean birdfeeders, wildflowers, spring cleaning at Black’s Creek Reservoir, raptor enrichment, Wings-Over-Water osprey project, as well as wildlife events. The newsletters were issued to the Idaho Wildlife license plate holders who returned RSVP postcards attached to their new plates. This year, the subscription mailing list was updated. The subscription base for the newsletter is 2,901. (IDFG employees also receive the newsletter.) The 2009 summer edition was the first all-electronic newsletter. *Windows to Wildlife* is no longer printed and mailed in hard copy format. The newsletters generated \$1,238 in donations, which are tax-deductible.
- *Idaho Wildlife Viewing Guides and posters* Sales from these items generated \$255.50.
- *Events* The Watchable Wildlife booth was staffed at the following events:



- MK Nature Center bird seed sale (December)
- Bald Eagle Days-Boise (January)
- International Migratory Bird Day-Boise (May)
- Snake River Birds of Prey Festival (May)
- The Idaho Green Expo (July)



At the Watchable Wildlife booth during International Migratory Bird Day and the Idaho Green Expo, kids created binoculars using recycled toilet paper rolls.

- *Projects*

- Snake River Birds of Prey Festival, May 15-17



The Watchable Wildlife Committee participated as a part of the Festival planning committee, worked during the Festival, and contributed financially to support the first of what is intended to become an annual festival. Modeled after Othello's Sandhill Crane Festival in the state of Washington, this festival included tours, lectures, children's activities, and a banquet. Western Heritage Scenic Byway Committee was the lead organization for the event.

- *Be Outside* Initiative



The Watchable Wildlife Committee has been an integral part of the *Be Outside* initiative and the Idaho Children and Nature Network, and provided financial support to procure *Be Outside* stickers and pop-up display banners. In addition, Watchable Wildlife Committee members donated hundreds of hours of time toward the project.

- Idaho Birding Trail/ Statewide Scenic Byway Signage Project



In April, the Watchable Wildlife Committee applied for a grant from the Idaho Transportation Department/ Idaho Scenic Byways Program to install Idaho Birding Trail signs at locations along various scenic byways within Idaho. The grant was funded. The Watchable Wildlife Committee will provide an in-kind match of hours working on the project. The signs are scheduled to be completed and installed during the spring of 2010.

- *Budget* With a beginning balance of \$20,923, the Committee generated revenues in sales and donations, and made expenditures to end the year with a balance of \$20,779.

**2010 Priorities**

Projects for 2010 will include development of a strategic plan for the Idaho Watchable Wildlife Program, completion and installation of the Idaho Birding Trail signs, and securing grant funding for future projects.

###