

IDAHO RECREATION & TOURISM INITIATIVE



2010

Annual Accomplishment Report

The Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative (IRTI), created in 1988, is a coalition of state and federal agencies and not-for-profit organizations dedicated to providing Idaho citizens and visitors with expanded recreation opportunities. IRTI's primary objective is to develop partnerships and cooperate with all interested agencies, organizations, groups, and individuals in order to improve public information and services associated with recreation and tourism in Idaho.

Idaho Recreation & Tourism Initiative

ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

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 byways 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 go outside and play. By working together, the coalition is able to more effectively provide information and services.

Who Is IRTI?

- 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 Recreation and Parks Association (IRPA)
- 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.



How Does IRTI Work?

A Steering Committee composed of one representative from each partner agency governs IRTI. The Steering Committee meets three to four times per year to explore opportunities to work together on projects that reflect overlapping agency and organizational objectives. The Steering Committee approves statewide work projects, charters working groups to implement the projects, and approves an annual budget. The annual IRTI budget is funded by contributions from various partner agencies. An IRTI Coordinator, currently Vicki Jo Lawson, provides staff support to the Steering Committee, is funded jointly by the partner agencies, and is hosted by IDPR.

Where Can I Find More Information About IRTI?

<http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/aboutus/irti.aspx> <http://commerce.idaho.gov/tourism-grants-and-resources/irti/>

How Does IRTI Benefit Idaho?

Current IRTI projects reflect a wide and diverse range of efforts, engage an equally wide and diverse range of partners, impact the lives of Idaho citizens and visitors, and help support Idaho's economy and quality of life. The following summaries briefly explain each of IRTI's 2010 projects, identify the project leader, and describe the project accomplishments and benefits to Idaho.

Be Outside, Idaho!

Formerly known as the Idaho Children and Nature Network, Be Outside, Idaho! (BOI) is an ever-widening network of partners working collaboratively to develop ways to connect children with nature in Idaho.

This project exemplifies how IRTI works. In 2007, many partners represented by the Steering Group discussed that their agencies had some kind of "kids and nature" initiative. However, none of the partners felt that they were doing an effective job of responding to the mandate. So, the Steering Group chartered an interagency working group to determine how to move forward. The group hosted a couple of community sessions, reaching outside the agencies to the community--to education, medical, scouting, environmental, and arts groups. The collaborative efforts of the working group and the community groups resulted in the current BOI organization which currently includes over 150 partners—federal, state, and municipal agencies, and private organizations and businesses. Its mission is to *connect children with nature in Idaho, from backyards to mountaintops*. The Be Outside campaign, as it's also called, includes a website (www.beoutsideidaho.org) that serves as a clearinghouse for all kids and nature activities and events throughout the state.



In 2010, BOI matured organizationally by developing a 2-year strategic plan, embracing operating guidelines, and strengthening committee structure. Active committees addressing arts, communications, education, finance, health, legislative issues, and partners accomplished an enormous amount. The project leads, Jamie Heinzerling, Administrative Assistant for Boise City Parks and Recreation Department, and Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor for IDFG, serve as co-chairs of the BOI Steering Committee.

2010 Accomplishments

- Completed creation of a year's worth of weekly television news stories addressing ways to get Idaho children outside. These stories aired statewide during newscasts.
- Engaged the Idaho Library Commission to establish a Family Reading Week theme of *Idaho is Wild about Reading*, encouraging libraries around the state to develop programs associated with BOI.
- Supported State Capitol "Rotunda Day" on February 1, an educational event for elected officials and the public about BOI; developed and delivered over 100 BOI information packets to legislators; transcribed the *Be Outside* music and arranged for the Kiwanis Choir to sing at "Rotunda Day".

- Supported “Outside Day”, an annual event designed to reconnect kids of all ages to nature and outdoor experiences.
- Produced a 30-second BOI commercial that will be included in the next phase of the BOI website.
- Created a Twitter account and Facebook page for BOI.
- Developed and presented “Arts and the Outdoors” workshop for teachers in association with Idaho Environmental Education Association.
- Developed and implemented a pilot of “Bird by Bird”, a birding program in eight local elementary and high schools, in association with Watchable Wildlife Committee, USFWS, IDFG, BLM, Golden Eagle Audubon, Society, Wild Birds Unlimited, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, and Partners in Flight.
- Created a nature-themed mural in downtown Boise with Silver Sage Girl Scouts.
- Researched alternatives for best fiscal structure for BOI organization.
- Hosted annual BOI partners’ meeting.
- Established an e-newsletter and email program to manage online communications with partners.
- Gathered information about people interested in forming BOI chapters across Idaho.
- Provided briefings regarding BOI for the Governor, Idaho’s U.S. Congressional Delegation, and State Legislators.
- Provided information to Idaho State Legislators who worked to pass Senate Concurrent Resolution 113, sponsored by Senator John McGee and Representative Pat Takasugi:
“...that we recognize the efforts of the Idaho Children and Nature Network for its success in generating awareness about the importance of encouraging Idaho children to find a sense of place, reconnect with nature and be outside with the initiative “Be Outside, Idaho Children in Nature” and we invite citizens to take advantage of the many opportunities our state offers for family outdoor recreation activities.”
- Participated in the following events to distribute BOI materials and deliver BOI messages:
 - Wildflower Wednesday activities and photo walk at Foothills Learning Center
 - Log Cabin Literary Center “Writing Wild!” summer nature journaling program
 - Green Expo
 - Idaho Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance Conference
 - St. Alphonsus Harvest Fest
 - Blue Cruise
 - Coordinated School Health Conference
 - Middleton Family Health Fair
 - Capital City Public Market arts and sunflower seed planting with Silver Sage Girl Scouts
 - National Children and Nature Network Gathering in Princeton, NJ

- Developed and distributed the following BOI materials or included BOI messages in the following community-wide sources:
 - “101 Things to do Outside” flyers and bookmarks
 - Article in Healthy Idaho magazine
 - Article in Family Physician newsletter
 - Article in Pediatrician newsletter
 - Postcard for insert in Family Physician Annual Conference packets
 - Health reasons to Be Outside
 - Plans for BOI posters to be displayed in health care settings

- Made presentations about BOI at the following events:
 - Idaho Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance Conference
 - Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism
 - Tri- State Parks and Recreation Association Conference: Connecting Children and the Outdoors
 - “Arts in the Outdoors” for teachers at the Idaho Environmental Education Association Conference
 - Idaho Science Teachers Association Annual Conference
 - Treasure Valley Partnership (Mayors and County Commissioners)

Free Fishing Day

Free Fishing Day has been an annual event in Idaho for over 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 on this day. Vicky Runnoe, Conservation Education Supervisor for IDFG, is the project lead.

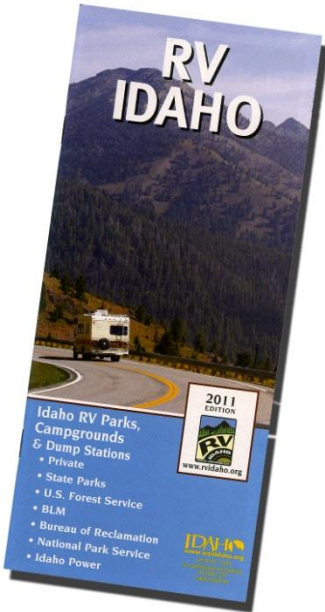
2010 Accomplishments

Anglers around Idaho celebrated Free Fishing Day on June 12 this year. Almost fifty different fishing-related events were held around the state to give Idahoans an opportunity to learn about fishing. The “Take Me Fishing” trailers, a new IDFG program, were wonderful additions to this year’s celebration. Each trailer’s exterior is wrapped in eye-catching graphics, and the inside contains all the equipment needed to go fishing. At each event, staff provided assistance to those unfamiliar with casting, baiting a hook, or catching a fish. Participants were eager to learn about the future schedules for the “Take Me Fishing” trailers in their areas. Free Fishing Day is so institutionalized now that it is an anticipated kick-off-to summer in Idaho.



Idaho Campground Directory

The Idaho campground directory, *RV Idaho*, is an annually-updated guide containing almost all public campgrounds, private RV parks, and dump stations 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.



IRVCA’s role is to create and implement a sustainable RV tourism development and marketing program for the owners of Idaho’s private RV parks and managers of public campgrounds. IRVCA’s goal is to increase overall RV tourism revenues throughout the state by promoting Idaho as a great RV destination and bringing new campers to Idaho’s RV parks and campgrounds. All 600 private RV parks and public campgrounds in Idaho share in the benefits of IRVCA’s targeted RV tourism development programs.

RVing continues to be the fastest growing segment of the traveling public and the Idaho Division of Tourism has identified RVers/campers as high priority visitors. RVers have extremely desirable demographics and spending patterns with considerable discretionary income which they choose to spend on their RV lifestyle. Despite the economy, RVers continue to travel in record numbers. A conservative estimate of RVer annual spending in Idaho would be in excess of \$200 million.

2010 Accomplishments

IRVCA updated the campground database information and published 115,000 copies of the 2011 edition of the annual statewide campground directory, *RV Idaho*. This publication is the third most-requested travel publication in Idaho, with only the State Travel Guide and Idaho map receiving more requests. It reaches more Idaho campers and those traveling to Idaho than any other publication. It is distributed free-of-charge to campers and RVers, both in-state and out-of-state, at hundreds of tourist information centers, regional tourism destinations, Chambers of Commerce offices, private RV parks, public campgrounds, gas stations, RV-related businesses, and recreation and sports shows. The directory also is direct mailed to more than 20,000 campers annually who request Idaho camping information via phone or the internet. For campers and RVers who research their travel options online, the updated campground database information also is reflected on Idaho’s travel and tourism website, www.visitidaho.org. In 2010, for the first time, the directory was available for download from the travel and tourism website, as well as from www.rvidaho.org.

Off-Highway Vehicle Travel Management

The Off-Highway Vehicle Travel Management project is overseen by the Idaho Interagency OHV Coordinating Committee (IICC), composed of state and federal resource management agencies responsible for some aspect of OHV recreation or access. The IICC seeks to foster consistent OHV management, quality OHV opportunities, public safety, user responsibility, and protection of natural, social, and economic resources across all management jurisdictions in Idaho. One of the primary projects of the IICC is the Idaho OHV public outreach campaign, *Stay on Trails* (www.stayontrails.com). This project was developed because the agencies charged with managing OHV travel felt that their individual public outreach efforts weren't being effective. This statewide campaign encourages riders to ride safely and responsibly and to reduce their impact on the land and other trail users. It began in 2005 and employs outdoor billboards, radio spots and live reads, printed material, direct mail, a cutting-edge website, videos, and social media.

This effort to focus the agencies' messaging abilities, rather than "peppering" the public with multiple messages, has been successful, as reflected in a phone survey several years ago. It showed that there was very deep market penetration with 73% of the people surveyed retaining the message. The hope is, of course, that message retention translates to responsible OHV use.

Relative to this, public lands officials continue to see examples of irresponsible riding and resource damage. Updated polling data from 2010 showed that 37% of the public believes that OHV riding is not sufficiently regulated. This may reflect public observations of resource damage from OHV use and/or people engaged in the act of illegal off-trail riding. This is significant in that a similar poll in 2004 revealed that 44% of the public, a greater proportion, believed that OHV riding was not sufficiently regulated. This shift may indicate that land managers are making some gains in achieving the responsible, shared use of trails by the OHV community.

Project leads are Jon Heggen, Enforcement Chief for IDFG (IICC), and Jennifer Blazek, Communication Manager for IDPR (OHV public outreach campaign).

2010 Accomplishments

The IICC efforts have focused on managing recent legislative changes to OHV regulations, especially those affecting OHV operation by unlicensed operators. The IICC also tracks the progress of travel management plans across the state. The IICC members, through their agencies, provide comments on pending legislation in an effort to coordinate state and federal OHV regulations.

This project's most visible accomplishments are reflected in the *Stay on Trails* campaign. Campaign elements and results are reflected below. Please note that the results address the degree of success of the media used, not necessarily the success of the messages. That is much more difficult to assess.



STAY ON TRAILS CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS

- **30-second radio spots** aired May 3 – June 20, 2010
 - Message: Stay on trails, use power responsibly, use proper trail etiquette
 - Markets purchased: Boise, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Twin Falls, and Idaho small markets
 - Total spots: 1,231 paid plus 1,100 no charge/matching spots
 - Delivery: Reached 62% of Idaho men aged 25 – 54 an average of 12 times
- **15-second live announcer read** aired May 3 – June 20, 2010
 - Message: Stay on trails, use power responsibly, use proper trail etiquette
 - Markets purchased: Boise, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Twin Falls
 - Total announcer reads: 240 paid plus 220 no charge/matching
 - Delivery: Reached 30% of Idaho men aged 25 – 54 an average of 5 times
- **Television/social media PSA**
 - Produced a 30-second *Stay on Trails* PSA video educating riders to stay on trails and go to the website for trail information.
 - Provided 30-second spot to all Idaho television stations and cable providers requesting no charge placement in PSA rotation
 - Posted on YouTube and OHV website
 - Issued a press release promoting the new PSA and its message
- **Social media**
 - Kept Idaho OHV blog current with new topics on an ongoing basis and maintained social media tools including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.
- **Web**
 - Added six new rides and maps to the *Where to Ride* section of www.stayontrails.com with material primarily from the Yankee Fork area and Bayhorse State Park. The *Where to Ride* section of the web site is the primary driver of web traffic on www.stayontrails.com, so it's important to keep that section as current as possible. More still photos were added to each ride description.
- **Press release on environmental damage in North Idaho**
 - The OHV campaign collaborated with the Forest Service and the BLM to issue a joint press release about several convictions of people charged with violating road or trail closures, with photos of the resource damage. The press release was re-tweeted on Twitter, Facebook and the *Stay on Trails* blog.
- **Hunting tips video**
 - The OHV campaign produced a new video of hunting tips, focusing on the need for hunters to stay on designated trails at all times. Additional emphasis was put on the fact that it is illegal to ride off-trail to retrieve or scout for game. Land managers and IDFG conservation officers believe that off-trail riding is something that happens frequently during hunting season, and it is difficult to reach hunters who aren't members of any particular OHV or hunting clubs. The hunting tips video was posted on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, and the YouTube link was sent by email to a list of hunting groups provided by IDFG and the Idaho Sportsmen's Caucus.

- **Stay on Trails window clings**
 - Knowing that hunters can be difficult to reach through paid media, the OHV campaign sent out transparent window clings bearing the *Stay on Trails* logo and website address to the IDFG statewide vendor list. IDFG vendors who sell licenses, tags, and supplies may be the last people contacted by hunters before going into the field for the fall hunt.
- **Fall campaign radio included BSU and U of I radio audience**
 - Radio time was purchased to air *Stay on Trails* messages statewide on U of I and BSU game day. *Stay on Trails* banner ads ran on U of I and BSU football websites throughout football season.
- **Search engine marketing (SEM)**
 - Using Google Online, keywords and content network sites were purchased; see report below.

STAY ON TRAILS CAMPAIGN RESULTS

SEM Campaign Performance (May 3 – June 27, 2010)

Delivered impressions: 225,277
 Clicks: 2,014
 Click rate: 0.89%
 Cost per click: \$1.05
 Effective CPM: \$9.37

WEBSITE PERFORMANCE

Google Search Network:

Delivered impressions: 92,396
 Clicks: 1,798
 Click rate: 1.95%
 Cost per click: \$1.04
 Effective CPM: \$20.25

Throughout the two month campaign, there was an increasing trend of clicks due to ongoing campaign management and optimization. In May, the average click rate was 1.49% and in June it had increased to 2.62%, while the cost-per-click decreased from \$1.16 to \$0.94. The four primary ad groups performed as follows:

Ad Group	Clicks	Impressions	Click through rate	Average cost per click	Cost	Average position
Trails	1,152	19,641	5.87%	\$ 0.94	\$ 1,078.86	1.5
Hunt	315	15,497	2.03%	\$ 1.24	\$ 390.58	1.8
Tips	41	4,071	1.01%	\$ 1.27	\$ 52.32	2.2
Homepage	290	53,187	0.55%	\$ 1.20	\$ 349.08	2.9

The 'trails' ad group was the most effective performer with the highest click-through rate as well as the most cost effective cost per click. While the 'homepage' ad group served the most impressions, the click through rate was low as well as the average text ad position. This may be attributed to the fact that users were searching for more specific information and resources such as OHV trails, hunting advice, general tips, and guidelines.

Google Content Network:

Delivered impressions: 132,881
 Clicks: 216
 Click rate: 0.16%
 Cost per click: \$1.11
 Effective CPM: \$1.80

Unlike the search campaign, the content ads were less successful in terms of attracting visitors to the OHV website. There are likely more improvements that could be made to the campaign to continue the upward momentum, specifically pairing further refined keywords with tailored ad copy and landing pages. Detailed performance of the 3 ad sizes are as follows:

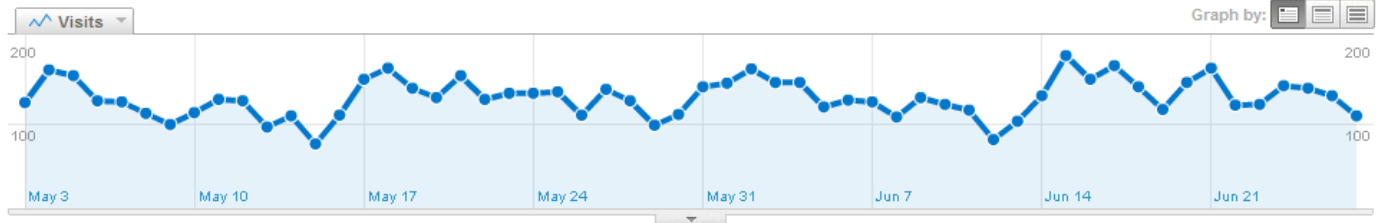
Ad Group	Clicks	Impressions	Click through rate	Average cost per click	Cost	Average position
300x250	116	50,758	0.23%	\$ 1.11	\$ 128.66	1.1
728x90	77	60,895	0.13%	\$ 1.06	\$ 81.42	1.2
160x600	23	21,228	0.11%	\$ 1.27	\$ 29.33	1.3

WEBSITE ANALYTICS

The website analytics reflect steady visits to www.stayontrails.com with a slight trending increase over time. Search engines were the strongest traffic driver accounting for 63% of visits.

Dashboard

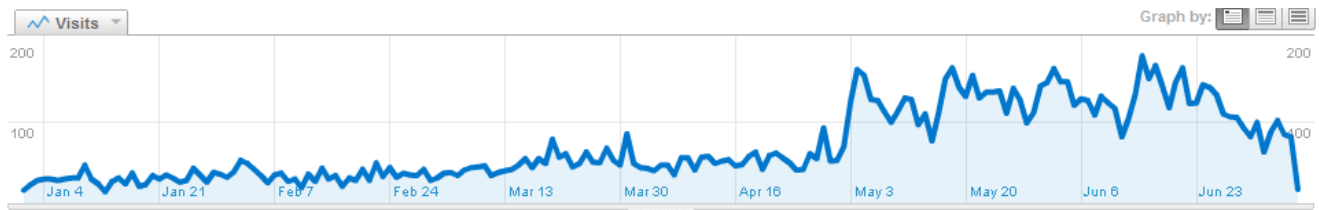
May 3, 2010 - Jun 27, 2010



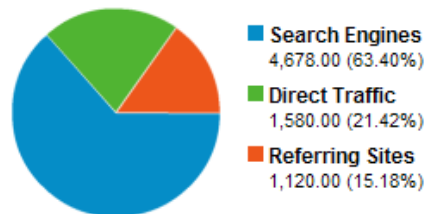
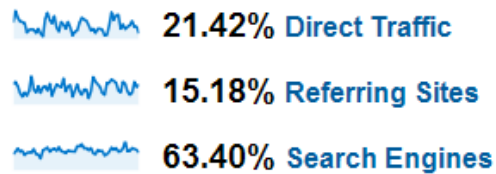
Site Usage



In comparing traffic during the campaign to overall traffic year-to-date, it is clear that the SEM assisted in increasing overall awareness of the *Stay on Trails* message, as well as drove traffic to the website. The radio campaign also encouraged people to visit the website for more information.



Traffic Sources



Top Content

Pageviews		Unique Pageviews		Avg. Time on Page		Bounce Rate		% Exit		\$ Index	
46,051		23,579		00:01:06		28.23%		16.02%		\$0.00	
% of Site Total: 100.00%		% of Site Total: 100.00%		Site Avg: 00:01:06 (0.00%)		Site Avg: 28.23% (0.00%)		Site Avg: 16.02% (0.00%)		Site Avg: \$0.00 (0.00%)	
Page	None	Pageviews ↓	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate	% Exit	\$ Index				
1.	/where-to-ride/	16,905	5,147	00:00:35	17.62%	10.65%	\$0.00				
2.	/	5,776	4,087	00:01:21	25.21%	30.40%	\$0.00				
3.	/where-to-ride/trail.aspx?name=Owyhee+Bac...	1,836	1,046	00:01:50	47.54%	18.25%	\$0.00				
4.	/where-to-ride/trail.aspx?name=Boise+Foothi...	1,607	967	00:01:21	44.16%	14.25%	\$0.00				
5.	/where-to-ride/trail.aspx?name=Danskin+Mo...	1,446	927	00:02:03	56.67%	19.29%	\$0.00				
6.	/where-to-ride/trail.aspx?name=Kirkham+Rid...	1,358	655	00:01:19	52.17%	11.19%	\$0.00				
7.	/where-to-ride/trail.aspx?name=Blackrock+C...	1,033	663	00:01:33	46.34%	19.07%	\$0.00				
8.	/where-to-ride/trail.aspx?name=Mackay+Mine...	1,026	440	00:01:21	36.11%	11.31%	\$0.00				
9.	/where-to-ride/trail.aspx?name=Rock+Creek...	1,022	682	00:01:34	41.67%	16.93%	\$0.00				
10.	/where-to-ride/trail.aspx?name=Big+Souther...	896	493	00:01:15	57.78%	13.06%	\$0.00				
Filter Page: containing		Go		Advanced Filter		Go to: 1		Show rows: 10		1 - 10 of 43	

Twenty-six percent of traffic from May 3 through June 27 was directly attributable to the Google CPC campaign. Visitors who came from Google spent an average of almost 5 minutes on the site and 82% of visitors were new to the site. The bounce rate was low at 35% indicating that users were able to find beneficial information on the *Stay on Trails* website in a timely manner. Visitors coming from the display campaign were more likely to bounce than those coming from the search campaign.

WHAT WE LEARNED

- The organic search performance for www.stayontrails.com is the primary traffic driver for searchers, but when coupled with a paid search campaign, value is added in providing searchers with qualified search results that drive nearly as much traffic as the organic search results on Google.
- Network display campaigns have value for awareness building, but are not as effective for driving qualified traffic to the site.
- Ongoing campaign management and optimization on paid search campaigns will improve campaign performance over time.

Outfitters and Guides GIS Mapping



The Outfitters and Guides Geospatial Information System Mapping project has produced digital maps of outfitter and guide-permitted and licensed areas throughout the state. This information was previously available only in “pieces” from multiple agencies. This collaborative mapping project has made it easier for all agencies to understand exactly which areas are permitted, licensed, and who holds the permits and licenses for which activities. While this information is useful to many of the land-managing agencies, it also has a very useful application for recreationists looking for outfitter and guide services. This information is now available online at www.fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb and includes a variety of search capabilities. Soon, it will be fully integrated on Idaho’s travel and tourism website. Project leads are Bart Butterfield of IDFG and Jake Howard, Executive Director of Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board.

2010 Accomplishments

Thirty-one additional outfitter and guide-permitted operating areas were mapped during 2010. Over 1,000 operating areas are now mapped, leaving 104 active operating areas still to be mapped. (The IDFG employee responsible for mapping operating areas resigned from her position and IDFG has been unable to refill that position due to budgetary constraints. Meanwhile, IDFG has tried to keep this project moving forward with existing personnel. An effort to refill the vacant position is ongoing.)

IOGLB made progress in restructuring and moving its licensing database to the Idaho State Department of Administration. When this database move is completed, the website will draw operating area information directly from IOGLB and eliminate the need for IDFG to maintain a separate copy of the database. The move also will make it possible to update the spatial data using nightly automated updates.

In 2010, the outfitter and guide data were integrated into the IDFG Idaho Hunt Planner website. Outfitters matching hunt queries are displayed with their contact information. Work to update the IDFG Fish Planner will begin next year, with plans to include the outfitter and guide information into it, too. Additionally, IDFG developed a web service for the Department of Commerce to consume information on boating outfitters that was used on Idaho’s travel and tourism website at www.visitidaho.org.

Recreation Information Fulfillment and Recreation/Tourism Databases and Websites

The Recreation Information Fulfillment project includes 1-800 call center operations contracted by the Division of Tourism to provide statewide recreation-tourism related information. Ongoing services include reader service, online inquiry processing, customer online inquiry reports, and support of live chat customer service at Idaho's primary travel and tourism website, www.visitidaho.org, which serves as a portal for www.beousideidaho.org, www.idahobyways.gov, etc. The Recreation/Tourism Databases and Websites project includes the websites and the database that supports them, www.update.idaho.com. Work on these sites/databases also is contracted by the Division of Tourism to ensure that the state's primary site continues to be exciting, accurate, and useful as one-stop information for visitors and recreationists. The Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative has eliminated duplication of efforts across agencies and has leveraged Idaho Division of Tourism marketing dollars. Project lead is Karen Ballard, Administrator for Idaho Division of Tourism.

2010 Accomplishments

Visitor inquiries associated with tourism in Idaho came from various sources during the past year. These inquiries are measured in two ways: those that are received by the fulfillment contractor, All West Communications, and those that are considered a unique visitor to any of the state's travel and tourism websites. The total number of inquiries received between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010 was 1,233,233, up from last year's 1,122,311.

The chart below compares the number of tourism inquiries received through each source during the fiscal years 2007/08, 2008/09, and 2009/10:

Inquiry Source	Period Inquiry July 1 – June 30	Quantity	% Change
All West (toll-free calls, mail)	2007/2008	105,483	
All West (toll –free calls, mail)	2008/2009	79,447	- 24%
All West (toll –free calls, mail)	2009/2010	149,215	+ 87.8%
Web unique visitors (all sites)	2007/2008	788,397	
Web unique visitors (all sites)	2008/2009	1,042,864	+ 32.3%
Web unique visitors (all sites)	2009/2010	1,084,028	+ 3.9 %

The database system created for the Division of Tourism in 2003 by Drake Cooper, www.updateidaho.com continues to be the online interface for Idaho's tourism industry to post and edit information about lodging properties, events, attractions, vacation packages, and contact information. Updates made at this site deliver data to these sites:

- www.visitidaho.org
- www.idahogolftrail.com
- www.idahowinter.org
- www.lewisandclarkidaho.com
- www.touridaho.org
- www.idahowhitewatertrail.com
- www.idahoparks.org
- www.rvidaho.org
- www.swita.org
- www.twinfallschamber.com
- www.visitsouthidaho.com
- www.stayontrails.com
- www.beoutsideidaho.org
- and the official Idaho travel guide.

2010 additions to www.updateidaho.com include social media visibility for lodging properties, attractions, and events utilizing Facebook, Twitter, My Space, RSS Feed, You Tube, Flickr, Linked In, Delicious, and Blogger. Within the edit option field, listings can add up to four social media network links that embed on the respective www.visitidaho.org landing page.

Scenic Byways

Years ago, Idaho had a mish-mash of a few scenic routes—some were National Forest Scenic Byways, some were State Scenic Routes; there were no consistent standards for such routes, and there was little publicity about them. Since becoming an IRTI project, an Idaho Scenic Byway Advisory Committee has been established with multi-agency and private sector members. The Committee advises the Idaho Transportation Department on Byway designation and it recommends state priorities for use of Federal Highway Administration Scenic Byway grant funds. The Committee effectively leverages between \$250,000 and \$1 million each year in Byway enhancement funds for Idaho. Idaho now has a system of 30 Scenic Byways with corridor management plans underway, completed, or being implemented for many of them. There is an award-winning website and brochures that are updated every year to publicize the Scenic Byway system.

2010 Accomplishments

Idaho received \$276,000 in federal Byway enhancement funds for Scenic Byway projects proposed in 2009. These include:

- Statewide Byway videos for online marketing
- Peaks to Craters Scenic Byway corridor management plan development
- Western Heritage Historic Byway corridor management plan implementation
- International Selkirk Loop Scenic Byway corridor management plan implementation
-

Grant proposals were submitted for FY2010 federal Byway enhancement funds for eight Scenic Byway projects valued at \$1.9 million. Grant awards have not yet been announced. These include:

- Top 10 marketing
- Payette River Scenic Byway interpretive signs
- Thousand Springs Scenic Byway wildlife viewing area
- Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway interpretive signs
- Stanley Visitor Center (confluence of three Scenic Byways) landscaping
- Pioneer Historic Byway interpretive site reconstruction, Oneida Stake Academy
- International Selkirk Loop Scenic Byway corridor management plan implementation
- Salmon River Scenic Byway path to Sacajawea Center

Taking the Scenic Route brochures were updated. Fifty thousand copies were printed and distributed.

25,000 regional Scenic Byway brochures were printed and distributed.



State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan

Each state is required to develop a State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP) every five years in order to be eligible for Land and Water Conservation Fund Act funding. (Please note that the tourism element is not required, but Idaho has chosen to include it.) While a new approach to meeting this requirement is being explored at the national level, the requirement remains. The project lead is Rick Just, Comprehensive Planning Chief for IDPR.



2010 Accomplishments

2010 was a year of little action on Idaho's SCORTP. There was some discussion regarding whether or not to include a study on the economic impact of outdoor recreation in the 2012-2017 Idaho SCORTP. The National Park Service approved a SCORTP grant request to cover half the cost of such a study, but attached conditions to the approval that IDPR is unable to meet. As a result, IDPR is moving forward on the next SCORTP without that element.

Meanwhile, the first step in the SCORTP 2012-2017 process began in November. Agency staff began meeting with outdoor recreation opinion leaders in all six regions of the state to determine what the major issues and opportunities are in Idaho. The results of those meetings will help staff craft an interactive web application that will be the key vehicle for gathering public opinion statewide. IDPR will either conduct a needs assessment study or purchase Idaho survey results from the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment. Those results will help to establish recreation trend data.

During 2011, IDPR will update point data for the SCORTP Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory, a copy of which will be included in the 2012-2017 report. That GIS database will be accessible online also.

Recently, Rick Just moderated a 2-hour national webinar on the "Best of SCORP." More than 100 planners and other interested parties participated.

Watchable Wildlife

The Watchable Wildlife (WW) Committee is an interagency team that works to emphasize programs, events, and publicity for wildlife viewing opportunities across land management jurisdictions, across all of Idaho. The WW 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, the WW Committee includes representatives from Golden Eagle Audubon, Idaho Fish and Game Foundation, and Idaho Power. In past years, the WW Committee produced and published the Idaho Wildlife Viewing Guide and Idaho Birding Trail Guidebook. Revenues from sales of these books and interagency funding support the WW Committee's work. In addition, in 2010, the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation donated the proceeds of their annual auction, almost \$17,000, to the WW Committee. The project lead and WW Committee Chair is Deniz Aygen, Watchable Wildlife Program Coordinator for IDFG.

2010 Accomplishments

▪ PROJECTS

- *Idaho Birding Trail/Statewide Scenic Byway Signage project.* In April 2009, WW received a grant through the Idaho Scenic Byways program to install Idaho Birding Trail signs at locations along various Scenic Byways across Idaho. The grant provided the funding to purchase 87 signs and WW provided an in-kind match of hours worked on the project. The signs indicate specific bird habitat locations, keyed to the Idaho Birding Trail Guidebook. The signs were installed this year.
- *Bird by Bird educational program.* WW Committee members, Be Outside, Idaho! partners, IDFG, BLM, USFWS, Golden Eagle Audubon, Wild Birds Unlimited, and the Nature Conservancy began a pilot bird watching and feeding program during the 2009-2010 school year in Treasure Valley elementary and high schools. Equipment, books, optics, and seed were provided for the whole school year. In turn, the classrooms recorded bird data and participated in Project Feeder Watch. In addition, each student submitted a "Bird by Bird" project at the end of the year, and the teachers submitted a summary report of their classroom's experience. Based on this information, the pilot year was a success! The same classrooms will participate again next year.
- *Idaho/Washington Stateline Wetlands Revitalization project.* WW helped fund a bird and wildlife observation deck at the Stateline Wetlands in Moscow. This project was coordinated by the University of Idaho Women in Science and the Palouse Audubon Society. Construction was completed in January.
- *Buffalo Jump Bighorn Sheep Viewing Station.* The second bighorn sheep viewing station near Challis was opened in April. The Idaho Chapter for North American Wild Sheep, the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association, the WW Committee, and IDFG Salmon Region staff worked for over a year to raise funds, gather support and partners, design signs,



purchase materials, and build this viewing station. The station is similar to the Red Rock site north of Salmon that was completed in October 2008.

- *Windows to Wildlife Newsletters.* These newsletters were issued quarterly, and included these topics: gardening for wildlife, tracking wolverines, “Bird by Bird” program in schools, bird-a-thon team fundraiser, new bighorn viewing station, and wildlife-related events. The newsletters are sent to the Idaho Wildlife license plate holders.

■ ENRICHMENT

- *Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism.* The Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism was held in Boise in May. WW helped support the conference by funding one of the presenters, Michael O’Malley, from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Watchable Wildlife Program. Participants learned how wildlife-viewing tourism can foster a sustainable future while simultaneously protecting and enhancing biodiversity and long-term community and economic stability.
- *National Watchable Wildlife Conference.* WW attended the annual national conference in Avalon, NJ in October. The conference was a great source of networking because WW coordinators from other states attended. The state coordinators met to discuss creative funding streams for non-consumptive uses, birding and wildlife trail systems, innovative curriculum, tools and other methods of connecting people with the outdoors through wildlife viewing and nature tourism.

■ EVENTS

Representatives from the WW Committee participated in and/or financially supported the following events to promote wildlife viewing across various age groups and across the state:

- Bald Eagle Days (January)
- Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism (May)
- International Migratory Bird Day (May)
- Snake River Birds of Prey Festival (May)
- Idaho Green Expo (July)
- Salmon and Steelhead Days (September)



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



Based on IRTI's accomplishments in 2010, it is clear that IRTI is no longer an "initiative" in the sense that it's an introductory or first step. Now, it's an initiative in the sense that the partners have the ability to identify mutual needs and design and implement responsive projects, as in "We take the initiative!"

For more information, visit IRTI's webpage at

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

<http://commerce.idaho.gov/tourism-grants-and-resources/irti/> or

contact IRTI Coordinator, Vicki Jo Lawson at vicki.lawson@idpr.idaho.gov.