



Contact: Vicki Jo Lawson
Tel: 208-608-8741 (cell)
Email: vlawson@idpr.idaho.gov

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State and Federal Agencies Leverage Resources in Lean Budget Times

(IDAHO- December, 12, 2008) Some agencies in Idaho are increasing their ability to share resources as state and federal funding becomes increasingly scarce. This year, Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative (IRTI) partner agencies will more than triple the amount of money they combine in an effort to achieve common goals, stretch dollars, compound effectiveness, and give Idaho citizens and visitors more.

This is not new or additional money. These are existing funds that the agencies routinely use for providing and managing recreation and tourism opportunities. By determining where the agencies' missions overlap, each can accomplish more for less. In addition to the economic practicality, working together allows these agencies to provide information and services that better serve the public. IRTI Coordinator Vicki Jo Lawson says "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 campground or wildlife area, they just want to camp and see wildlife."

To accommodate needs such as these, IRTI has facilitated a number of efforts, including: a statewide campground directory, a statewide scenic byway system, a statewide wildlife viewing guide, a statewide public information campaign on responsible use of off highway vehicles, and an annual conference on recreation and tourism. New projects in 2009 include statewide efforts to connect children and nature and to provide statewide online trail and recreation maps.

The 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. Their primary objective is to improve public information and services associated with recreation and tourism opportunities in Idaho through partnerships and cooperation. IRTI partners include Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Idaho Department of Commerce, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board, Idaho Transportation Department, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service. Other public and private entities participate in various IRTI projects, including Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho Division of Aeronautics, Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association, and Idaho RV Campgrounds Association.

More information about IRTI is available at <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/aboutus/irti.aspx>, including recent accomplishment reports.

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