



IRTI Steering Group April 1, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Participants

Karen Ballard, IDC-Division of Tourism
Bart Butterfield, IDFG
Anne Chambers, ID RV Campground Owners' Association
Jeremy Chase, Drake Cooper
Troy Elmore, IDPR
Robin Fehlau, BLM
Sara Focht, IDFG
Steve Frost, IDPR
Rich Gummingsall, IDPR
Terry Heslin, BLM
Rick Just, IDPR
Mike Keckler, IDFG

Jim Keller, USFS
Vicki Jo Lawson, IRTI
Meggan Laxalt-Mackey, USFWS
Doug Neighbor, NPS
Diane Norton, IDC-Division of Tourism
Ben Phillips, Idaho Youth Conservation Corps
Vicky Runnoe, IDFG
Dean Sangrey, IDPR
Craig Thompson, IDL
Jennifer Wernex, IDPR
Garry Young, ITD
Mark Young, ITD-Division of Aeronautics

Steering Group Membership

We welcomed to the Steering Group, for the first time, representatives from the Idaho Transportation Department Division of Aeronautics and Idaho Department of Lands. We also welcomed BLM's new representative, Robin Fehlau. We are grateful to Doug Neighbor, National Park Service representative to the Steering Group, for making the 6 hour, round-trip drive from Craters of the Moon to participate in the meeting. (A list of current contact information for Steering Group members and Working Group leads is attached. (See page 6.)

OHV Travel Management

Jennifer Wernex reported that the OHV Awareness Campaign received IDPR ORMV grant funding, in addition to existing IRTI funds, to make \$48,000 available for the spring campaign. In addition to encouraging folks to stay on trails and ride responsibly, key messages now encourage folks to register their vehicles. Because of the ongoing need for this campaign, this project will continue in FY2009. Media costs may be slightly higher than in FY2008. However, for planning purposes, assume that this project will require \$67,000 (same as FY2008) through the IRTI partners.

Utah is mimicking Idaho's OHV Awareness Campaign, and there has been discussion about launching a national version of it. Those who have worked on the Idaho OHV Awareness Campaign are to be commended!

Dean Sangrey reported that the State Legislature has passed HB365. This will require all vehicles travelling on "controlled access" highways (state highways and interstates) to meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS). Vehicle operators may self-certify that standards are met. In regard to trail vehicles, this applies only to motorbikes; this does apply to ATVs or UTVs.

Dean reported that the State Legislature has passed HB602, pending the Governor's signature. This requires all motorbikes, ATVs, and UTVs to have attached a \$3 restricted plate and a \$10 IDPR sticker affixed to the plate. This will allow OHVs to travel on all County roads, though this road definition requires further interpretation. Folks in northern Idaho are concerned about the impact of this bill because of the uncertainty regarding reciprocity with adjacent states. HB602 is a "work in progress". IDPR will encourage working with all partners to refine HB602 in the future. The bill can be viewed at <http://www3.idaho.gov/oasis/H0602.html>.

Terry Heslin reported that the Idaho Interagency OHV Coordinating Council (IICC) will be meeting on April 15. The meeting will focus on the impacts of recent State Legislature activities. Craig Thompson is the new IDL representative to the IICC.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP)

Rick Just reported that “SCORTP is done”. The Plan that was completed two years ago has been signed and approved. Since SCORTP updates are required by LWCF every five years, Rick will convene an interagency working group at the next Steering Group meeting. The working group will draft the 2011-2015 SCORTP. The current SCORTP is available online. Contact Jeff Cook at IDPR (208-514-2483) to learn how to access it.

Kids and Nature Initiative

Sara Focht reported that she and the Watchable Wildlife Working Group explored the possibility of a Kids and Nature Initiative project for IRTI. Sara said that the group quickly concluded that such a project should involve a community larger than IRTI. To that end, the Working Group organized the March 1 meeting, “Connecting Children and Nature”, which was hosted by IRTI and embedded in the Idaho Environmental Education Association annual conference. Details of the event include:

- Of the 322 invitations sent out, over 100 people attended.
- Sara, Meggan Laxalt-Mackey, and Vicky Runnoe were the primary organizers.
- Mike Keckler served as the event moderator.
- Watchable Wildlife bore some of the expenses.
- Panelists included Emily Hopping (Vineyard Christian Fellowship), Dr. Martin Gabica (Healthwise), Dr. Catherine Serio (Healthwise), Cal Groen (IDFG), and Kevin Collins (Meridian Charter School).
- Many IRTI Steering Group members, Watchable Wildlife Working Group members, and agency staffs participated and/or served as group discussion facilitators.
- Participant interest and enthusiasm were high! 126 meeting participants and invitees requested to be a part of an Idaho-wide agency and private network. The meeting was a great success!

As a result of the March 1 meeting, several things have occurred/are occurring:

- Meggan reported that notes from the individual discussion groups have been sent out to participants with a request for corrections and additions. In early April, those notes will be woven into proceedings in the format of a Children and Nature Network Community Action Plan, and distributed to all meeting participants and interested parties.
- Idaho now is part of the national Children and Nature network (<http://www.cnaturenet.org/>). Thanks to Meggan for submitting our effort!
- Vicky Runnoe and Jennifer Wernex reported that IDFG, IDPR, and USFWS have been discussing efforts to “brand” the Idaho children and nature effort.
- Vicky Runnoe and Mike Keckler reported that IDFG is working with TV, radio, and public school folks to produce special programming, events, and publications related to this effort.
- Karen Ballard suggested that the visitidaho.org website could house the Idaho “menu” of children and nature opportunities, and that a special Idaho kids and nature brochure would be useful to have in fulfilling tourism requests.

In an effort to coordinate the multitude of efforts, channel the keen enthusiasm, and involve all agencies and the interested public, the Steering Group chartered a working group to focus on the Kids and Nature Initiative. Meggan agreed to chair the working group. She will be setting up a meeting soon. She and the working group will let Vicki Lawson know how much project funding will be needed in FY2009 through the IRTI partners.

Doug Neighbor noted that the NPS is tasked to host an event and/or acknowledge kids and nature opportunities, along with IDPR, in April, in conjunction with Earth Day celebrations.

Diane Norton explained the “Wired to Nature” program that IDC is helping to pilot. The program re-packages the outdoors as a product that demonstrates the association of nature and humans, and engages ownership in the natural world through the utilization of techno tools along with pro-active participation. More information is available at www.wiredtonature.org and www.wiredtonature.com.

2008 Idaho Governor’s Conference on Recreation and Tourism

Karen Ballard reported that the Governor's Conference is scheduled for May 6-8 at the Red Lion Hotel in Pocatello. The theme will be geo-tourism, and the keynote speaker will be James Dion from the National Geographic Society. Conference details, agenda, and on-line registration can be found at <http://tourism.idaho.gov>. Karen is looking for folks interested in hosting a "breakfast club" discussion topic. Please contact Karen if you have such a topic and/or if you wish to host a discussion.

National Geographic, working through the Sonoran Institute, has just launched "Crown of the Continent", a geotourism approach to mapping and tourism marketing, which includes areas of Alberta, British Columbia, and Montana. A press conference on April 16 will launch a similar effort for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Partners include BLM, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, NPS, USFS, and Idaho Division of Tourism.

2008 Free Fishing Day

Vicky Runnoe reported that Free Fishing Day, featuring events across the State, is scheduled for June 7. In 2009, Free Fishing Day may be expanded to be a Free Fishing Weekend. Currently, there is no web page for Idaho's Free Fishing Day, but Karen Ballard offered to include it on the visitidaho.org site. In FY 2009, this project will require \$3,500 (same as FY2008) through the IRTI partners.

Outfitter and Guide GIS project

Bart Butterfield reported that most all permitted outfitter and guide operating areas are mapped. Currently, the information, including good search capability, can be accessed at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb/>. This information has not been put on the visitidaho.org site yet, but will be in the not-too-distant future. In FY2009, this project primarily will be in a maintenance mode, and will require \$6,000 (\$500 less than required in FY2008) through the IRTI partners.

Idaho RV Campground Directory

Anne Chambers reported that 150,000 2008 RV Campground Directories have been printed; 30,000 have been mailed out; and most of the remaining have been distributed. This directory is unique in the nation in that it is not a membership directory, but is "consumer-friendly", including both public and private campgrounds. The information contained in the directory is available in greater detail at www.rvidaho.gov. In FY 2009, this project will require \$51,150 (same as FY2008) through the IRTI partners and an Idaho Travel Council grant.

In mid-June, Anne will send update forms to the contacts for each campground listed in the directory. She will need the updated information provided to her in a timely way so that the new directories can be printed in October and distributed in November. Updates may also be made on-line at www.update.idaho.com.

Through a national program, Idaho has been designated as an "RV-friendly" state. "RV-friendly" signs can be affixed to roadside signs indicating that the site, service, or facility is, in fact, "RV-friendly". Criteria for such designation include adequate space for parking and maneuvering a large rig. Contact Karen Ballard if signs are needed.

Watchable Wildlife

Sara Focht reported that she has been working to include Idaho's Forest Service-managed Watchable Wildlife locations and information on the Forest Service's Nature Watch website. Twenty-two of Idaho's sites are located on National Forest System lands. Sara would like to post the BLM-managed sites on a similar BLM site. Robin Fehlau will check to see if there is such a site.

Sara and Meggan Laxalt-Mackey are working with artist Ward Hooper to produce a poster for the Watchable Wildlife program that also can serve the Kids and Nature program. Comments on the poster included:

- it could be useful for "branding" the Kids and Nature program;
- a web address needs to be included on it; and
- reference to "Idaho" needs to be included on it.

Meggan wants to know how many posters each agency wants to have (more are cheaper). She will include on the poster all IRTI and other participating partners' logos. The poster design and some printing will be funded through the Watchable Wildlife program. Some portion of additional printing will need to be borne by the agencies requesting the posters.

Scenic Byways

Garry Young reported that the FY2008 Scenic Byway grant request cycle is over. Four projects will be submitted from Idaho to the FHWA. It is expected that the \$811,000 grant request will be funded in full. The four projects include:

- statewide interpretive signage package including 12 projects affecting 14 different byways;
- a regional marketing approach to marketing byway assets in North Central Idaho and Southeastern Washington;
- International Selkirk Loop corridor management plan implementation; and
- Western Heritage National Historic Byway corridor management plan 3rd year implementation.

A new byway designation period will open later this year.

In FY2009, the Scenic Byway brochure will be updated and reprinted. ITD can no longer use their federal funds for the project, but will make them up from other sources. Printing costs will be a bit higher in FY2009, but photography costs can be reduced by using Tourism photo sources. (Thanks to Karen Ballard!) Consequently, this project will require \$47,000 (same as FY2009) through the IRTI partners and Idaho Travel Regions.

Tourism-Recreation Databases and Websites

Jeremy Chase reported on database and website status:

- www.update.idaho.com All facility data can be updated at any time through this site. Karen Ballard observes that use of the site is pretty intuitive; there is no need for a tutorial. Jeremy currently is working to improve the reporting capability of the site.
- www.visitidaho.org Tourism and Drake Cooper folks are trying to keep this site exciting and useful as a one-stop information source. Jeremy is integrating within the www.visitidaho.org website many separate websites, including winter recreation, golfing, 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games, scenic byways, ID-OHV.org, and the outfitter and guide mapping site. Jeremy explained that the site "sells" activities and provides detailed information about them. However, there currently is a gap in that the site does not function as a trip planner. Jeremy likened this to "being at a buffet without a plate or fork". So, work is underway to remedy this and improve the navigation functions.

Jeremy offered to demonstrate how the update Idaho website works and to give a "tour" of the visitidaho.org site at the next IRTI meeting.

Statewide Online Trail Mapping

Steve Frost reported that the Governor signed the FY2009 budget that includes \$500,000 for this project. Steve anticipates that the next step will be to reconvene the technical working group in late April or early May. In FY2009, this project will be primarily in a planning mode. It will be included in the IRTI FY2009 program of work, but will require no funding through the IRTI partners. This may change in subsequent years as the mapping application is developed.

IRTI Coordinator Position

Dean Sangrey reported that the IRTI coordinator position will continue to be hosted by IDPR in FY2009.

FY2009 IRTI Operating Plan/Budget

Vicki Lawson distributed the FY2009 IRTI Annual Operating Plan and Budget template and the signed FY2008 Annual Operating Plan. Project totals for FY2009 were discussed and are included in a separate attachment. Vicki asked that working group leads whose projects do not yet reflect a total, or whose project totals are incorrect, get accurate totals to her as soon as possible. Vicki will then send out the FY2009 budget with accurate project totals

and ask that **each Steering Group member fill in their agency's contributions and return by June 1**. This timeframe will allow for a signed budget by July 1 or shortly thereafter.

Dean Sangrey asked that a project summary accompany the operating plan and budget. Vicki agreed to draft this.

New Business

- **Need for an Idaho interagency recreation map** - Robin Fehlau led a discussion to determine if there currently is any interest in developing an interagency recreation map for Idaho. Karen Ballard noted that consumers don't seem to be too concerned about jurisdictional boundaries. Idaho visitors consistently request State highway maps and State Parks maps. Maps are the most popular downloaded item from the visitidaho.org website. Due to an oversupply of State highway maps, there may not be a reprint in FY2009. Robin will give the interagency map idea more consideration, and may bring it up at a later date.
- **Idaho Youth Conservation Corps** - Ben Phillips described the Idaho Youth Conservation Corps Pilot Program which will be implemented this summer in partnership with Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife-Idaho and the Boise District BLM. Anyone interested in learning more about the effort and how to become involved may contact Ben at: 224 S. Cole Rd., Boise, ID 83709; 208-323-1102; bphillips@atnboise.org.

Upcoming Events

- **April 11-12** – Dubois Grouse Days – A celebration of sage grouse mating, Dubois
- **April 30 - May 2** – Quiet Commotion Summit, Boise
- **May 6-8** – Idaho Governor's Conference on Recreation and Tourism, Pocatello
- **May 10** - International Migratory Bird Day There is a different theme each year, and it will dovetail with activities at the Foothills Learning Center, M-K Nature Center, and Zoo Boise.
- **June 1** – Ironman Triathlon, Boise
- **June 7** – National Trails Day
- **June 7** – National Free Fishing Day
- **June 14** – National Get Outdoors Day – Jim Keller reported that National Get Outdoors Day will include federal agencies and non-profit organizations across the U.S. The new annual event will encourage healthy, active outdoor fun. Events will be scheduled that offer traditional and non-traditional outdoor activities. Vicki Lawson will serve as a clearinghouse for any events that the IRTI partners might be planning. Details are available at www.funoutdoors.com.
- **August 16** – Bio-Blitz, Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge. There is an opportunity for folks to put up booths.
- **September 11 – 13** - National Federation of Press Women gathering, Idaho Falls. Sponsorships are being sought. The contact for this event is k_fleisch@idahomagazine.com.

Fieldtrip

Thanks to Steve Frost, Troy Elmore, and Rich Gummersall for the tour of IDPR's OHV mobile education trailer!

Date for Next IRTI Steering Group Meeting

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 9 am – 1 pm

Idaho Department of Commerce, Division of Tourism office, 700 W. State Street, Boise

Thanks to Jennifer Wernex, IDPR, for design of the IRTI logo!

Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative (IRTI)
Current Steering Group Members(*), Working Group Leads(+), and Other Contacts

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