



IRTI Steering Group December 9, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Participants

Jeff Alexander, FS
Deniz Aygen, IDFG
Karen Ballard, IDC-Division of Tourism
Bart Butterfield, IDFG
Krystal Clair, BOR
Sara Focht, IDFG
Steve Frost, IDPR
Rick Just, IDPR
Mike Keckler, IDFG
Vicki Lawson, IRTI

Meggan Laxalt-Mackey, USFWS
Gary McElheney, ITD-Division of Aeronautics
Diane Norton, IDC-Division of Tourism
Vicky Runnoe, IDFG
Cecilia Seesholtz
Garry Young, ITD
Jennifer Wernex, IDPR

Steering Group Membership

We welcomed to the Steering Group Cecilia Seesholtz, new Boise National Forest Supervisor, and Jeff Alexander, new Boise National Forest Recreation, Lands, and Minerals Staff Officer. We also welcomed Deniz Aygen from IDFG, who will be the new Watchable Wildlife Committee chair. We bid a fond farewell to Sara Focht, who will still be working with IDFG, but at the MK Nature Center. We also bid a fond farewell to Terry Heslin, who will be rotating off as chair of the Idaho Interagency Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinating Committee (IICC). Troy Elmore will be replacing Terry in January.

IRTI Follow-up Business

IRTI Budget and Accomplishment Report - The signed FY2009 IRTI budgets and 2008 IRTI Annual Accomplishment Reports were distributed. By the end of the week, the Accomplishment Reports will be sent out electronically, and posted on the new IRTI web page, located at <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/aboutus/irti.aspx> and also at <http://commerce.idaho.gov/travel/irti.aspx>. Vicki Lawson encouraged suggestions for improving the Accomplishment Report format and web page.

News Release - The draft news release, "State and Federal Agencies Leverage Resources in Lean Budget Times" was discussed. Rick Just suggested that more emphasis be put on the fact that IRTI funds are existing funds, not new, additional funds. Vicki Lawson agreed to rewrite the release and share it with the Steering Group before finally releasing it.

Steering Group Representative from Academia - Vicki reported that she has contacted Steve Hollenhorst at the University of Idaho about providing a faculty member to be on the IRTI Steering Group. He has agreed to recommend someone. Sara Focht will follow up with Steve about Steering Group opportunity.

Recreation Fees - Vicki followed up on the August Steering Group meeting discussion about conducting a recreation fee survey. Andy Brunelle had asked the Steering Group to consider ways to determine if, in fact, recreation fees impact tourism. Karen Ballard had suggested that questions concerning recreation fees possibly could be included in a quarterly survey that the Division of Tourism was contracting. As it turned out, the costs of including these questions in the off-the-shelf survey are prohibitive. Sara Focht suggested that the impact of fees is not static, that it may vary as recreationists' economic situations fluctuate. Rick Just reinforced that the next SCORTP effort can help explore recreation fee questions.

Outfitter and Guide GIS project

Bart Butterfield reported that almost all of the licensed outfitting and guiding areas in the State have been digitized. There are about 1,000 areas, and for about 900 of them, accurate information was easy to obtain. The last 100 have

been difficult. Still remaining to be digitized are 2 fishing areas, 3 snowmobiling areas, and various private land areas. When outfitter and guides find mapping errors on the website, their concerns are reviewed by the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board, and then remedied.

Bart noted that now that the digitizing is nearly done and the search functionality is good, the website needs more exposure. The site can be found at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ioglb/>. Karen Ballard agreed to help with getting additional exposure for the site by linking it to www.visitidaho.com. The site also will be a link on the IDFG's Hunt Planner site. However, it won't be part of www.updateidaho.com, since data will be maintained through a different portal. Karen noted that some of the Tourism funds in the IRTI agreement go toward supporting this project, so she will reflect that more clearly in next year's IRTI budget.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP)

Rick Just reported that plans to develop Idaho's next SCORTP (2011-2015) are moving rapidly. IDPR intends to regionalize the planning process, reflecting the regional boundaries of IDPR's Board representation. Each Board member will work with a team to identify issues through local public meetings. SCORTP goals and objectives will be developed responsive to these issues. IRTI will have a role in SCORTP, though its exact nature is not yet clear.

IDPR will request NPS-administered funds to help with the SCORTP process. IDC will help with a statewide study to determine the economic value of various kinds of recreationists to Idaho (e.g. snowmobilers, anglers, hikers, etc.). Terry Heslin recommended that the study include an element to explore the value of Idaho's "quality of life"-- why people choose to live here, what people give up (economically) to live here, etc. Rick anticipates that such a study will be expensive. He will be looking for a doctoral candidate who would like to explore this for a thesis. It was suggested that developers of some of the "on-hold" resorts (e.g. Tamarack, Avimore, etc.) may be willing partners to help fund such a study.

Jim Keller reported that the Boise National Forest is conducting National Visitor Use Monitoring now. It's a visitor use/economic/satisfaction survey conducted every five years on each National Forest. Every third survey administered gathers economic data, which may be useful to SCORTP. Meggan Laxalt-Mackey reported that USFWS conducts similar studies on lands it manages.

OHV Travel Management

Terry Heslin reported that the Idaho Interagency Off-Highway Coordinating Committee (IICC) MOU will expire this calendar year, and will need to be renewed. Issues that the IICC has been working on include the new license plate requirements for trail vehicles resulting from passage of HB602 and grizzly bear habitat-OHV conflicts in Northern Idaho. Steve Frost reported that an IDPR website (http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/recreation/proposed_ohv_legislation.aspx) includes a fact sheet and FAQs associated with the new licensing requirements resulting from passage of HB602. Steve suggested that the Idaho Recreation Council may carry legislation in 2009 to "clean up" HB602; IDPR will not be drafting such legislation this year.

Terry announced that the BLM has released the Challis Field Office Travel Management Plan and it has been challenged. The BLM Owyhee Field Office is planning to release the Travel Management Plan for the Murphy Subregion in early 2009. Jim Keller reported that the FS Chief requires all National Forests to have travel plans with route designations in place by the end of 2009. At this time, implementation of this requirement, the OHV Rule, is the highest recreation priority on the Boise National Forest.

OHV Public Outreach Campaign

Jennifer Wernex reported that the OHV public outreach campaign, *Stay on Trails*, is now starting its fifth year. It has been modified and tweaked a bit each year. Jen observed that the message may need to morph again. The campaign has a 70% comprehension rate, as revealed by a recent survey. Vicky Runnoe inquired if there is a way to measure the impact of comprehension on behavior.

Jen is writing an ORMV grant proposal for campaign funding for years 5 and 6. Safety is a key element in the proposal and the campaign. Cecilia Seesholtz will be hosting a number of travel planning public meetings in the

near future, and will be interested to gauge public response to the campaign. It is to the credit of all involved with designing and implementing the campaign that neighboring states, including Nevada and Utah, soon will be using the same campaign.

Statewide Online Trail and Recreation Mapping Project

Steve Frost reported that progress on this project has been slow. The Idaho Department of Administration (IDA) has developed some very basic web architecture for the project. It can be viewed at <http://gis.idaho.gov/idahorecreation/>. Steve indicated that Google-earth and/or aerial photography may provide the base for the maps. The application/user interface will be developed using IDA's initial work. Development of the application may be contracted. Data sharing among agencies still needs to be formalized. After that is done, there will need to be significant "gap analysis", since there are trail designation/trail regulation differences across agency boundaries, even across various boundaries within agencies (e.g. Ranger District boundaries). Steve has funds to support this analysis. The IDPR Board expects the site to be useable this coming spring. Steve admits there is a lot of work to be done.

Recreation-tourism databases, websites, and information fulfillment

Karen Ballard reported that the visitidaho.org website now includes portals for Voluntourism in Idaho and Girlfriend Getaway packages. Soon, the Idaho kids and nature portal (*Be Outside*) will be included.

2009 Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism

Karen Ballard reported that planning for the 2009 conference has begun. Since the Governor cannot attend, the conference will not be referred to as the "Governor's Conference". However, the Governor's Take Pride in Idaho Awards for Recreation and Tourism will still be presented. Karen has met with Jane Kollmeyer, Sawtooth NF Supervisor, and some of her staff to begin planning. The conference is scheduled for May 5-8 in Sun Valley. There are plans to incorporate four tracks throughout the conference including these: sales and marketing, management, recreation, and sustainability. Karen notes that it would be helpful and practical for other related meetings to be scheduled in Sun Valley during the same week, especially on May 5. Karen welcomes recommendations for effective speakers who can address sustainability, trends, or generational diversity. There are opportunities to host "breakfast club" topics.

Idaho Campground Directory

The 2009 edition of the Idaho Campground Directory was published in October (130,000 copies) and shipped to each agency's list of recipients. Copies of the new Directories were distributed at the meeting.

Anne Chambers (via email) reported that all partners have been invoiced by IRVCA, except the BLM and FS. Terry Heslin indicated that the BLM will let partners know when to send invoices. Jim Keller said that the FS needs to amend existing agreements before invoices can be processed. Jim will let partners know when invoices should be sent.

Free Fishing Day

Vicky Runnoe reported that Free Fishing Day 2009 will be sponsored on Saturday, June 6. Free-Fishing *Weekend* hasn't been discussed recently.

Watchable Wildlife

Deniz Aygen will be replacing Sara Focht as Chair of the Watchable Wildlife (WW) Committee. Deniz will be working 8 months/year, rather than the 12 months/year that Sara served in the position. Due to reorganization at IDFG, the WW program will be part of the Conservation Sciences Division, not part of the Non-Game Division. The WW newsletter will be wholly dependent upon WW program funds, not subsidized by Non-Game funds, as in the past. WW has no new projects planned for 2009 at this time. However, the newsletter will continue to be published (more electronic issues and fewer hard copy issues) and the WW Committee will assist with planning and implementing the Snake River Birds of Prey Festival, scheduled for May 15-17 in Kuna.

Scenic Byway Brochure

Garry Young reported that Idaho received \$672,000 in federal fund Scenic Byway grants for 2008. Three of the four submitted projects were funded. The regional marketing project for six North Central Idaho Byways was not funded. Projects associated with corridor management plan implementation on the International Selkirk Loop and Western Heritage Historic Byway were funded partially. The statewide interpretive signage project was funded in full. Garry noted that there is \$50,000 available from the 2008 interpretive signage project. Folks with appropriate Byway interpretive projects and a 20% non-federal match should contact Garry soon.

The Scenic Byway Advisory Committee is working on putting together a package of 2009 grant proposals (to be expended in 2010). One such project is a YouTube video associated with Idaho Scenic Byways. A proposal for a new Scenic Byway is being discussed. It will include State Highways 75 and 93 and extend from Shoshone to Challis. Byway names being discussed are “Peaks to Craters,” but the Steering Group preferred “Taters to Craters!”

Idaho Children and Nature Network

Meggan Laxalt-Mackey reported that the Idaho Children and Nature Network (IDCNN) is growing and thriving with 66 different agencies/organizations/entities currently participating. The Governor may include reference to the *Be Outside* campaign in his State of State address as he urges Idahoans to enjoy their outdoors. In any case, there is a January 30 kick-off scheduled for the *Be Outside* campaign. It will include Governor and Mrs. Otter, and perhaps Barbara Morgan and Bob Kustra. It will take place in conjunction with Bald Eagle Days. In addition, Senator Crapo has agreed to draft an op-ed piece related to children in nature that will be published in January.

The *Be Outside* logo has been developed to be used somewhat like a “Good Housekeeping seal of approval” for outdoor activities for kids. Jennifer Wernex is developing protocols for use of the *Be Outside* logo by agencies, businesses, etc.

IDCNN is exploring specific metrics that will help measure effectiveness of the *Be Outside* campaign. Meggan anticipates that this will be a focused one-year campaign, at the least. There may be a need to establish a 501(c) 3 organization later, if the campaign outgrows what the agencies and the network can provide.

IDCNN decided not to endorse the “No Child Left Behind” legislation in order to retain the apolitical nature of the group.

IDCNN was awarded the Idaho Environmental Summit’s Outstanding Achievement Award for “making a difference in Idaho”. Congratulations to all whom are working to make the Network effective!

March 4 (as in “march forth”) will be Outside Day, “an escape to reality”, sponsored by TREE (Teens Restoring Earth’s Environment), and headed up by teacher Dick Jordan. TREE will officially launch the Outside Day website in January, but it is available now at <http://www.outsideday.org/6.html>. IDCNN is supporting this event.

IRTI FY2010 Budget

Anticipated needs for the FY2010 budget:

- Scenic Byways – Additional funds likely will be needed because, in addition to the statewide brochure, regional brochures are needed. The Idaho Travel Council may be able to help with a grant, although the grant fund is down 1% over last year. (However, the fund was up 7% last year over the previous year.) There also may be a savings to balance the additional need because there are 90,000 Scenic Byway brochures remaining due to less distribution resulting from the closed Visitor Center this year.
- Outfitter and Guide GIS project – This project will need \$4,000-\$6,000 to provide ongoing data maintenance and updates.
- Free Fishing Day – The same level of funding as 2009 will be needed.
- Watchable Wildlife - The same level of funding as 2009 will be needed.

New Business

Karen Ballard reported that the Division of Tourism will be developing an online community to help better understand Canadian visitors to Idaho. Canadians make up 5% of Idaho's visitation. If you wish to pose specific questions to this audience, please get them to Karen.

Lane Packwood was hired recently to serve as the Director of IDC's Division of Economics.

Date for Next IRTI Steering Group Meeting

Tuesday, May 5

Sun Valley Lodge, Sun Valley, ID

###

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

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Terry Heslin 208-373-3836 terry_heslin@blm.gov
*Robin Fehlau 208-373-3825 robin_fehlau@blm.gov

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

*Krystal Clair 208-383-2211 kclair@pn.usbr.gov
*Scott Short 208-383-2218 sshort@pn.usbr.gov

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

*Karen Ballard 208-334-2470 karen.ballard@tourism.idaho.gov
Diane Norton 208-334-2470 diane.norton@tourism.idaho.gov

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

+Bart Butterfield 208-287-2722 bbutterfield@idfg.idaho.gov
*Mike Keckler 208-287-2870 mkeckler@idfg.idaho.gov
+Vicky Runnoe 208-287-2874 vrunnoe@idfg.idaho.gov
Sara Focht 208-287-2750 sfocht@idfg.idaho.gov
+Deniz Aygen 208-287-2750 daygen@idfg.idaho.gov

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

*Craig Thompson 208-334-0260 cthompson@idl.idaho.gov

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

+Steve Frost 208-514-2410 sfrost@idpr.idaho.gov
*+Rick Just 208-514-2480 rjust@idpr.idaho.gov
*Dean Sangrey 208-514-2260 dsangrey@idpr.idaho.gov
*+Jennifer Wernex 208-514-2254 jwernex@idpr.idaho.gov
+Troy Elmore 208-514-2411 telmore@idpr.idaho.gov

IDAHO OUTFITTERS AND GUIDES ASSOCIATION

*Grant Simonds 208-342-1438 gsimonds@cableone.net

IDAHO OUTFITTERS AND GUIDES LICENSING BOARD

*Jake Howard 208-327-7380 jhoward@oglb.state.id.us

IDAHO RV CAMPGROUNDS ASSOCIATION

* + Anne Chambers 208-345-6009 anne@rvidaho.org

IDAHO TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

*+Garry Young 208-334-8214 garry.young@itd.idaho.gov
*Gary McElheney (Division of Aeronautics) 208-334-8893 gary.mcelheney@itd.idaho.gov

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

*Doug Neighbor 208-527-3257, ext. 101 doug_neighbor@nps.gov

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

*+Meggan Laxalt-Mackey 208-378-5243 meggan_laxalt@fws.gov

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

*Jim Keller 208-373-4142 jbkeller@fs.fed.us
*Cecilia Seesholtz 208-373-4102 cseesholtz@fs.fed.us

IDAHO RECREATION AND TOURISM INITIATIVE

Vicki Jo Lawson 208-514-2262 vlawson@idpr.idaho.gov

IRTI WEBPAGES are located at: <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/aboutus/irti.aspx>

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