



**IRTI Steering Committee
August 31, 2010 Meeting Minutes
IDPR Headquarters, Boise, ID**

Participants

Brett Adler, Boise Rec Connection
Deniz Aygen, IDFG
Karen Ballard, ID Division of Tourism
Tom Bicak, Canyon County Parks, Recreation, and Waterways
Bart Butterfield, IDFG
Anne Chambers, ID RV Campgrounds Association
Krystal Clair, BOR
Robin Fehlau, BLM
Maureen Gresham, ITD
Jamie Heinzerling, Boise City Parks
Danelle Highfill, USFS
Jake Howard, IOGLB
Kevin Johnston, University of Idaho
Vicki Jo Lawson, IRTI
Meggan Laxalt-Mackey, USFWS
Doug Neighbor, NPS
Diane Norton, ID Division of Tourism
Jeff Reavis, BOR
Vicky Runnoe, IDFG
Pamela Thibeau, IDPR
Connie Vaughn, IDPR
Garry Young, ITD

IRTI BUSINESS

Report on status of new IRTI partners

Discussion at the last IRTI Steering Committee meeting resulted in a request to solicit new members. Vicki Lawson reported that invitations were extended to ID Chambers of Commerce Association, ID Recreation and Parks Association, Boise City Parks, and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The Steering Committee welcomed Jamie Heinzerling from the ID Recreation and Parks Association and Boise City Parks. Further discussions will be held with USACE folks and representatives from Idaho's power companies.

IRTI Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Vicki Lawson distributed the most current version of the IRTI MOU, which has been reviewed by ITD, IRVCA, and IDPR, and includes their revisions. Kevin Johnston requested that the University of Idaho be included as a signatory. Vicki agreed to include that and to send the edited version to the Steering Committee. She requested that Committee members engage their agencies' grants and agreements specialists to review and **provide suggested revisions to the MOU prior to December 7**, the next Steering Committee meeting.

FY2010 IRTI Budget

The final, although not yet signed, FY2011 IRTI Budget and Operating Plan was distributed. Vicki Lawson asked to meet with each of the agency executives within the next couple of weeks to get their signatures so that the budget and operating plan can be implemented. Vicki will distribute the final budgets as soon as they are signed.

IRTI Annual Accomplishment Report due date

The Committee agreed to a **November 1 due date for annual accomplishment reports**. This will allow Vicki to complete the report by early December. Vicki will send an email to each of the working group leads with this outline for the report:

- What specific things did the working group accomplish in FY2010?
- What specific progress was made on the project?
- Why does the project matter?
- How does the project benefit Idahoans?
- What changes, efforts, and accomplishments are anticipated in FY2011?
- Anything else that the working group would like agency directors, media folks, and taxpayers to know about the project.

Meggan Laxalt-Mackey urged that the report be strategic in its messaging and include a news release. Meggan offered to review the report and news release before they are posted and distributed. Vicki happily accepted the offer.

PROJECT UPDATES

Idaho Campground Directory (Directory)

Anne Chambers reported that only 4,000 of last year's 110,000 Directories are left. Another 110,000 copies of the updated Directory are being printed and will be available to distribute at the largest annual RV trade show, scheduled for October in Pomona, CA. Anne reported that ad sales went well this year. She urged partners to review the Directory distribution/shipment lists to ensure that the correct numbers of new Directories are shipped to the correct addresses. Ann observed that RV camping continued strong throughout the summer in Idaho, and no slow-down is anticipated.

Scenic Byways

Garry Young reported that in FY2011, ITD will be printing 50,000 regional Byway brochures and reprinting 50,000 statewide ("Taking the Scenic Route") brochures. The statewide brochure will be updated in FY2012 because a new Byway (Hwy. 52), is anticipated, making it Idaho's 31st Byway. The Scenic Byway Advisory Committee (SBAC) has established a subcommittee to determine what to include in the Byway videos being recorded this coming year. The SBAC will be developing specs for the contract for which the Division of Tourism will take the lead.

Be Outside, Idaho!

Vicky Runnoe reported that this project's name has changed from the Idaho Children and Nature Network to *Be Outside, Idaho!* to accommodate a request from the National Children and Nature Network. It seemed like a logical change given that the public information campaign has been called *Be Outside, Idaho*, since its inception. The *Be Outside* organization has been busy:

- In May, it engaged in a facilitated strategic planning session, and has produced a 2-year strategic plan. From that, the group also is establishing operating guidelines.
- A *Be Outside* chapter is being established in Idaho Falls.
- *Be Outside* representatives will be included in this autumn's Idaho teacher in-service trainings, the annual meeting of the ID Association of School Boards, and the tri-state Parks and Recreation Association meeting.
- The health community is taking the lead on promoting an "UNPLUGGED" week aimed at children. *Be Outside* will be a major participant. Maureen Gresham suggested that "UNPLUGGED" week be scheduled during national bicycle week. She will follow up with Vicky regarding the specific dates.

Outfitter and Guide GIS project

Bart Butterfield reported that another application for the outfitter and guide GIS project is being beta tested that will allow IDFG to manage only the spatial layer, allow the other partners to manage their specific information, and continue to allow all partners to access all information. Information relevant to rafting outfitters is now available to tourists on visitidaho.org; land-based outfitter information will be added soon. Information relevant to hunting outfitters is now available on IDFG's hunt planner site. Jake Howard emphasized that IDFG has done a great job creating this useful site for all of the partners to use.

Recreation-Tourism Databases, Websites, and Information Fulfillment

Karen Ballard reported that the www.VisitIdaho.com website will be getting a facelift, making it easier to find on the web. The changes also will provide more emphasis on Idaho's Scenic Byways. Tourism inquiries are down by 1% this year over last, but unique visitors to the website are up by 7%. The *Adventures in Living* campaign continues to be successful. It has driven about 50,000 people to the site, and the recent contests-with-prizes have attracted 400-600 contest participants each week. Idaho's 2% bed-tax was up 6% last month, over the same month last year. Also, a disproportionately high number of Idaho map requests have come from Canadians this year. Overall, Karen noted that with fewer advertising dollars available in 2010, product exposure and customer responsiveness have remained steady.

Doug Neighbor noted that visitation to Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve is up 10% this year, and that visitation to Yellowstone National Park is breaking all records this year.

Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism Conference (ICORT)

Diane Norton reported that the 2010 ICORT participant survey results are posted at http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=R1RqVYAE4LzAGmH2EoQa5nrYAhTfRK0EPjlvkaXhj0_3d. She is analyzing the results and beginning to plan for the 2011 ICORT, scheduled for May 3-5 in Lewiston. She is seeking conference sponsors, such as Trip Advisor. Vicki Lawson reported that Liz Close, FS Intermountain Region Recreation Director, will be in Boise next week to discuss if and how FS may be involved in next year's ICORT.

Free Fishing Day

Vicky Runnoe reported that Free Fishing Day was a very popular event in 2010, and is scheduled for June 11 in 2011. IDFG's five fishing trailers were well-used during Free Fishing Day.

State Visitor Centers

Three visitor centers located near Idaho state boundaries--Huetter, Cherry Creek, and Snake River View--are funded in part by ITD (bricks and mortar maintenance) and by ID Division of Tourism (operations). The Centers are operated by volunteers recruited by local Chambers of Commerce. IDPR has helped coordinate and support these operations in the past, but is no longer able to. Kevin Johnston offered to engage some of his graduate students at the University of Idaho to consider how to improve the Visitor Center situation, given the limited resources. Vicki Lawson offered to draft a white paper on the current Visitor Center situation, with the help of Karen Ballard.

Watchable Wildlife (WW)

Deniz Aygen reported that the second bighorn sheep viewing station near Challis opened in April. The Idaho Chapter for North American Wild Sheep, Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association, along with 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 the viewing station. The station is similar to the Red Rock site north of Salmon that was completed in October 2008 that includes an informational kiosk and viewing scope.

Deniz also reported that 87 signs keyed to specific sites along the Idaho Birding Trail have been fabricated and distributed to respective land managers. The signs are the result of a grant from ITD/ Idaho Scenic Byways Program to install the signs at locations along various Byways within the state. The grant provided the funding to purchase the signs, and the WW Committee provided an in-kind match for hours worked on the project. Deniz urges land managers to send her photos of the signs in the environment once they have been installed. Deniz will monitor sales of the Idaho Birding Trail book to learn if the keyed signs impact sales. Karen Ballard offered to add the birding sites to the Idaho Visitor Guide. There are another 80 birding sites that could be signed if funds are available. These sites are not located along Byways.

The WW Committee, *Be Outside* partners, IDFG, BLM, USFWS, Golden Eagle Audubon, Wild Birds Unlimited, and Nature Conservancy began a pilot bird watching and feeding program during the 2009-2010 school year in local elementary and high schools. Equipment, books, optics, and seed were provided for the entire school year. In turn, the classrooms recorded bird data and participated in Project Feeder Watch. The pilot year was a huge success and the coming school year has more schools signed up, for a total of 11. Deniz hopes eventually to be able to include elementary schools and high schools across all of Idaho in this program. Karen offered to provide Deniz with some grant opportunities specific to such an effort.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan

Connie Vaughn reported that a framework for the 2012-2016 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP) has been developed and that an \$85,000 grant to support it has been submitted to the NPS. These are the steps that IDPR will take in leading the SCORTP effort for Idaho:

1. 2010 November – December: Idaho Park and Recreation Board members will host regional meetings with elected officials and their staff, key outdoor recreation opinion leaders, recreation providers (representatives from IRTI partner agencies), regional Travel Council representatives, and outdoor recreation advisory committee members. IDPR staff will lead a process at each meeting to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for outdoor recreation in the region and statewide. Results will be ranked by region, and then aggregated into a statewide report.
2. 2011 January – March: IDPR will develop a web-based public participation tool to allow citizens to promote and demote ideas in the statewide report and to generate new ideas.
3. 2011 July: IDPR will purchase a statewide recreation demand survey from the Forest Service National Survey on Recreation and the Environment. This will be a continuation of decades of surveys done by researchers at the University of Georgia.
4. 2011 January - March: IDPR will survey city and county recreation providers to determine needs of their constituents
5. 2011 January – August: IDPR will work with BSU and University of Idaho to survey the economic impact of camping statewide, state parks, boating, snowmobiling, and off-highway vehicles. Analysis is due by December. Karen Ballard indicated that IDC will provide \$45,000 for this economic impact study.
6. 2011 January – March: IDPR will facilitate an update of the state’s GIS-based Outdoor Recreation Facility Inventory.
7. 2010 December - 2011 December: The IRTI partners will monitor and advise the SCORPT process. Partners will meet four times during the year to do this.
8. 2011 April - December: IDPR will analyze data, draft and produce report. The SCORTP document will be available on-line; a few hard copies will be printed.
9. 2011 January – June: A wetlands priority plan will be developed, but a partner to do this has not yet been identified.

NEW BUSINESS, OTHER BUSINESS, AND UPDATES

Idaho Oregon Snake River Water Trail

Tom Bicak, director of Canyon County Parks, Recreation, and Waterways (thepark@canyonco.org; 208.440.4600) briefed the Steering Committee on efforts over the past year and a half to develop the Idaho Oregon Snake River Water Trail, which uses the Snake River to connect people with its stories. When completed, the Trail will be 206 miles long, extending from Three Island Crossing State Park to Farewell Bend State Park, passing through Elmore, Owyhee, Ada, Canyon, Payette, and Washington Counties in Idaho, and Malheur and Baker Counties in Oregon.. Canyon County is taking the planning lead, supported by NPS planning-assistance funding. When completed, Idaho Power will manage the river access facilities. Over the next few months, public meetings will be held in various communities along the Trail to continue to engage the public in a working framework to implement and manage the project.

First Boise Rec Fest: Successes and Lessons

Brett Adler, executive director of Boise Rec Connection (brett@boiserecfest.com, 208.412.9095) reported that the first Boise Rec Fest was a success. There were 86 booths, 32 workshops, 200 volunteers, and thousands of participants (though difficult to estimate). Brett indicated that the Boise Rec Fest was able to meet all of its financial obligations, except his salary. Planning for Boise Rec Fest Year 2 is underway. Some changes are anticipated, including: the physical lay-out of the Fest; addition of a skiing simulator, a climbing wall, scheduled races, additional tournaments, and other things to engage participants. Brett explained that the Fest offers “delayed pay-offs” for tourism in Idaho, in that Fest participants can learn about other Idaho recreation locations and events, and visit and participate in them later.

Proposal for Idaho Recreation Website

Brett Adler discussed a vision to create a website for recreation in Idaho, integrated with, but not duplicating, the www.VisitIdaho.com website. He emphasized opportunities for phone apps with such a site, tied to local recreation

organizations and calendars. Brett will work with the Rec Connection folks to further develop this vision, and may come back to the Steering Group with a more proposal in the future.

Date for Next IRTI Steering Group Meeting

Tuesday, December 7, 1 pm to 4:30 pm

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Headquarters, 5657 Warm Springs Avenue, Boise, ID

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Current Steering Committee Members (*), Working Group Leads (+), and Other Contacts

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