



Sandra F. Mitchell, Executive Director

501 Baybrook Court
P.O. Box 70001, Boise, ID 83707-0101
tel: (208) 424-3870 fax: (208) 424-3850
e-mail: smitchel@alscott.com

July 25, 2013

The IDPR Board Chairman Crimmins and Board Members:

This letter is in response to your recent IDPR Board decision to continue using some 1.5 million dollars of RV registration funds for IDPR operational costs.

The intent of the RV community when legislation was originally passed was to have the funds spent through the grant process with the involvement of the advisory committee. Since 2010, however, that has not always been the case. The manner in which the RV fund has been used recently is disconcerting to recreation enthusiasts who pursued that dedicated funding legislation in good faith, expecting that the intent of the legislation would be honored.

What is worse is the written assurances provided by the IDPR Director that the "bail-out" initially provided by the RV community of up to \$2,000,000 annually would be temporary in nature. We were told by the Director and the IDPR Board that the last diversion would be in 2015 and each year it would be reduced by \$500,000. At the last IDPR Board meeting, ignoring their prior commitment, the board voted to extend the diversion indefinitely.

We recognize the difficulty that IDPR faces with regard to limited general fund dollars, and the goal for IDPR to be a self-sufficient agency. To that end, we believe we have a solution that could benefit all parties involved. IRC suggests a modest increase to non-resident camping fees over resident camping fees at Idaho State Parks. The following are a few of the reasons for this recommendation:

- The infrastructure of these parks was paid for almost exclusively by IDPR residents (RV funds, Idaho's LWCF allocation, general tax revenue), yet non-residents get to enjoy them at no additional cost. This amounts to a camping trip subsidized for non-residents at the expense of Idaho residents.
- Residents are having a difficult time getting into the "premium" parks they paid to build, and now pay to maintain.
- The market will bear it. A \$5-\$10 increase in daily camping fees will NOT turn visitors away. Camping fees represent a very small portion of the overall cost of a camping trip, yet could generate considerable income for IDPR.
- The IDPR Board made a commitment to seek new revenue sources to eliminate their dependency upon the RV fund. As part of IDPR Board's motion to continue using RV funds to cover operational costs on an on-going basis, the Board also committed itself to finding ways to wean the agency off of those funds. While the previous commitments made to the RV enthusiasts weren't met, we'd hope this commitment will be.

The IRC would like to offer its full support to any legislative action or policy directives to this end. We will be happy to provide our support not only in word, but in deed during any opportunities for public testimony. **All we ask, is that any additional revenue generation be FIRST utilized to remove the IDPR's dependency upon these dedicated RV funds. Considering the stated desire of all parties to do so, we would consider it a win-win to pursue that goal.**

We welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with IDPR on this matter, and look forward to repairing the fractured relationship in which we currently find ourselves.

Sincerely,

Sandra Mitchell

A proposal for additional park funding for your consideration:

Most of the parks have RV sites with full hookups available. With full hookups (which includes sewer), there is no need to utilize the dump station. Unless the park includes partial hookup sites, water/electric or just electric, there is no need for a dump station. Therefore the primary usage of the park would be for travelers or locals who utilize the dump only. It would be feasible to install a system that allows for a dumping charge in these types of scenarios with the paying site users entitled to use it for free (a coin or code) in the case of partial hookups.

Other scenarios encountered include the "pay to dump" automated system that allows only paid customers to dump, these are usually not at parks but are city dumps.

Dump site maintenance and cost is also dependent on the size and nature of the reservoir. Smaller reservoirs/septic tanks need to be emptied more often. A large septic tank in open land might very well handle the traffic it receives without frequent cleanout.

We believe that a \$3 or \$5 charge for dumping is a discretionary decision based on necessity or the lack of it. If the dump is free of charge, the decision may be to dump whether it is necessary or not. If the dump has a charge connected to it, one may choose to wait until it becomes necessary or seek a free dump in another location.

To: IDPR Board
From: IRC and Good Sam
Date: July 30, 2013

A Summary of the Recent History of RV Fund which began in 1982:

- In 2010 because of a shortfall in Parks budget, the IDPR Board voted to take two million per year for up to 5 years for operation and maintenance of State Parks. The RV Advisory Committee reluctantly agreed.
- The RV committee through IRC was assured by the IDPR Board and the Director that the amount would be one million five hundred thousand per year and the last diversion would be in 2015. They also committed to reducing the amount diverted by five hundred thousand each year.
- In 2011, the JFAC Committee proposed a direct transfer of three million from the RV fund to IDPR. This money was for specific projects including construction and maintenance projects and once again, the grant process was ignored.
- In 2013, an additional one million seven hundred thousand was diverted from the RV fund through the budgeting process to upgrade Farragut State Park's sewer system. Again, the grant process was not used to secure the funding.
- In April of 2013, the IDPR Board voted to "continue to use up to \$1.5 million in RV funds for park operation on an ongoing basis" in spite of the assurances we had from the board and the Director that 2015 would be that last year these funds would be diverted from the RV Fund.
- We have been told there is a proposal under consideration that would dedicate up to 40% of the RV grant funds yearly for operation and maintenance of State Parks and RV facilities. As we understand the proposal, it would be done legislatively.