



**IDPR Board Meeting
December 1, 2021
Director Susan Buxton Report**

Fall travel started right after our August Board Meeting in Wallace. I was able to spend several hours touring McCroskey State Park and met Joan Kerttu. She has been a seasonal worker for IDPR for 13 years after a successful career working for IDL as a forester. It is humbling to attract people like Joan to work for IDPR.

DMVs and Registration

The Idaho Transportation Department invited me to fly to Salmon on August 24th to meet with the Idaho County Assessors, to explain how we all need to serve the public by making the sale of the Passport, Off Highway Vehicle (OHV), boat and snowmobile stickers available at DMVs. The group was very amenable to our request, and we had a fantastic flight over and back on the State plane. Alberto Gonzales and his staff, and the ITD Board have been very supportive of IDPR. We started 2021 with 11 County DMVs selling IDP stickers, we now have over 30.



Joan at McCrosky



Alberto Gonzales - ITD



Lucky Peak-Discovery Park and Sandy Point



Lake Cascade State Park – Sugarloaf Campground

Visitation

When visiting over a few of our facilities in September, it is evident why visitation waned a little later in the summer and fall. The drought lowered reservoir levels early this year, the fire danger and smoke brought fewer visitors. Fortunately, many boat ramps were still in use even when the marinas and docks were out of the water. The public continued to seek outdoor recreation wherever possible. Our visitation, system wide through August is 5.8 million. Visitation remains high.



Rockland



Tour of East Rock Creek

Legislative and Agency Outreach

To illustrate the impact on Idaho’s natural and outdoor resources, Sen. Dave Lent, Rep. Randy Armstrong, and Power County Commissioner, Delane Anderson, invited us to visit East Fork Rock Creek near Rockland, about 30 minutes south of Massacre Rocks State Park. This is a beautiful spring fed creek, stocked with trout that sees intense camping use well into shoulder seasons. There is also an OHV trail nearby that attracts our users. The property is IDL endowment land that had been managed by Fish and Game, then Power County Waterways and now IDL is looking for some options. Several weeks later, we met with Dustin Miller, Director of IDL to discuss uses of IDL land in conjunction with IDPR in this area, McCall (adjacent to Ponderosa State Park), Priest Lake and others. The thought is to better monetize endowment lands managed by IDL for recreation. I have

also met with Ed Schriever, Director of Fish and Game to discuss how we better work together to provide camping and revenue for our collective agency operations.

We have fantastic colleagues on the Natural Resources Cabinet and had a directors meeting on October 5 at the Department of Agriculture, to discuss our mutual challenges. Governor Little put IDPR in his Economic Development Cabinet and held that Cabinet meeting at IDPR headquarters on October 20. There was a high-level discussion of how the state and its agencies are integral in the state's economic status and growth.



Troy Elmore sandbagging the NASPD Golf Tournament

NASPD

Betty Mills and Troy Elmore accompanied me to the National Association of Park Directors (NASPD) annual conference in Pennsylvania the week of September 7-10. These meetings are so helpful because we met NPS, FS, State Directors and their staff, vendors and others who generously spent time with us and provided ideas and encouragement for IDPR.



Dwoshak State Park – Lori Wolff and Alex Adams



Jeff Smith – Hells Gate State Park

Lewiston, Dworshak and Hells Gate Trip

We continue to travel to our facilities statewide and meet with other agency heads. Lori Wolff, DHR Administrator and Alex Adams, DFM Administrator went to Dworshak State Park and Hells Gate State Park with Adam Zaragoza and me. Jeff Smith, Hells Gate Assistant Manager, explained the sewer system, irrigation, and increased visitation issues. We also looked at the Hells Gate Marina and discussed the impact on construction due to the delays by our federal partner on the cost of the improvements.

We went to Dworshak and met with Manager John Seely, Ranger Jake Davis, and Randy Rausin, a fantastic seasonal. We saw the new paving at Freeman Creek and the repair/upgrade to the water system. We also showed them other needs at Dworshak, mainly the lodge and Marina. IDPR staff does a wonderful job explaining the complexities of their work in the parks and in the field. Having them available at a moment's notice to address anything that arises in our 24/7 facilities is impressive and necessary to protect lives and our state parks.

While in Lewiston, we had dinner with President Cynthia Pemberton, at Lewis Clark State College. We discussed the increased need for an internship/apprenticeship program to bring students into state employment and to provide educational opportunities for students in our state parks and recreation facilities. We are working on that policy as it benefits all state agencies.



Masked up in Pullman



Leadership Meeting at Ponderosa

With my first 6 months as the Director, we held a leadership retreat at Ponderosa the week of October 25th, where we discussed the vision, we'd like to see for IDPR. Chairman Beckley and Nate Fisher (Governor's Office) were able to join us for a portion of the meeting. Their insight was helpful for the planning of the region meetings.

The week of November 2, 2021, we held the Headquarters meeting in Boise with some in person trainings and awards. We left the next day for Coeur d'Alene. Board Member Eastwood joined us for parts of both days meetings. His participation was helpful because the staff appreciated his Board insights. The South and East Region meeting was combined in Twin Falls the week of November 9th. Board Member Roach met with the group and did a wonderful job introducing himself and describing his vision for IDPR.



Janet Gallimore at Harriman State Park



Mark Eliot and Kyle Babbitt at Harriman State Park

Idaho State Historical Society

Jan Gallimore, Executive Director of the Idaho State Historical Society, visited Massacre Rocks and Harriman State Parks with me to look at our historical/cultural interpretation with the idea to help us update those displays and preserve the collections. We will work more with her staff in the coming months.



South/East Region Meeting-Board Member Roach



Heyburn State Park – Benewah Lake with Nate Blackburn

Meetings with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe

During the North Region meeting, Troy Elmore and I met with representatives of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe at the Rocky Point Lodge at Heyburn State Park with Manager Nate Blackburn. We were also able to discuss our partnership with the Tribe at Old Mission.



HQ Meeting



Troy fixing the state car



Housing Concerns



Leadership Group at Ponderosa

Summary

We are implementing the FY22 budget and working with DFM, the Governor's Office and many Legislators to pass the FY23 budget once it is released at the Governor's State of the State address. With housing becoming scarce and unaffordable across the state, not just in the Treasure Valley, we are being innovative on how to increase salaries and address housing for employees. Housing at our parks is customary and essential due to the 24/7 nature of our business. The remote locations, need for first response to protect life, limb and our state assets makes housing for employees a unique but necessary investment.

All in all, showing off our recreation and park programs and facilities has been fantastic. I am happy to say the Department is doing well and is rich with experienced, positive, and efficient staff.