

Meeting the Challenge

The 2010-2014 Strategic Plan for the
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

2011 Update





Mission
*To improve the
quality of life in Idaho
through outdoor
recreation and
resource stewardship.*



C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor
State of Idaho



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The Planning Process

The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) produces a strategic plan every five years, as required by state statute. A strategic plan sets an organization's direction and guides its allocation of resources.

As a state agency it is incumbent on us to consult with our constituents in producing a plan. IDPR has a variety of ways built into its operations to receive public comments on an ongoing basis. We make contact information for key agency personnel and citizen board members available on our website, including live email links to each. The regularly scheduled public meetings of the Idaho Park and Recreation Board are widely announced and agenda items and minutes of past meetings are available on the agency website. Customer satisfaction comment cards are available in each of our parks and we survey customers randomly in every park each year.

While these routine avenues of communication provide the agency with day-to-day customer feedback, we used two additional surveys to inform the development of this plan. The agency surveyed IDPR employees and the general public to get a better sense of the perceived value of the agency's existing services. The results of those surveys are in the appendix of this plan and are referenced throughout.

Performance measures developed during this process are described and tracked annually in the Agency Profile document sent to the Division of Financial Management each September, as well as in the annual update to the strategic plan.

Updated information as of June 30, 2010 is highlighted in blue.

Mandate

Idaho Code Chapter 67-1903 requires that "Each state agency shall develop and submit to the division of financial management a comprehensive strategic plan for the major divisions and core functions of that agency." The statute further specifies that plans cover not less than four years. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR), which chose to cover a five-year period in its strategic plan, has been updating its 2006-2010 plan annually as required by statute. A new strategic plan for the agency is due July 1, 2010.

The purpose for strategic planning, as outlined in Idaho code is to:

- (1) Improve state agency accountability to state citizens and lawmakers;
- (2) Increase the ability of the legislature to assess and oversee agency performance;
- (3) Assist lawmakers with policy and budget decisions; and
- (4) Increase the ability of state agencies to improve agency management and service delivery and assess program effectiveness.

Vision

The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation lives up to the trust of Idahoans by carefully maintaining facilities, practicing wise resource stewardship and striving to understand the recreational needs of citizens. We promote ethical behavior, safe practices, healthy lifestyles and the sharpening of outdoor skills. While recognizing private property rights the agency protects access to public lands. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation continues its role as a leader in outdoor recreation through partnerships, innovation and good work.

Goals and Objectives

The 2010-2014 strategic plan goal development began with the creation of Idaho Park and Recreation Board Goals in January, 2007. The Board revisited those in 2008 and 2009, modifying them when goals were achieved and agency needs changed. They were updated for 2010-2014 in February, 2010. In addition to Board Goals, the results of employee and public surveys in 2010 were considered in the development of the agency's goals.

Focus on core responsibilities

- Consider the day-to-day management of our legislatively authorized programs and parks our highest priority.
- Maintain and operate existing facilities to protect the State's investment in outdoor recreation.
- Maintain communication with the public and partners about outdoor recreation opportunities and issues.
- Identify what outdoor recreation programs and facilities are needed by the public and determine the best way to see that they are provided.
- Maintain the highest quality of service possible with available funds.
- Enhance day-to-day resources through volunteer recruitment.
- Provide education, mediation and regulatory programs to enhance user opportunities and experiences.
- Protect and improve public access to outdoor recreation statewide.

While protecting park resources maximize revenue throughout the system

- Integrate park business plans and marketing plans, focusing on revenue development.
- Implement a statewide park sign program.

Develop a dedicated funding source to support state park operations

- Work with constituent groups and elected officials to identify an appropriate funding source.

Achieving our Goals

As described previously, strategic plan goals and objectives were developed from Idaho Park and Recreation Board goals, an agency wide employee survey and a statewide citizen survey. The agency believes the goals and objectives are a fair reflection of the outdoor recreation needs of Idaho citizens and, assuming the availability of adequate financial resources, are within the capability of the agency.

This plan will be distributed to all agency employees and will be available to the general public. The goals and objectives will be incorporated into individual employee work plans as appropriate. Performance measures will be tracked and reported annually to the Division of Financial Management. Annual reports will be available to the public enabling them to track progress the agency is making.

The following pages describe agency programs and initiatives and how the goals, objectives and performance measures developed in this planning process will be implemented. That implementation is dependent, in part, on external factors.

That old saying about best laid plans is a recognition that much lies outside of our control. Knowing this, we asked agency staff to identify threats that could significantly affect the achievement of goals and objectives. They were:

- Uncertain funding, no dedicated fund state parks (83% agreement)
- Lack of Legislative support (78% agreement)
- Not enough staff to perform the job (78% agreement)

External forces beyond agency control identified in the 2006-2010 strategic plan also still apply:

- State and National Economy
- Weather Extremes Affecting Park Attendance
- Natural Disasters
- Floods
- Fires
- Earthquakes
- Extreme Increase in Fuel Prices
- Acts of Terrorism

Authority

In 1965, the Idaho State Legislature enacted legislation creating the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR). The legislation reads, in part:

It is the intent of the Legislature that the Department of Parks and Recreation shall formulate and put into execution a long range, comprehensive plan and program for the acquisition, leasing, planning, protection, operation, maintenance, development and wise use of areas of scenic beauty, recreational utility, historic, archeological or scientific interest, to the end that the health, happiness, recreational opportunities and wholesome enjoyment of life of the people may be further encouraged.

Goal 1: Focus on core responsibilities

Objective:

Consider the day-to-day management of our legislatively authorized programs and parks our highest priority.

Performance Measure:

Keep our legislatively authorized programs and parks open to the public.

Benchmarks:

Keep 30 state parks open to the public to the extent that budget allows.

Operate recreation programs for snowmobiles, motorbikes, ATVs, RVs, boats and cross-country skiing.

Operate a registration program for snowmobiles, motorbikes, ATVs and boats.

Keeping parks and programs operating is the agency's highest priority. In previous years this was simply a given and remained unstated. The budget crisis facing the State of Idaho in 2009 necessarily brought it to the forefront. That fall, along with other cutbacks, the Idaho Park and Recreation Board had voted to return management of Dworshak State Park the US Army Corps of engineers. That effectively closed the park because the Corps was unable to resume management.

On February 3, 2010, after much public opposition to the Dworshak decision, the Idaho Park and Recreation Board voted unanimously on a motion that stated: "Provided we are not putting our users, staff or facilities at risk of injury or damage, IDPR will keep all parks open and operate at the highest quality possible with available funding." Within those bounds, IDPR will make every effort to keep parks open during the life of this plan. Doing so will require demonstrated success in reaching Strategic Plan Goal 2 and 3.

Objective:

Maintain and operate existing facilities to protect the State's investment in outdoor recreation.

Performance Measure:

A level of maintenance consistent with a positive visitor experience.

Benchmark:

A systemwide overall park condition rating of 90.

Each summer IDPR asks randomly selected customers in each of our parks to rate their satisfaction with certain park characteristics and facilities in influencing their recreational experience. A systemwide rating of 90 in the category "overall park condition" is the benchmark for this objective.

Objective:

Maintain communication with the public and partners about outdoor recreation opportunities and issues

Performance Measure:

A high level of interest in IDPR programs as indicated by website use.

Benchmark:

600,000 unique website users annually

The IDPR website received more than 670,000 unique visitors in FY2010, each spending an average of about 4 minutes on the site. More than 60,000 of those visitors went on to our reservation website. IDPR and the Idaho Department of Commerce share databases so that the many recreation websites offered by the two agencies feature up-to-date public and private sector lodging and campground information.

Goal 1: Focus on Core Responsibilities

Objective:

Identify what outdoor recreation programs and facilities are needed by the public and determine the best way to see that they are provided.

Performance Measures:

A high level of alignment of user needs with grant criteria.

Assure that all grant applicants statewide receive service commensurate with their needs.

Benchmarks:

An approved Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) in the 2012 SCORP.

Staff the grants section at a level that is meeting customer needs.

Idaho’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP) is an over-arching, multi-agency plan approved by the governor and the National Park Service. One element of that five-year plan is the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP), which identifies outdoor recreation needs regionally in Idaho and is the basis for the development of IDPR grant criteria. The purpose of OPSP is to assure that grant requests meet the needs of each region.

Our State and Federal Grant Section manages various outdoor recreation grant programs for the agency. In 2010, the staff of four provided technical assistance to more than 200 grant applicants, agencies and local communities that resulted in the granting of about \$5 million. [The following table shows the funding distribution by program.](#)

Grant Program	Funds Awarded
RV Program	\$1,443,016
Waterways Improvement	\$904,254
Recreation Trails Program	\$1,498,731
Off Road Motor Vehicle Program	\$400,000
Motorbike Program	\$456,875
Recreational Road and Bridge Fund	\$273,427
TOTAL	\$4,976,303

Objective:

Maintain the highest quality of park experience possible with available funds.

Performance Measure:

A high level of satisfaction with cleanliness and functionality of state parks.

Benchmark:

A Park CSI of 90.

One of the most important aspects of managing our day-to-day programs is to assure that customers are satisfied with their experience. IDPR encourages customers in our parks to let us know how we’re doing by providing customer comment cards that can be sent straight to the agency director.

That opportunity helps us correct immediate concerns. To uncover emergent problems, we proactively ask customers to rate their experience in our park.

Each summer IDPR asks randomly selected customers in each of our parks to rate their satisfaction with certain park characteristics and facilities in influencing their recreational experience. Five-point scales are used to measure the levels of satisfaction, between 1=Not Satisfied and 5=Very Satisfied.

From previous surveys, we have determined the four items customers care the most about. Those indicator items are entered into a Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) formula to produce an overall satisfaction index for each park. [The following table shows CSI numbers for Idaho’s state parks for 2006 through 2010.](#)

Systemwide CSI				
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
89.90	89.80	85.60	88.65	93.20

Although budget cuts and staff reductions in recent years have affected IDPR’s ability to serve customers, the agency retains a CSI benchmark of 90 to reflect the level of customer service we will continue to strive for.

Goal 1: Focus on Core Responsibilities

Objective

Enhance day-to-day resources through volunteer recruitment

Performance Measure:

A high level of interest in volunteering at IDPR.

Benchmark:

70,000 volunteer hours per year.

In 2010, individual volunteers and organized groups contributed 83,400 hours to our parks and programs. That's the equivalent of a little over 40 employees working full time for a year and a value of over \$1.2 million to the state of Idaho. This figure represents an increase of 10,000 hours over the prior year. The 13 percent jump in volunteers in just one year is probably a reaction to media attention regarding reduced funding for parks. When the word went out that Idaho State Parks needed help, people responded. There is not a single unit within IDPR that does not rely heavily on volunteers to assist within every area of program and park operations. Over the last five years, parks and programs have been the beneficiaries of a 45 percent increase in donated volunteer time.

The level of service people have come to expect from our agency would suffer greatly without the work of dedicated volunteers.

Objective:

Provide education, mediation and regulatory programs to enhance user opportunities and experiences

Performance Measures:

Provide motorized recreationist with safety and environmental educational opportunities appropriate to their activity.

Provide park visitors with learning opportunities in keeping with the nature of individual parks.

Benchmarks:

Participation in recreation safety classes opportunities by 30,000 users each year.

Participation in park interpretive programs by 50,000 visitors each year.

In FY2010 OHV safety education classes reached 400 and avalanche classes reached 857 students. The OHV Education Program now has three mobile education trailers with OHV simulators and presented safe operation and ethical use of off-highway vehicles presentations and materials to 67,600 participants at 13 events statewide. IDPR now has a pool of 60 ATV instructors, 30 motorbike instructors statewide and 60 OHV Trail Ambassadors. Hells Gate, Canyon County Pickle Butte and Eagle Island OHV training sites are

operational and Priest Lake, Lake Walcott OHV training sites are under development. Noise Park in Idaho Falls and county land near Grangeville and Orofino identified to begin development this summer. IDPR is actively distributing the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council's Public Land Advocacy DVD to help educate Idaho's residents on the US Forest Service's travel planning process and trail management. The DVD will also be made available to the public during recreation based shows and events.

IDPR's boating safety program made 233,356 individual contacts at 181 events in 2010, a 61 percent increase over the previous year. The program trained 1,524 students in boating safety. Another 228 took an online course, and 68 took home study courses. In addition, IDPR trained 89 law enforcement officers in various basic and advanced marine law enforcement training courses. They in turn made 37,239 recreational boating safety compliance inspections and checks.

In FY2010 parks hosted 85,941 visitors at interpretive centers, during campfire programs and at special events.

Goal 1: Focus on Core Responsibilities

Objective: Protect and improve public access to outdoor recreation statewide.

Performance Measure:

Design and develop a web-based interactive trail map program that provides users with detailed information on trail opportunities statewide.

Benchmarks:

Beta test the site in calendar year 2010.

Go live by calendar year 2011.

Update as travel management plans are developed by federal agencies.

This comprehensive website will be a crucial tool to help users access new opportunities to practice their particular trail-based recreational activity. The site will inform them of seasonal and management closures, give them contact information for the managing agency and even link weather and road reports for their destination.

The site will become increasingly valuable as BLM and Forest Service travel management plans change, giving users real-time information about routes so they do not have to rely on potentially out-dated maps. In the future, the site will allow users to

download route coordinates to their own GPS units to assure they can avoid private lands, administrative route closures, and conflicts with other trail users.

Site development is on schedule and in beta testing. Downloadable maps for GPS devices and a distance calculator should be available by August.

Objective: Protect and improve public access to outdoor recreation statewide.

Performance Measure:

Provide increased outdoor recreation opportunities in relation to increasing demands through maintenance of trails on public lands.

Benchmarks:

1,500 miles of trail maintained by trail rangers annually.

5,600 miles of snowmobile trail groomed annually.

Accomplished through the Motorbike Recreation Fund and the Snowmobile Registration Fund, respectively. While not the only effort to provide and improve access, these are heavily used and readily measured programs.

Goal 2: While protecting park resources maximize revenue throughout the system

Objective:

Integrate park business plans and marketing plans, focusing on revenue development.

Performance Measures:

Assure that each park is active in local chambers of commerce, economic development initiatives, and tourism efforts.

Develop community stakeholder marketing teams in each park.

Develop marketing tools for each park manager.

Benchmarks:

Every park has a chamber membership.

Every park has a functioning stakeholder marketing team in place.

Marketing tools developed for every park.

For this goal, while the objectives, performance measures and benchmarks can be readily identified, laying out the integrated strategy is less confusing than addressing each element as a stand-alone.

Local marketing team created

Each park manager will create a local marketing team consisting of park staff of his or her choice, and representatives from the local community to include chamber, tourism and economic development people, media, elected officials and other local stakeholders. The marketing teams will meet regularly to develop visitation and revenue generating strategies for their respective parks to include special events, marketing, and an assessment of facility needs working within the bounds of the park development guidelines and budget constraints.

Orientation and brainstorming with local marketing team

Upon creation of each marketing team, the planning chief and communications manager will meet with them to orient members to their role, describe the support they can expect, and facilitate an initial idea generating session.

Development of one and five-year marketing plan

The communications manager and planning chief will provide a template from which the local teams will develop marketing plans with one-year and five-year goals. Each item described will include a projected implementation budget and revenue projections.

Review of marketing plan

Each park marketing plan will be reviewed by the director, deputy director, fiscal officer, region managers, communication manager, planning chief, engineer and Development planner. If funding is available, they will approve or disapprove each item in the plan.

Incorporation of marketing measurable into the business plan

The planning chief will add approved marketing plan items to the business plan strategies section. Revenue projections will also be added and will serve as strategic plan benchmarks.

Goal 2: While protecting park resources maximize revenue throughout the system

Development of plan resources

The communications manager will assist the park with resources such as event planning checklists, media contacts, brochures and web development.

Implementation of marketing plan

The park manager will implement the plan, identifying whatever resources are necessary to make it a success. The communications manager will assist and provide needed tools.

Annual review and adjustment to marketing plan

The planning chief and communications manager will meet annually with the park manager and marketing team to review successes and failures and assist in adjusting goals.

Annual Report

The communications manager and planning chief will develop

an annual report template that will capture measurable and qualitative data about each year's marketing efforts. Park managers will fill in quantitative data such as participation numbers for special events and revenue from marketing efforts. The communications manager will aggregate the report and present it to the director, deputy director and fiscal officer.

The communications manager and planning chief have visited all parks and met with community marketing teams. Action plans have been developed for all parks and complete marketing plans are in place for Old Mission, Lake Walcott, Round Lake, Winchester Lake and Priest Lake. We anticipate all marketing plans will be implemented by the end of August.

Objective:

Implement a statewide park sign program.

Performance Measure:

Maximize directional signing within the bounds of state and local rules.

Benchmark:

Approval by the Idaho Park and Recreation Board of sign implementation at each park.

The Idaho Park and Recreation Board has determined that wayfinding signs, particularly those on state and local highways leading to a park, are in need of improvement. Budget permitting, IDPR will evaluate the need park by park and determine where better signing would make visiting a park easier. The agency will work with the Idaho Transportation Department and local highway districts to erect needed signs within the bound of the controlling agency's regulations. Sign plans for one to three parks are being presented to the Idaho Park and Recreation Board for their approval at each quarterly board meeting.

Goal 3: Develop a dedicated funding source to support state park operations

Objective:

Work with constituent groups and elected officials to identify an appropriate funding source.

Performance Measure:

Seek to reduce agency dependence on the General Fund.

Benchmark:

Secure a dedicated funding source for maintenance, operation and development of Idaho state parks.

While increased revenue from park operations is a worthy and necessary goal, no state parks agency in the nation has yet become totally self-sufficient. Idahoans value their state parks—91 percent of 2010 Strategic Plan Survey respondents said it was important or very important to maintain parks and facilities. Yet, some of those valued parks and facilities will never be self-sufficient because of their nature, i.e. historic sites or natural reserves.

How do we preserve cultural treasures such as The Coeur d’Alenes Old Mission State Park and unique

natural sites such as Box Canyon that are unlikely to pay for themselves through visitor fees? The State General Fund has subsidized state park operations since the beginning of the agency in 1965. While about half of Idahoans still support that method of funding, according to our survey, the reality is that the General Fund is now unable to meet the needs of every agency.

Developing a dedicated funding source for IDPR that would take pressure off of the General Fund is a solution supported by many elected officials. Agency staff cannot take this on because of lobbying restrictions, so the impetus for moving a dedicated funding initiative falls to the Idaho Park and Recreation Board and interest groups such as the Friends of Idaho Parks and Recreation. Agency staff will serve the critical role of providing information to those groups that will help them make the case for whatever dedicated funding source is envisioned and to determine the adequacy of that source.

2010 Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation General Public Strategic Plan Survey Results

Mandate

Idaho Code Chapter 67-1903 requires that “Each state agency shall develop and submit to the division of financial management a comprehensive strategic plan for the major divisions and core functions of that agency.” The statute further specifies that plans cover not less than four years. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR), which chose to cover a five-year period in its strategic plan, has been updating its 2006-2010 plan annually as required by statute. A new strategic plan for the agency is due July 1, 2010.

The purpose for strategic planning, as outlined in Idaho code is to:

- (1) Improve state agency accountability to state citizens and lawmakers;
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- (3) Assist lawmakers with policy and budget decisions; and
- (4) Increase the ability of state agencies to improve agency management and service delivery and assess program effectiveness.

Idaho Code Chapter 67-1903 further states that “When developing a strategic plan, an agency shall consult with the appropriate members of the legislature, and shall solicit and consider the views and suggestions of those persons and entities potentially affected by the plan.” IDPR understands that to mean that the agency is required to consider the views of the general public when formulating the plan and determined that a statewide survey of randomly selected Idahoans was an appropriate way of doing so.

General Public Survey

Between March 8 and April 30, 2010 the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) sent postcards to 10,000 Idaho households asking them to participate in a survey regarding the future of IDPR for strategic planning purposes. Recipients were asked to go to www.idahorecreationsurvey.org to complete the survey online. The agency recognized that sending a printed survey to each household would result in much higher participation, but chose not to do so because of dramatically higher costs. IDPR received 320 valid responses to the survey, which gives a margin of error of plus or minus 5.5 with a confidence level of 95%.

Analysis

State Parks

Support for managing and maintaining Idaho's state parks and facilities is very strong, with 91% of respondents saying it was important or very important to do so. Support was also strong (89%) for protecting and preserving park land.

Idahoans value their state parks highly, with 87% saying they are important to local economies because of the visitors they attract. A total of 86% value state parks' role in protecting clean air and clean water as well as promoting healthy lifestyles.

Though support for state parks as a legitimate function of state government is strong, how to fund their operation and development remains a question. About half of the respondents support funding them through the General Fund, while 18% oppose that. The remaining 32% are neutral. While economic conditions might make a reduction in General Fund dependence a good idea, the public does not seem to be clamoring for it.

There is slightly more support for funding state parks through a new \$6 fee attached to vehicle registrations. 55% support such a fee. Though there is more support for that than for funding parks through the General Fund, there is likewise more opposition (31%).

Recreation Programs

Although no single recreation program gets the broad public support of state parks, we must remember that those programs by their nature have a dedicated core of supporters. While more respondents were neutral about recreation programs and more were negative, that is likely at least partially a reflection of non-participation in that particular activity.

Funding existing recreation programs through registration fees and a portion of the gas tax is well supported. Registration fees were not nearly as popular as a funding mechanism for those activities that currently receive no funding. It is still not clear from this survey what funding source for non-motorized boaters, bicyclists and equestrians might be appropriate, or even if a majority of users feel they need facilities and programs funded.

Important Issues

Protecting access to public lands has been an important issue for years. In statewide surveys conducted in 2002 and 2004 for the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP), it was second behind protecting water quality. Preserving access came out on top this time, perhaps because of talk of state park closures about the time this survey was conducted.

Survey Results

Highlights of the survey results follow. For ease of analysis the categories Important and Very Important are combined under the heading Important, while Not Very Important and Not Important at All are combined as Not important. Note that because of rounding totals may not add up to 100 percent.

Park Support

Question 1 of 20 The following list of responsibilities and services represents what the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation does today. Many responsibilities are outside of park boundaries. For instance, the agency manages funding programs for boaters, snowmobilers, off-highway vehicle riders and cross-country skiers statewide, as well as community park and recreation programs, all from funding sources dedicated to those activities. Please tell us how important each is to you by ranking them from 1 (Not Important At All) to 5 (Very Important).

Activity	Not Important	Neutral	Important
Manage and maintain state parks and facilities	4%	5%	91%
Protect and preserve park land	4%	7%	89%

(Question 1 continued)

Activity	Not Important	Neutral	Important
Provide funding for docks and other boating facilities statewide through fees and taxes paid by users.	13%	20%	68%
Register recreation vehicles such as motorbikes, snowmobiles and boats.	19%	21%	61%
Provide funding for marine law enforcement to counties statewide from boat registration fees, Coast Guard grants and fuel taxes.	19%	20%	60%
Maintain trails for motorized vehicles such as ATVs and motorbikes from registration fees paid by users.	29%	21%	50%
Provide funding for campground development on public land statewide from registration fees paid by users.	9%	16%	75%
Maintain multiple use trails open to hikers, equestrians and motorized users through registration fees paid by motorized users.	18%	17%	65%
Manage federal grants for local communities to use for park and recreation projects.	12%	17%	71%
Support 17 cross-country skiing sites statewide on public land through fees paid by skiers	20%	22%	58%
Support snowmobile grooming statewide through fees and taxes paid by snowmobilers.	31%	22%	47%

Park Classification

Question 2 of 20 The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation manages several kinds of parks. A few parks with campgrounds pay their own way through user fees. Others, such as heritage parks, rarely do. Given this disparity, we would like to know how important you feel it is for the state to operate the kinds of parks and trailways listed below. Please tell us how important the operation of each is to you by ranking them from 1 (Not Important At All) to 5 (Very Important)

Classification	Not Important	Neutral	Important
Recreation parks that provide for activities such as camping, boating, hiking and bicycle riding (such as Farragut or Lucky Peak state parks)	5%	10%	85%
Heritage parks that preserve and provide educational opportunities (Such as the Coeur d'Alene's Old Mission State Park)	10%	25%	65%
Recreation trailways (such as Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes)	16%	24%	60%
Natural parks that allow recreation, but whose purpose is the enjoyment of nature (such as Ponderosa or Priest Lake state parks)	8%	12%	80%

The Value of State Parks

Question 3 of 20 About 65% of the cost of operating Idaho’s state parks is covered by user fees. For nearly 50 years an annual general fund appropriation (income tax and sales tax revenues) has made up the difference. Some Idahoans would like to see the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation’s operating become self supporting and have its budget removed from the State General Fund. Some believe the agency should continue to receive General Fund support. The following statements address the value of state parks as a function of government. Please read each and mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with each. Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
State Parks are part of what attracts visitors to Idaho. Those visitors bring dollars into the local economy.	6%	7%	87%
It is not the government’s job to provide recreation sites. Leave that to the private sector.	74%	12%	13%
State parks are a benefit to all Idahoans because they protect natural resources that help provide clean air and clean water.	6%	9%	86%
State parks provide needed recreational opportunities that promote healthy lifestyles.	6%	7%	86%
State parks should serve all Idahoans, even those who cannot afford higher fees.	12%	9%	80%
State parks increase the value of nearby property.	9%	26%	65%

How to Fund State Parks

Question 4-7 of 20 Background: All states subsidize their state park systems in some way, recognizing that citizens generally support preserving history and natural resources, and providing the opportunity for healthy outdoor recreation. Montana and Washington have recently begun funding their park systems a different way. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation is considering similar legislation. Here's how it would work: Currently, it costs \$5 per vehicle per day to use an Idaho state park. An annual pass to Idaho's 30 state parks costs \$35. The pass allows you to visit as many times as you wish for day use. Those wishing to stay overnight in campgrounds, cabins and other facilities pay lodging fees. Under the new proposal, all Idahoans would have free access to state parks without an annual pass, and without paying a day use fee. Instead of paying upon entering a park, Idahoans would pay a small annual fee at the time they register their vehicle. Out-of-state visitors would continue to pay a park entrance fee.

Question	Oppose	Neutral	Support
Would you support a MANDATORY \$6 registration fee that also provided free day use access to parks and eliminated state General Fund support for the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation? Rate this idea from 1 (Strongly Oppose) to 5 (Strongly Support).	31%	13%	55%
Would you support an OPTIONAL \$6 registration fee that provided free day use access to parks and eliminated state General Fund support for the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation? Rate this idea from 1 (Strongly Oppose) to 5 (Strongly Support).	31%	18%	51%
Would you be more likely to support a registration fee such as those described above if a portion of the fee went to support non-game wildlife? Rate your level of support from 1 (Strongly Oppose) to 5 (Strongly Support).	34%	37%	30%
Would you be more likely to support a registration fee such as those describe above if a portion of the fee went to support an annual grant program for city and county parks and pathways in your community? Rate your level of support from 1 (Strongly Oppose) to 5 (Strongly Support).	35%	25%	41%

Question 8 of 20 Below are some ways to partially fund a parks system. How would you rate these as ways to fund facility improvements, operations and maintenance of our state park system? Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Oppose) to 5 (Strongly Support).

Funding Source	Oppose	Neutral	Support
A transaction fee of one tenth of one percent on the sale price of real estate.	66%	14%	18%
Rely on the State General Fund, as is now the case.	18%	32%	50%
A one percent tax on sporting goods sold in Idaho.	49%	15%	36%
A one percent tax on soft drinks.	48%	14%	38%

Boating Improvements

Question 9 of 20 Funding for many boating improvements in Idaho is provided by boating enthusiasts who pay fuels tax to operate their vessels but cannot use them on state highways. As a result, 0.84% (percent) of the state fuels tax goes back to this program to be distributed in the form of grants to public agencies, most often county waterways programs. Please tell us how important each funded item is to you by ranking them from 1 (Not Important At All) to 5 (Very Important).

Activity	Not Important	Neutral	Important
Development of parking and restroom facilities.	9%	13%	78%
Providing patrol boats and rescue equipment.	12%	22%	65%
Law enforcement specifically addressing issues associated with the activity.	15%	23%	62%
Development of docks and ramps.	13%	27%	61%
Activity education (such as safety training for boat operators).	20%	26%	54%

RV Funding

Question 10 of 20 Money collected from registration fees for RVs is currently spent for the following. Please tell us how appropriate it is to do so by ranking from 1 (Not Appropriate At All) to 5 (Very Appropriate).

Question	Not Appropriate	Neutral	Appropriate
To provide for the acquisition, lease, development, improvement, and maintenance of facilities--typically campgrounds, restrooms, shower buildings--designed to promote the health, safety, and enjoyment of recreational vehicle users.	6%	12%	82%

OHV Improvements

Question 11 of 20 Money collected from registration fees for ATVs, motorbikes and snowmobiles is currently spent on the following. Please tell us how important each is to you by ranking them from 1 (Not Important At All) to 5 (Very Important).

Activity	Not Important	Neutral	Important
Signing and trail marking specific to that particular type of recreation.	14%	18%	68%
Facility and trail maintenance specific to that particular type of recreation.	17%	18%	66%
Facility and trail development specific to that particular type of recreation.	24%	25%	51%
Repair and refurbishment of areas heavily impacted by that type of recreation.	12%	12%	76%
Activity education (such as safety training for vehicle operators)	23%	27%	51%
Law enforcement specifically addressing issues associated with the activity.	17%	23%	60%

OHV Funding

Question 12 of 20 In lieu of receiving an annual refund of taxes on gasoline not used on state roads, snowmobile riders, ATV/motor bike riders and boaters asked the Legislature several years ago to dedicate the money to programs for the benefit of their recreational activities. In your opinion, where should their non-highway-use portion of gasoline tax be spent? (check only one).

Where should the money go?	Percentage of respondents
Fund projects and programs that benefit the recreational activities of those users.	75%
State highway maintenance.	19%
Other, please specify.	5%

Question 13 of 20 What state taxes or fees should go to supporting programs for motorized recreation on trails in Idaho? Rank from least supported to most supported, from 1 (No Support At All) to 5 (Very Strong Support).

Funding Source	No Support	Neutral	Strong Support
Registration fees from motorbikes, snowmobiles and boats.	12%	13%	76%
A portion of the gas tax representing the gas used off highway by motorized recreation vehicles.	18%	20%	62%
The sales tax collected from the sale of motorized recreation vehicles.	16%	15%	68%
A portion of the sales tax collected from the sale of accessories for motorized recreation vehicles.	19%	17%	63%

Funding Cross-Country Skiing

Question 14 of 20 What state taxes or fees should go to supporting programs for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing trails in Idaho? Rank from least supported to most supported, from 1 (No Support At All) to 5 (Very Strong Support).

Funding Source	No Support	Neutral	Strong Support
A parking sticker required at winter recreation sites.	15%	19%	65%
An optional specialty license plates for cross-country skiers and snowshoers.	17%	25%	57%
A portion of the sales tax collected from the sale of accessories for cross-country skiers and snowshoers.	20%	21%	59%

Funding Non-Motorized Boats

Question 15 of 20 What state taxes or fees should go to supporting programs and facilities for non-motorized boats (kayaks, canoes, rafts, rowboats) in Idaho? Rank from least supported to most supported, from 1 (No Support At All) to 5 (Very Strong Support).

Funding Source	No Support	Neutral	Strong Support
Registration fees from non-motorized boats (they are not currently registered).	43%	17%	40%
The sales tax collected from the sale of non-motorized boats vehicles.	25%	16%	59%
A portion of the sales tax collected from the sale of accessories for non-motorized boats.	27%	19%	54%

Funding Bike Riding

Question 16 of 20 What state taxes or fees should go to support trails and pathways for bicycle and mountain bike riders in Idaho? Rank from least supported to most supported, from 1 (No Support At All) to 5 (Very Strong Support).

Funding Source	No Support	Neutral	Strong Support
A registration program for bicycles and mountain bikes.	48%	14%	39%
A new one percent tax on bicycles and bicycle-related equipment.	28%	14%	58%
A portion of the sales tax collected from the sale of bicycles and bicycle-related equipment.	45%	18%	37%

Funding for Equestrians

Question 17 of 20 What state taxes or fees should go to support trails and programs for equestrians in Idaho? Rank from least supported to most supported, from 1 (No Support At All) to 5 (Very Strong Support).

Funding Source	No Support	Neutral	Strong Support
Registration fees on equestrian trailers	31%	20%	49%
A portion of the sales tax collected on equestrian accessories	27%	20%	53%
An optional specialty license plate for equestrians	24%	21%	55%

Important Recreation Issues

Question 18 of 20 We would like your opinion on the relative importance of issues that may affect your enjoyment of outdoor recreation in Idaho. Note that while many of these issues go well beyond state parks, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for assessing outdoor recreation needs statewide and sharing our findings with local, state and federal agencies. Please indicate how important these issues are to you by ranking each issue from 1 (Not Important At All) to 5 (Very Important).

Issue	Not Important	Neutral	Important
Protecting existing access to public lands	4%	5%	90%
Protecting water quality	6%	9%	86%
Protecting natural resources on public lands	8%	11%	82%
Controlling invasive species	6%	15%	79%
Rehabilitating outdoor recreation facilities	8%	15%	77%
Providing additional access to public lands for outdoor recreation	13%	16%	71%
Provide more spontaneous camping (no reservations)	13%	21%	66%
Educating youth about natural resources and the environment	17%	21%	62%
Providing outdoor recreation education for youth	16%	23%	60%
Providing recreation safety education for youth	16%	26%	58%

Question 19 of 20 asked for the zip code of respondents.

Question 20 of 20 was an opportunity for respondents to share comments with us. Comments received are available upon request.

Survey analysis by Chief Planner Rick Just

2010 IDPR Strategic Plan Employee Survey

In the spring of 2010 IDPR surveyed its 132 employees and six Board members. A total of 86 IDPR employees responded to the survey, 48 of whom worked in a park. There were 13 from the Recreation Bureau, 6 from a region office, 3 from Fiscal, 2 from Development, 1 from Registration and 10 who worked elsewhere in IDPR. Three Board members also participated. This return gives us a 95 percent confidence level at plus or minus 6.26%.

For the first question, participants were asked to rank importance of priorities on a scale of 1 (Not at All Important) to 5 (Very Important). Percentages listed are the Important and Very Important answers combined. In the case of a tie in the total, the answer with a higher Very Important total was given precedence. Priorities were selected base on previous staff planning surveys.

The top six agency priorities identified by staff

- Creating a dedicated funding source to support state parks (96%)
- Maintaining and operating existing IDPR facilities to protect the state's investment (94%)
- Offering a high quality of statewide park experiences (94%)
- Improving responsive and mutually supportive relationships with the Governor and Legislators (91%)
- Protecting and improving public access to outdoor recreation statewide (91%)
- Increasing self sufficiency by increasing agency generated revenue (86%)

For all other questions, participants were asked to rank their level of agreement on a scale of 1 (Do Not Agree At All) to 5 (Completely Agree). Percentages listed are the Agree and Completely Agree answers combined. In the case of a tie in the total, the answer with a higher Completely Agree total was given precedence.

The top six agency strengths

- Satisfied customers (92%)
- Diversity of recreation resources for safe, fun, family recreation (83%)
- Volunteers (82%)
- Dedicated, optimistic, resourceful staff (80%)
- Good community relations (79%)
- We preserve history (79%)

The top six agency weaknesses

- Uncertain funding, no dedicated fund (83%)
- Lack of Legislative support (78%)
- Not enough staff to perform the job (78%)
- Aging infrastructure and facilities (76%)
- Lack of economic impact data (65%)
- Small, quiet agency with a can-do attitude (63%)

Top six agency opportunities

- Develop a dedicated funding source (95%)
- More involvement with local communities (85%)
- Partnerships with other agencies and groups (82%)
- Marketing as a quality, close-to-home opportunity (82%)
- Focus on revenue development (80%)
- Volunteers (78%)

Top six agency threats

- Lack of public understanding of what IDPR does (90%)
- Diluted services due to lack of staff (88%)
- Poor morale (81%)
- Loss of Parks (78%)
- Aging facilities (75%)
- Loss of recreation and economic opportunities for communities (74%)

Analysis

Clearly, developing a dedicated funding source is the highest priority for employees. It topped the priority list as well as the Opportunity and Weakness lists. Focusing on core responsibilities was also a high consideration, i.e., maintaining and operating existing facilities, keeping customers satisfied, offering a high quality experience, protecting access and offering a diversity of recreation experiences. Communications and marketing, whether to educate the public or increase revenues was also high.

